



"Navigating Change: NEP's Role in transforming Higher Education in India"

Osceen Mishra

(Research Scholar, DSMNRU, Lucknow)

Abstract

This paper explores the transformative role of the National Education Policy (NEP) in reshaping higher education within India. Amidst global shifts and local imperatives, the NEP stands as a pivotal framework aimed at modernizing educational practices, fostering innovation, and enhancing accessibility across the spectrum of higher education institutions. Through a critical analysis of policy objectives, implementation challenges, and anticipated outcomes, this study highlights how the NEP seeks to address longstanding structural deficiencies while aligning with contemporary educational paradigms. By examining the features, opportunities and challenges faced this research elucidates the NEP's potential to redefine educational landscapes, empower diverse stakeholders, and propel India towards a knowledge-driven future.

Keywords: National Education Policy-2020, Higher Education, Opportunities, Challenges

Introduction

The landscape of higher education in India is undergoing a profound transformation catalysed by the National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020. In a world increasingly shaped by rapid technological advancements, global interconnectedness, and evolving socio-economic dynamics, the NEP represents a strategic response aimed at revitalizing and future-proofing India's educational institutions. This policy marks a significant departure from the status quo, advocating for a paradigm shift towards learner-centric education, multidisciplinary approaches, and holistic development. At its core, the NEP endeavours to address longstanding challenges while harnessing emerging opportunities to propel India towards becoming a knowledge economy. By emphasizing flexibility, creativity, and critical thinking, the policy aims to equip learners with the skills necessary to thrive in a complex and interconnected world. Moreover, it seeks to bridge existing divides in access and quality, ensuring that educational opportunities are inclusive and equitable across diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Central to the NEP's vision is the reconfiguration of higher education institutions into vibrant centers of learning and innovation.

Key reforms include the promotion of research and development, integration of technology in teaching and learning processes, and the establishment of robust governance structures that empower institutions to chart their own courses of excellence. These initiatives are not only intended to elevate academic standards but also to foster a culture of entrepreneurship, collaboration, and societal engagement among students and educators alike.

This research paper aims to critically examine the NEP's transformative agenda within the context of higher education in India. Through a comprehensive analysis of policy objectives, implementation strategies, and potential impacts, this study seeks to elucidate how the NEP is poised to reshape educational landscapes, enhance institutional capacities, and redefine the future trajectory of higher education in the country. By synthesizing empirical evidence and stakeholder perspectives, this paper endeavours to contribute insights into the ongoing evolution of India's educational framework and its implications for stakeholders within and beyond academia.

Review of literature

B.L. Gupta (2013) explains the meaning, dimensions and characteristics of effectiveness in the context of schools. The authors also discuss changes in the environment outside of school and their impact on studies at home. This article is based on literature review, the author's experience and expert opinions. According to the author of the successful institution, it has a vision, values, beliefs, ethics, standards, leadership, participation in management and administration, independent, challenging goals, continuous improvement and an attitude of learning together.

Jo Ritzen (2016) In this study researcher talks about university freedom and funding in university education because it affects graduates' abilities and the quality and quantity of research. This article shows that politics affects the degree of independence of public universities in a country. The results show that there is significant evidence that increasing independent training will deliver better educational outcomes and have a direct impact on labor market product development.

Purna Prabhakar Nandamuri (2015) researched the current situation of school self-management and for this purpose a sample of 188 secondary schools was selected from the "stratified sampling" technique. A survey was administered and interviews were conducted to collect primary data. Chi-square test and simple percentage were used to analyse the data. The results show that there is not much management and financial management, and there is partial freedom in the work area. Respondents from various management schools mostly preferred freedom in all areas (management, education and finance). But there are strong calls for full independence in unaided schools.

Kalyani (2020) explored the impact of NEP-2020 on various stakeholders including students, parents, and teachers. The study revealed that students are influenced by multiple factors when selecting their subjects, prioritizing the enhancement of knowledge and skills to improve employability prospects. Parents were noted

to play a crucial role by providing valuable guidance in subject selection and extending financial support to their children.

