NEP 2020 Mediated Transformation in Higher Education

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Abstract: *The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to give the nation's school and higher education systems a holistic viewpoint and all-encompassing framework. In order to create a new system, this approach suggests redefining and reshaping every aspect of the educational system, including its governance and regulation. Indian customs and values, as well as the goals of education in the twenty-first century, such the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), serve as the foundation for the proposed system. Individual success and enlightenment, productive and responsible public engagement, and constructive contributions to society are only possible when a high-quality higher education is accessible. People must be able to work in productive environments, lead fulfilling lives, and become economically independent via education. Therefore, it is essential to include a certain set of values and abilities into every learning level, from preschool to college. In order to make a significant and lasting impact on the nation's higher education landscape, NEP has consequently made a number of improvements and changes. Transforming higher educational institutions (HEIs) into significant multidisciplinary universities and HEI groupings is the most significant recommendation of NEP, 2020. This will eliminate the fragmentation of higher education. The ancient Indian universities of Takshashila, Nalanda, Vallabhi, and Vikramshila served as the model for this endeavour. They drew thousands of students from around the globe to study in an exciting multidisciplinary setting. This change is essential to reviving India's long history of generating intelligent and talented people. Through appropriate financing, incentives, and processes, HEIs will also assist other HEIs in their development, contribution to various fields of practice, community service and participation, faculty development for the higher education system, and so forth. The NEP 2020, its impact on India's higher education system, and its difficulties will be the main topics of this essay.*
Keywords: *Higher Education, NEP: 2020, Implementation Strategies, Challenges*

I.   Introduction

The 2020 National Education Policy (NEP) focusses on reforming higher education to equip the next generation to thrive and compete in the digital economy. The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) outlines the goals of India's future educational system and was published on July 29, 2020. NEP 2020 prioritises five pillars: affordability, accessibility, quality, equity, and accountability in order to ensure ongoing improvement. Since the economy and society need information, it was created to satisfy the needs of the populace by requiring the continual learning of new abilities. In order to achieve full and productive employment and decent labour, as stated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030, NEP 2020 aims to provide high-quality education and possibilities for lifelong learning for everyone. The new strategy, which replaces the 1986 National strategy on Education, lays out a comprehensive plan for modernising India's basic and secondary educational systems by 2040. Multidisciplinarity, digital literacy, written communication, problem-solving, logical thinking, and exposure to many professions are among the skills that are heavily emphasised in the article (Digital Learning Network, 2021).

In the policy, the Indian government included several obstacles and requirements that prevent children from receiving an education. Children's fundamental requirements, how to realise human potential, the creation of equality and justice in society, national development, high-quality education, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation are all covered in the proposal's introductory part. Goal 4 of India's 2030 Agenda, which was implemented in 2030, is also described. Goal 4 will ensure that every child receives a high-quality, equitable, and inclusive education by 2030 and promote opportunities for lifelong learning. The plan also takes into account the ever-evolving global economy and job opportunities, which emphasise the importance of learning skills for students. India also aims to provide high-quality education by 2040.

This policy was written by Mr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, who was the head of the National Education Policy Draughting Panel. The educational system is also supposed to be transformed by this idea. Additionally, it modifies the hiring process for teachers and re-establishes a new structure to make teachers the most important and cherished members of society. The policy then goes on to outline the main points, including

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flexible learning, achieving a foundational level in reading and maths by the third grade, finding, appreciating, and fostering each student's unique abilities, and more. The departments are not different from one another.

A multidisciplinary educational system that emphasises, among other things, the practical skills necessary to manage one's life effectively, creativity, critical thinking and analysis, conceptual advancement, the development of ethics and human values through constitutional preaching, and the use of technology. The policy is then divided into four sections: part one covers school education, part two covers higher education, part three covers professional education and all other important sectors, and part four focusses on strengthening and funding different education boards, among other things (Vaishale, 2021). The influence and difficulties of NEP 2020 in higher education are the paper's primary areas of interest.

WHAT ARE THE NEW CHANGES UNDER NEP 2020?

