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Impact of National Education Policy 2020 on Higher Education

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Abstract:

India marks the completion of India's 73rd year of Independence, still the goal of 100% Literacy or universal Literacy in the nation. It is necessary to reflect on the vision and goals that had been laid for independent India. The vision is to see equality in nation and so equality in education. This shows the need for improvement in educational system in India. In light of this, amidst the Pandemic year, the new National Education Policy has come into force under the chairmanship of eminent scientist Dr. K. Kasturirangan. The National Education Policy contributes directly in sustainable transformation of our nation into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. The new National Education Policy was approved by Union Cabinet of India on 29th July 2020 which is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. The new policy aims for universalisation of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030 and aims to raise GER in higher education to 50 per cent by 2025. There are many opportunities and challenges to the education fraternity in implementation of NEP 2020. This paper Impact of National Education Policy on Higher Education: Opportunities & Challenges, tries to trace the history of Education System in India, to review the NEP in relation to HE, to analyse the impact of NEP on teachers, and also expresses the opportunities and challenges in implementation of NEP and also describes the road ahead to NEP.

Keywords: National Education Policy, Higher Education, universalisation, impact on teachers

Introduction:

National Education Policy is a new policy to address the crippling issues faced by Indian education system. The NEP 2020 which was approved by Union Cabinet of India on July 29th 2020 outlines the vision of India's new education system. National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all. This NEP replaces the previous National Policy of Education 1986. The new policy is based on a draft prepared by a committee led by

Former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Dr. K. Kasturirangan. The committee is working on the policy from last six years and Kasturirangan Committee is the second Committee to work on the policy. The NEP enacts numerous changes in the India's Education Policy. NEP is a comprehensive framework of education from elementary level to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban areas.

The NEP 2020 has outlined an ambitious task of nearly doubling the GER in higher education from 26.3 per cent (2018) to 50 per cent by 2035 while improving quality of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and positioning India as a global education hub. The focus is on providing a flexible curriculum through an interdisciplinary approach, creating multiple exit points in what would be a four-year undergraduate programme, catalysing research, improving faculty support and encouraging internationalisation.

One of the most radical shifts will be seen in setting up of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for the entire higher education segment. The HECI will act as a single regulator and several functions, including accreditation, funding and academic standard setting, will be carried out by independent verticals. These entities will eventually replace other regulatory bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) or the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

The Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi stated that the policy focuses on "how to think rather than what to think".

Objectives of the study:

The study is made to fulfill the objectives mentioned below:

- a. To know the key highlights of NEP in relation to Higher Education
- b. To trace the history of Indian Education System and its present status.
- c. To analyse the impact of National Education Policy 2020 on Higher Education.

Methodology:

The methodology consists of a conceptual discussion on highlighting the gist of the national educational policy framework, highlighting various sections of the policy of NEP 2020 in relation to Higher Education System. Impact of NEP on Higher Education is made using the focus group discussion method. The challenges and opportunities of the new policy related to Higher Education are analyzed using the predictive analysis technique.

Evolution of India's education policy: A road map from independence till today:

The first committee after India's independence was the University Education Commission 1948-49 also known as the Radhakrishnan commission. This committee was led by Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan which focused on higher education.

The Secondary Education Commission 1952-53 focussed mainly on education after primary school and before University Education begins.

The Education Commission 1964-66 also known as Kothari Commission led by Dr. D. S Kothari. This Commission had a holistic approach and advise the government on the national pattern of education and general policies taking into account each stage from primary to post graduation.

In 1968, The National Policy on Education was announced by government based on the recommendations by Kothari Commission and a policy for equal educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration and greater economic and cultural development.

The National Policy on Education 1986 gave special emphasis on the removal of disparities in education system and aimed to equalise educational opportunity for all. This act was modified in 1992 “Common Minimum Programme” especially for women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Schedule Caste (SC).

In 2009, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act was passed which made elementary education a fundamental right for every child.

The T.S.R. Subramanian Committee or Committee for Evolution of the New Education Policy in 2016, sought to improve the quality and credibility of education by addressing implementation gaps.

Finally Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee was framed to draft the new National Education Policy and submitted its report on May 31, 2019. This draft sought to address the challenges of access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability faced by current education system. The committee reframed the HRD ministry to Ministry of Education.