Aithal and Aithal (2020) conducted a comparative analysis between the educational policies of 1986 and NEP-2020, highlighting innovative practices proposed in the latter. Their study discussed the potential implementation of these practices and their merits, particularly focusing on their effects on teacher education, professional education, and private educational institutions.

Thakur and Kumar (2021) identified several challenges in the implementation process of NEP-2020. Their study emphasized the necessity for a well-designed action plan to ensure successful implementation of the policy in both its intended framework and practical application.

Rupesh S. Wankhade (2021) this research paper focuses on the importance of higher education as it is an important aspect in deciding the economy, social status, technology adoption, and healthy human behavior in every country. Improving GER to include every citizen of the country in higher education offerings is the responsibility of the education department of the country government.

NEP and Higher Education

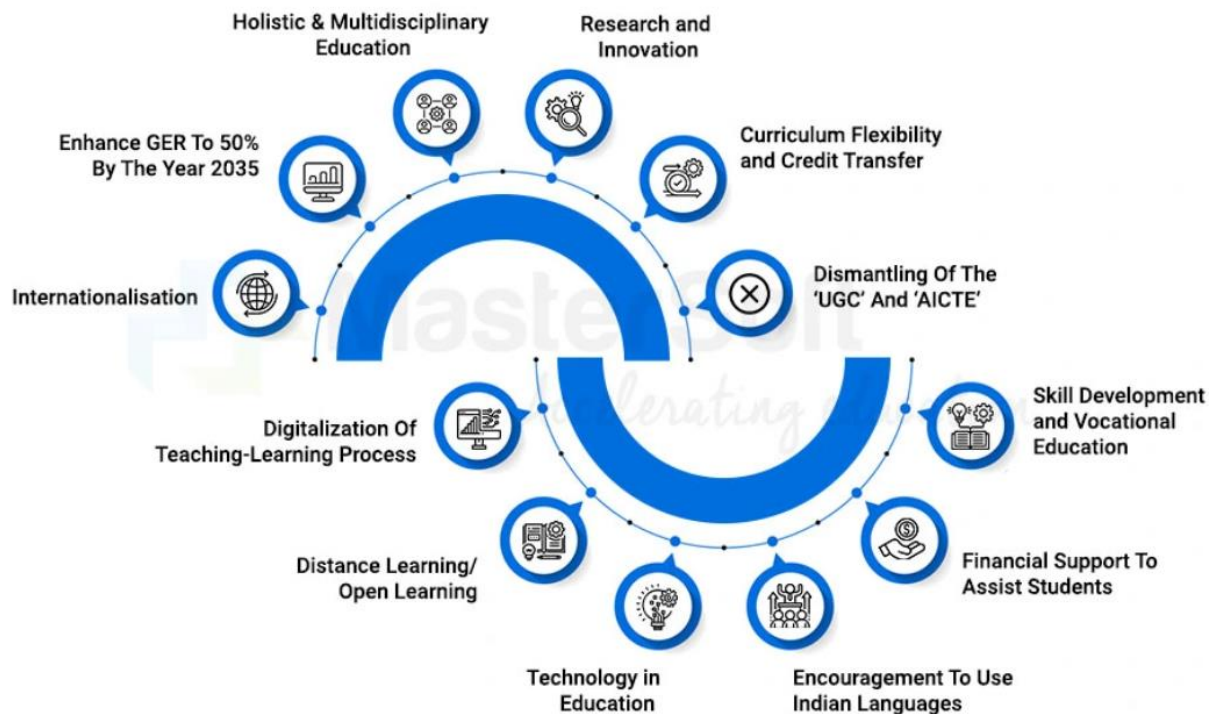
The National Education Policy 2020 aims to overhaul India's higher education system, emphasizing interdisciplinary studies, the introduction of new subjects, and greater flexibility in course offerings to provide students with diverse opportunities.

It seeks to enhance the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education, offer multiple entry and exit points, and enable students to align their course selections with their interests and aptitudes. Additionally, the policy proposes the establishment of a National Research Foundation, a National Education Technology Forum, and the expansion of Higher Education Institutions nationwide.