NEP 2020 is a new education policy that aims to improve the quality of teachers and students in the wake of the 1968 and 1986 programs. The main goal of NEP 2020 is to provide pupils with global knowledge. The 2020 NEP strategy was the administration's update to the 34-year-old national education policy. Ten significant changes have been made to the new system. The following are the main modifications to the NEP 2020 policy:

1. Anganwadi, or kinder garden, is the kind of education that begins at age 3.
2. The 10+2 educational system was replaced with the 5+3+3+4 one.
3. There was no longer any strict division or distinction between science, the arts, and commerce.
4. Beginning in sixth grade, the internship and vocational education programs were implemented. In addition to helping the student develop their practical knowledge and social skills, this gives them insight and experience in the workplace.
5. Board exam models had changed as a result of the NEP. The board exams for classes 10 and 12 are still administered, but the format has altered. Instead of focussing on the syllabus, the exam will instead assess students' fundamental topic understanding.
6. The four-year undergraduate program structure was reinstated by NEP 2020.
7. By 2035, the major measures were to reduce the gross enrolment ratio to 50%.
8. All graduating programs will administer the Common College Entrance Exam.
9. The government will set the college costs, and a special committee will be established to oversee them and make sure no universities charge more than the cap.
10. The MPhil program will be eliminated from the educational framework, and the mother tongue will be used as the primary language of instruction.

Higher Education and NEP

UGC states that the following are some of the key characteristics of NEP 2020's higher education (UGC, 2021):

Raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to at least 50% by 2035:

The goal is to raise the GER in higher education, including vocational education, from 26.3% in 2018 to 50% by 2035.

Holistic Multidisciplinary Education: In order to provide students with integrated, rigorous exposure to science, the arts, humanities, mathematics, and professional fields, the policy envisions a broad-based, multidisciplinary holistic education at the undergraduate level. This includes innovative and adaptable curricular structures, creative study combinations, vocational education integration, and multiple entry/exit points. The development of well-rounded people with essential 21st century skills in the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational domains, as well as a social engagement ethic, soft skills like discussion, debate, and communication, and rigorous specialisation in one or more chosen fields, will be facilitated by a comprehensive and multidisciplinary education. All undergraduate programs, including those in technical, professional, and vocational fields, will eventually adopt a comprehensive approach to education.

Numerous exit options will be available during the three or four-year undergraduate program, along with suitable certifications, such as a certificate in a specific subject or field—including professional and vocational sectors—after one year, a diploma after two years, or a bachelor's degree after three years. The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's degree will be the suggested option as it allows students to focus on their major and minors while experiencing the full range of holistic and interdisciplinary education. An **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)** will be created in order to digitally record academic credits gained from several authorised HEIs and allow degrees from those schools to be issued based on credits earned.

In order to achieve the greatest standards for multidisciplinary education in India, **Multidisciplinary Education and Research institutions (MERUs)**, model public institutions for holistic and interdisciplinary education, will be established.

In order to provide the best possible learning settings that are stimulating and encouraging for every student, a variety of strategies will be put into place. The freedom to innovate in curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment will be granted to all institutions and faculty within a broad framework of higher education qualifications that guarantees uniformity across programs and institutions as well as across online, traditional "in-class" modes, and ODL. High-stakes tests must give way to more ongoing and thorough review, and HEIs must switch to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student progress according to each program's learning objectives.

In order to help and encourage students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, universities and colleges will establish first-rate support facilities and get sufficient funding and academic resources. All students will have access to professional career and academic counselling, as well as counsellors to support their physical, mental, and emotional well.

Rationalised Institutional design: A new vision and design for higher education includes sizable, vibrant, diverse institutions with enough resources. Major interdisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/knowledge hubs with 3,000 or more students will be created from existing universities, colleges, and campuses. A university is a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that provides excellent teaching, research, and community involvement in addition to undergraduate and graduate programs. The word "university" will refer to a broad category of establishments, such as autonomous degree-granting colleges (ACs), teaching-intensive universities, and research-intensive universities.

National Research Foundation (NRF): To boost and broaden research and innovation nationwide, a new institution will be founded. The main objective of the NRF will be to facilitate the spread of a research culture throughout our universities. This will be achieved by providing suitable incentives for and acknowledging exceptional research, as well as by implementing significant programs to initiate and expand research at State Universities and other public institutions with limited research capacity. The NRF will provide competitive funding for research across all fields. Successful research will be identified and, where suitable, put into practice through close cooperation with government organisations, corporations, and private/philanthropic groups.

Financial assistance for students: In recognition of their accomplishments, students from the SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs will receive rewards. To better assist, nurture, and monitor the development of scholarship winners, the National Scholarship Portal will be improved. There will be pressure on private universities to provide their students greater scholarships and free cruises.

The expansion of open and remote learning will play a significant role in increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50%. Measures like online courses and digital repositories, research funding, improved student services, credit-based recognition of MOOCs, and so on will be implemented to make sure it is comparable to the best in-class programs.

Institutional partnerships, teacher and student mobility, and the development of campuses in our nation by highly regarded institutions from throughout the globe will all help to encourage the internationalisation of education.