Highlights of Policies NEP 2020 for Higher Education System :

Policy changes:

1. The Gross Enrolment Ratio in HE including Vocational education will increase from current 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
2. HEIs which deliver the highest quality will get more incentives from the Government.
3. Reputed international universities to be encouraged to setup campuses in India.
4. Higher education institutions will promote multidisciplinary education and flexible curriculum structure that will offer multiple entry and exit points to create new possibilities for lifelong learning.
5. Greater focus on online education and open distance learning (ODL) as a key means to improve access equity and inclusion
6. Integration of vocational education within higher education. At least 50% of learners to have exposure to vocational education by 2025.
7. HE quality will be improved to global quality level to attract more international students and the credits acquired in foreign will be counted for the award

Healthcare education system must be integrated in such a way that all students of allopathic medical education must have a basic understanding of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), and vice versa. Greater emphasis should be given in all forms of healthcare education to preventive healthcare and community medicine.

Technical education should be offered within multidisciplinary education institutions and should focus on opportunities to engage deeply with other disciplines. The focus should be on offering Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3-D machining, big data analysis, and machine learning, in addition to

genomic studies, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neuroscience, with applications to health, environment, and sustainable living.

Governing body:

- HE monitoring and controlling institutions like UGC, AICTE, MCI, DCI, INC, etc will be merged with the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single regulator for HEI.
- The current Accreditation Institutions like NAAC and NAB will be replaced by a robust National Accreditation Council (NAC).
- An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) will be established which would digitally store the academic credits of all registered candidates earned from various recognized HEIs (SWAYAM & ODL mode) that can be taken into account while awarding degrees by the college or university.
- The various nomenclatures used currently such as deemed to be university, affiliating university, central university, affiliating technical university, unitary university, etc will be replaced by 'University' after fulfilling the required criteria as per norms.
- National Scholarship Portal will be strengthened and expanded to universities help the financial needs of merit-based students. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

University level:

1. Consolidation of existing fragmented HEIs into two types of Multidisciplinary Universities (MU) and Multidisciplinary Autonomous Colleges (AC).
2. Multidisciplinary Universities will be of two types as (1) Research-intensive Universities, and (2) Teaching-intensive Universities.
3. Establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund research in universities and colleges.
4. Research will be included in UG, PG, level and have a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach.
5. All HEIs will focus on research and innovation by setting up (1) Start-up incubation centres, (2) Technology development centres, (3) Centres in frontier areas of research, (4) Centre for Industry-academic linkage, and (5) Interdisciplinary Research Centres including humanities and social sciences research.
6. All HEIs will have professional academic and career counselling centres with counsellors available to all students to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being.
7. All HEIs will develop, support, and fund for topic-centred clubs and activities organized by students with the help of faculty and other experts as needed, in the area of science, mathematics, poetry, language, literature, debate, music, sports, etc.
8. The Degree programmes may contain in-class teaching, Online teaching components, and ODL components with 40:30:30 ratio model to achieve a global standard of quality.

9. All private universities are eligible for graded autonomy based on their accreditation status.
10. All private universities / autonomous colleges have to maintain an openness in their financial dealings and the BoG is responsible for any irregularities in the accounting system. BoG should contain eminent people well reputed in their professional area to guide the speedy development of the HEIs.
11. Universities/institutions offering law education must prefer to offer bilingual education for future lawyers and judges - in English and State language.

IV Institution Level:

1. Multi disciplinary Autonomous colleges campus will have more than 3,000 students. The Timeline to become multi-disciplinary is by 2030 and to have 3,000 and more students by 2040.
2. Every existing College will develop into either degree granting autonomous College or migrated into a Constituent College of University and becomes fully a part of the University.
3. All existing affiliated Colleges will eventually grow autonomous degree-granting colleges with the mentoring support of affiliated University by improving and securing the prescribed accreditation level.
4. Four years Bachelor degree with multiple exit options, one to two years Master's degree based on the number of years spent in Bachelor degree as four or three respectively, and option to do Ph.D. for four years Bachelor degree with research are possible.
5. Two years Master degree with full research in the second year, One year Master degree for four years Bachelor degree holders, and Five years integrated Bachelor/Master degree.
6. HEIs will be encouraged to prepare professionals in agriculture and veterinary sciences through programmes integrated with general education. HEIs offering agricultural education must focus on the local community and involvement in setting up Agricultural Technology Parks in the region to promote technology incubation and dissemination.
7. All HEIs have autonomy in deciding their fees structure and surplus if any should be reinvested in the expansion projects with a transparent accounting system.
8. All private HEIs should offer 20% free-ship and 30% scholarship in the course fee for meritorious students in every course which they offer during a given academic year and this should be checked and confirmed by the accreditation process.