This holistic approach aims to create an adaptable education system that meets the demands of the 21st century. The key highlights of NEP for Higher Education is as follows:

- The policy aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% by 2035.
- Around 5 crore seats to be added in higher education. The policy proposes the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund and promote research in all disciplines.
- The policy recommends the establishment of a single regulator for higher education, called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), to replace multiple regulatory bodies.
- The policy proposes the introduction of a four-year multidisciplinary undergraduate degree, with multiple exit options and opportunities for skill development.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to promote the use of technology in higher education.

- The policy recommends the development of a credit-based system for degree programs, which would enable students to pursue multiple degrees or programs simultaneously.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Academic Credit Bank (NAC-Bank) to facilitate the transfer and accumulation of academic credits across institutions.



Source: National Education Policy 2020 For Higher Education (iitms.co.in)

Features of NEP 2020 for higher Education

The NEP 2020 for Higher Education introduces several key features aimed at transforming India's educational landscape:

1. **Interdisciplinary education:** The policy advocates breaking down rigid boundaries between academic disciplines, encouraging universities to offer multi-disciplinary courses that allow students to explore diverse subjects and fields.
2. **Flexible curriculum and credit transfer:** It recommends a flexible curriculum where students can choose courses aligned with their interests and career goals. Additionally, a credit-transfer system facilitates seamless movement between institutions without loss of academic credits, enhancing mobility and academic achievement.
3. **Research and innovation:** To position India as a global hub for research and innovation, the NEP 2020 emphasizes increasing investment in research and technology. It proposes establishing a National Research Foundation to support research activities across disciplines.

4. **Vocational education and skill development:** Recognizing the importance of vocational education, the policy integrates vocational training into mainstream education. It promotes apprenticeships and work-integrated learning programs to equip students with practical skills relevant to the job market.
5. **Online education:** Acknowledging the role of technology in education, the NEP 2020 advocates for developing robust digital infrastructure. It encourages universities to offer online courses and blended learning models to enhance access and cater to diverse learner needs.
6. **Inclusivity and equity:** Addressing disparities, the policy prioritizes inclusivity by providing equal opportunities to disadvantaged groups, including girls, students from low-income families, and those with disabilities.
7. **Internationalization:** The NEP 2020 promotes international collaborations, attracting global students and facilitating exchanges with foreign universities. It proposes a National Education Exchange Programme (NEEP) to foster educational exchanges across states.
8. **Autonomy and accountability:** To improve quality, the policy advocates greater institutional autonomy and decentralized decision-making. It stresses the importance of accountability, transparency, and regulatory mechanisms to uphold educational standards.

These features collectively aim to modernize higher education in India, making it more responsive to global trends and better equipped to meet the evolving needs of students and society.

Merits of NEP 2020 for Higher Education

The National Education Policy 2020 introduces several merits for higher education:

1. **Flexibility:** The policy adopts a flexible, student-centric approach, allowing students to select their courses, pace of learning, and mode of delivery.
2. **Multiple Entry and Exit Points:** It provides opportunities for students to enter or exit courses at different stages, enabling them to pursue varied educational paths based on their interests and circumstances.
3. **Investment in Research:** There is a strong emphasis on building a robust research and innovation ecosystem through increased investment in research and development, fostering collaborations between academia and industry.
4. **Job-Oriented Training:** Vocational training is integrated into higher education to equip students with practical skills necessary for the job market.
5. **Teacher Development:** NEP 2020 prioritizes comprehensive teacher training programs to enhance teaching quality and promote continuous professional development among educators.
6. **Technological Integration:** The policy aims to leverage technology to enhance teaching and learning experiences, including the development of online courses, open educational resources, and e-learning platforms.

These measures collectively aim to modernize India's higher education system, making it more adaptable to the evolving needs of students and society while enhancing educational outcomes and employability.