Motivated, Energised, and Capable Faculty: NEP 2020 states that the calibre and engagement of a university's faculty determines its performance. At HEIs, faculty recruitment procedures and standards shall be clearly stated, unbiased, and open. Faculty will be allowed to develop their own curriculum and instructional strategies within the predetermined parameters. Progression into institutional leadership and suitable incentives, promotions, and recognitions will be given for excellence. Teachers will be held responsible if they don't live up to the standards.

Effective leadership and governance are crucial at HEIs. Through a suitable system of graded autonomy and graded certification, which will be implemented gradually over a 15-year period, all Indian HEIs will aim to become independent, self-governing organisations that pursue innovation and quality. Every HEI will take action to ensure top-notch leadership and cultivate an excellence-focused institutional culture. It is intended for academic, administrative, and financial autonomy to guide institutional governance, with each higher education institution having its own Board of Governors. For all leadership positions, including heads of institutions, consideration will be given to candidates with strong academic credentials, proven administrative and leadership skills, and the capacity to handle challenging circumstances.

Regulation: With separate organisations for funding (the Higher Education Grants Council), accreditation (the National Accreditation Council), standard-setting (the General Education Council), and regulation (the National Higher Education Regulatory Council), the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will act as the main umbrella organisation for promoting higher education. Instead of an inspectorial regime, regulation will be

"light but tight," with honest self-disclosure as the norm, to ensure financial probity, public spiritedness, and the avoidance of conflicts of interest. The regulatory body would have the power to punish HEIs that violate norms and standards and would function through impersonal technological intervention for regulation. Both public and private higher education institutions will be subject to the same set of regulations on accreditation, regulation, and academic requirements (Aithal and Aithal, 2020).

Teacher Education: Multidisciplinary institutions should provide a four-year integrated Bachelor of Education program that is subject-specific and stage-specific. In order to create a new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, or NCFTE 2021, the NCTE will engage with NCERT. The minimum degree requirement for teaching by 2030 will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree that covers a wide range of academic material and methodology and includes substantial practical experience through student teaching at nearby schools. There will be serious repercussions for subpar independent Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs).

With the help of a vast network of outstanding senior and retired academics, including those who are fluent in Indian languages, a National mentorship Mission will be established, offering university and college instructors both short-term and long-term professional support and mentorship.

Professional Education: All types of professional education will be a part of the higher education system. Multidisciplinary education will be a goal for technical universities, health science universities, law and agricultural colleges, and other institutions in these and other fields.

Technology in Education: To facilitate the open exchange of ideas on how to utilise technology to enhance administration, planning, assessment, and learning, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), an independent organisation, will be founded. At all educational levels, proper technology integration will be carried out to enhance classroom operations, assist teacher professional development, expand educational access for underprivileged groups, and speed up educational planning, administration, and management. Higher education and schools will better incorporate DIKSHA/SWAYAM and other technology-based learning systems. HEIs will explore disruptive technologies and provide educational resources and courses, including online courses in cutting-edge fields.

To ensure preparedness with alternative modes of high-quality education whenever and wherever traditional and in-person modes of education are not feasible, a thorough set of recommendations for promoting online education has been discussed in light of the recent rise in epidemics and pandemics. The MHRD will create a specialised unit to coordinate the development of digital infrastructure, digital content, and capacity building in order to meet the demands of both higher education and school e-learning.

Adult Education: By 2030, the policy seeks to attain 100% literacy among adults and kids.

Promotion of Indian languages: To guarantee the survival, growth, and vibrancy of all Indian languages, a number of initiatives are planned. More HEIs and higher education programs will employ the mother tongue or local language as a medium of instruction and/or provide bilingual programs in an effort to improve access and GER and to encourage the strength, usage, and vitality of all Indian languages. An Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. All Indian language departments and institutes, including those teaching Sanskrit, will be substantially reinforced nationwide. There will be separate national institutes for Pali, Persian, and Prakrit. We shall conserve and promote all Indian languages, including endangered, tribal, and classical ones.

Funding Education: Education cannot be made into a company or a source of income since it is a public service. A number of checks and balances will be in place to prevent and fight the commercialisation of higher education. Because they are 'not for profit' organisations, all educational institutions will be subject to the same transparency and auditing requirements. In order to increase public investment in education to 6% of GDP as quickly as feasible, the Centre and the States will work together.

To guarantee cooperation and a stronger emphasis on educational quality, the **Central Advisory Board of Education** will be reinforced. The redesigned and reinvigorated CABE will be in charge of consistently developing, articulating, assessing, and revising the nation's educational vision in close collaboration with the MHRD and the corresponding apex bodies of States. Additionally, it will create and evaluate institutional structures that can help achieve this goal.