V Student Level

1. Student Centred teaching & learning process instead of Teacher centred teaching model.
2. Choice Based Credit System is revised by an innovative and flexible Competency Based Credit System.
3. Examination system will change from high-stakes examinations (Semester End system) towards a more continuous and comprehensive evaluation examination system.
4. Pedagogy in HEIs will focus on communication, presentation, discussion, debate, research, analysis, and interdisciplinary thinking.

Impact of new national education policy can be studied under the following headings:**Large-scale consolidation will help in quality universities and colleges:**

Institutional restructuring and consolidation will have significant impact on the value volume of higher Education institutions in the country by reducing them to nearly one third. However it is worth noting that average enrolment per college in India currently stands at 693 (AISHE 18-19, Ministry of Human Resource Development, KPMG in India Analysis) while the policy aims to create higher education institutions with 3000 Plus enrollments. This new policy focuses on more number of autonomous colleges to promote excellence. In India less than 1000 autonomous colleges are existing out of nearly 40000 colleges in India. This shows a lot of consolidations and collaborations will take place in India's higher education institutions limitation of the policy. It is expected that the above move will result in higher education institutions coming down to 15000 colleges from 50000 colleges in India.

Focus on multidisciplinary education:

Indian higher education system is characterized by single disciplinary Islands of excellence such as IIT IIM and AIIM. New national education policy focuses on multidisciplinary education by heading towards creation of large multi-disciplinary universities called multidisciplinary education and research universities (MERU's) like those in United States of America and United Kingdom. The creation of MERU's will provide access to quality education in diverse field across all segments of society, covering all the districts and remote places in the country. This will enable students have wide scope in selection of their areas of interest.

Faculty shortage and need for improvement in faculty quality:

The current faculty student ratio in our country after Right to education act is 1:30, should be improved to 1:20 which is considered as a healthy ratio. This revision will lead to hiring of not minimum 500000 new faculty members into the system. In addition to addressing faculty shortage the quality of faculty also need to be addressed. by 2022 a set of national professional standard for teachers (NPST) will be created that will determine all aspects of teacher career management including tenure, continuous professional development efforts, salaries, promotions and other recognitions. The policy also talks about creating performance standards for teachers clearly spelling out the role of the teacher at different levels of expertise and competencies required for that stage.

Catalysing Research Activities:

The National Research Foundation (NRF) proposed by the NEP is likely to create a dedicated focus towards the quality research, including lightening the research funding by making it competitive and also by improving efficiency of funding processes to have more targeted approach towards funding research initiatives. Research activities will be imbibed in the students from their younger age itself.

Improving access and equity through Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes:

Around 40 Lakhs i.e. 11% of learners of the total higher education enrolments in India are through ODL. Pandemic issue also leads in improving of ODL system, and it is likely to see a significant increase in the coming years which will help double India's Gross Enrolment

Conclusion:

The new national education policy 2020 is a good policy as it aims at making the education system holistic flexible multi-disciplinary align to the needs of 21st century and the 2030 sustainable development goals. The NEP is a product of an extensive exercise that strives to achieve 100% gross enrollment ratio by 2030. With an aim to create a more inclusive cohesive and productive nation the recently unveiled national education policy 2020 has come a groundbreaking reform by the Ministry of human resource development MHRD. The intent of policy seems to be ideal in many ways but it is the implementation where lies the key to success. Under the NEP 2020, the focus areas of the reforms seek to cultivate 21st century skills among students including critical thinking problem solving creativity and digital literacy. As technological advancements rapid globalisation and unprecedented developments such as the covid-19 pandemic – transform the future of work, the existing education models need to be reassessed in keeping with the challenges of the global economy.

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