Implementing NEP-2020 Skill Development
Presents challenges

The strategy places a strong emphasis on skill development, particularly in the areas of vocational training and life skills. Children that get life skills training are more socially adept, more socially adaptive, and relatively simpler to execute. However, providing vocational training presents a significant difficulty since it runs the risk of assigning certain professions to communities that have historically relied on such jobs for many generations. The pupils' determined ability should serve as the foundation for the suggested occupational instruction. The public's attitude towards vocational education must shift, and administrators and policymakers must consider the reasons why India has yet to meet the goals established by the Kothari Commission in 1964–1966 (Manoj, 2021).

Need for Qualified Teachers

Trained educators, facilitators, and support personnel will be required to carry out this policy, in addition to a network of motivating mentors. Instead of boring repetitive mental labour that finally results in kids who are unemployed, learning should be made an interesting and pleasurable activity. As a result, the policy must create a learning program that considers both the cultural and geographic variety of our wonderful country and the varying rates at which each student learns. As the primary motivators and initiators of the IT deployment in schools, the next generation of tech-savvy educators will serve as mentors to their pupils, advising them on new technologies (Gupta, 2020).

Management of Change

Along with laying the groundwork for reading, NEP 2020 aims to enhance kids' cognitive abilities by fostering critical and higher order thinking skills as well as life skills that will equip them for the many obstacles they will face as adults. Therefore, it is imperative that the curriculum and teaching strategies be changed in order to maximise the benefits of the new policy. NEP calls for curriculum and pedagogical reforms in addition to a value-based education system. For the policy to be applied successfully, new techniques must be developed and improvised.

Complexities of the Law

Any policy must be consistent with other laws and acts in order to be implemented. Regarding age, there is a legal issue with this policy's implementation under The Right Education Act, 2009. In the long term, any issues between the Act and the recently announced policy will need to be resolved by clarifying some clauses, such as the age at which students must begin attending school.

Higher education that is multidisciplinary

An excellent proposal that will provide students the freedom to study the courses they want to is an inter-disciplinary educational regime. Indian institutions have historically been highly compartmentalised, with academics and instructors zealously defending their areas of expertise. The new policy calls for altering this deeply ingrained culture, which has few exceptions. It is difficult to adopt an interdisciplinary higher education model since the teaching staff must not only be subject matter experts but also draw from other fields. Over the course of the next ten or so years, a disruptive cultural transformation is required for the system to succeed.

Education or a degree or certificate

The usefulness of such certificates and diplomas is still up for debate, even though flexibility in the higher education model through the notion of various exits is a crucial step in lowering the number of dropouts. In Indian culture, occupations are tightly linked to degrees earned. Therefore, in order to properly implement the new system, we must first remove the antiquated belief that a degree is the only prerequisite for employment. This is a risky worldview that discredits and deters people from using their other natural abilities.

Connectivity via digital

Since e-learning is the way of the future, as demonstrated during the epidemic, we need internet penetration in rural locations. Digital classrooms, expertise-driven online teaching models, AR/VR technologies to fill in the gaps in physical teaching and lab infrastructure, consistent assessment programs across schools, career counselling sessions, and teacher training to become proficient with cutting-edge technologies are all examples of the digital infrastructure needed for this purpose. In the upcoming ten years, this will remain a significant obstacle.

Content and Curriculum

In order to include early childhood education into formal education, the NEP aims to change the 10+2 framework to a 5+3+3+4 structure. Additionally, NEP 2020 emphasises cutting back on curricular material to allow for critical thinking, which in turn helps people build 21st-century abilities. To achieve these objectives, it is necessary to reform every facet of the curriculum and pedagogy. Adapting the curriculum to the National Curriculum Framework is one of the hurdles in effectively implementing these changes. Teachers must also reconsider the learning content criteria and adjust the textbooks appropriately.

II. Conclusion

Up until this point, Indian universities were primarily domestic, with only Indian instructors and students, and lacked foreign diversity. The dearth of foreign instructors and students in India's top universities is one factor contributing to the country's poor rankings. Indian universities, especially IITs, are now able to expand internationally and establish campuses all over the world thanks to NEP. This will enhance their reputation internationally in addition to increasing their reach abroad. NEP was eagerly adopted and well appreciated when it was initially implemented in India. In the past year, institutions have also made significant progress in implementing NEP. The results will be accessible shortly. For students not under test pressure, the highlights listed in NEP 2020 seem ambitious and adaptable. It is most likely to encourage interdisciplinary learning and facilitate students' job pursuits in a setting that is becoming more and more competitive. However, the need for faculty and academics will rise significantly in order to achieve this aim. In reality, there is a 35 percent faculty shortfall in India's higher education system, which would require additional measures and supportive laws to satisfy demand.

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