Challenges of NEP 2020 for Higher Education

Challenges of the National Education Policy 2020 for higher education include:

1. **Overhauling the Higher Education System:** The NEP 2020 proposes a comprehensive restructuring of India's higher education system, aiming for greater efficiency and effectiveness. However, stakeholders express concerns about potential challenges and disruptions during the implementation phase.
2. **Financing Initiatives:** The policy introduces ambitious initiatives like establishing new universities, restructuring the education framework, and promoting online education. Securing adequate funding for these initiatives is crucial, and the government must explore sustainable financing models that do not burden taxpayers further.
3. **Bridging the Digital Divide:** While promoting online education to enhance accessibility, especially in remote areas, the policy confronts the persistent challenge of bridging the digital divide. Many regions in India still lack reliable internet infrastructure, posing barriers to equitable access to online learning opportunities.
4. **Faculty Development:** NEP 2020 emphasizes enhancing faculty development and training programs to elevate teaching standards. However, there exists a shortage of qualified faculty in various disciplines, necessitating significant investment and time to build the requisite teaching capacity.
5. **Equity Concerns:** Despite its aim to foster equity and inclusion in higher education, there are apprehensions that certain initiatives, such as the proposed four-year undergraduate program, might inadvertently disadvantage students from marginalized backgrounds or those with disabilities. Addressing these concerns will be crucial to ensure that all students benefit equitably from the policy's reforms.

These challenges underscore the complexity and scale of the reforms envisaged by the NEP 2020, requiring strategic planning, robust implementation strategies, and continuous stakeholder engagement to navigate effectively towards achieving the policy's objectives.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 represents a significant milestone in India's journey towards revitalizing its higher education system. By focusing on modernization, innovation, and increased accessibility, the NEP aims to address longstanding structural challenges and adapt to evolving global educational trends. Through this study, we have identified key policy objectives, explored implementation challenges, and discussed potential outcomes, illustrating how the NEP endeavours to reshape educational practices and empower stakeholders across diverse backgrounds. While recognizing the opportunities presented by the NEP, including interdisciplinary education, enhanced research focus, and technological

integration, it is crucial to acknowledge the accompanying challenges such as funding requirements and the need for robust implementation strategies. Ultimately, by navigating these complexities effectively, the NEP holds the promise of fostering a dynamic educational landscape in India that fosters knowledge creation, innovation, and equitable access, thereby contributing to the nation's socio-economic development in the 21st century.

References

National Education Policy 2020 - Wikipedia

NEP_Final_English_0.pdf (education.gov.in)

pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1847066

Devi, P. (2022). Study of NEP 2020: Indian Higher Education. *Innovative Research Thoughts*, 8(4).

Joshi, J. NEP 2020 and Transforming Higher Education: A Comprehensive Analysis.

Kalyani, P. (2020). An empirical study on NEP 2020 [National Education Policy] with special reference to the future of Indian education system and its effects on the Stakeholders. *Journal of Management Engineering and Information Technology*, 7(5), 1-17.

SAHU, D. N. Challenges and Salient Features of NEP 2020: Higher Education.

Vanita, D. (2024). A Roadmap For Internationalization Of Higher Education AsPer Nep 2020 Framework. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(5), 9100-9103.

Ranjan, S. P. (2023). Role of NEP 2020 in Transforming Higher Education in India.

Gupta, B. L., & Choubey, A. K. (2021). Higher education institutions–some guidelines for obtaining and sustaining autonomy in the context of NEP 2020. *Higher Education*, 9(1).

Chakradev, D. K., & Inamdar, V. D. K. (2022). Need for Compulsory Teacher Education Courses for Higher Education Faculty for Effective Implementation of NEP 2020. *Sumedha Journal of Management*, 11(2), 68-73.

KC, M. T. (2022). Impact of national education policy 2020 on higher education. *Sumedha Journal of Management*, 11(2).

Aithal, P. S., & Aithal, S. (2020). Analysis of the Indian National Education Policy 2020 towards achieving its objectives. *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences (IJMTS)*, 5(2), 19-41.

Lakshmi, V. V., & Ugandhar, T. Problems, Obstacles, and Suggestions for Improving the Quality of Higher Education Institutions in NEP.

Agarwal, A. 7 Role of NEP 2020 towards the Digitalization, Privatization and Globalization of Higher Education in India. *Navigating the Digital Landscape*, 96.

Pathak, R., & Pathak, R. (2021). National Education Policy 2020: can it improve faculty motivation and academic outcomes in India. *International Research Journal of Modernization in Engineering Technology and Science*, 3(4), 573-579.

Prakash, S., & Kumari, A. (2023). IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY-2020 TOWARDS ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES.

Kamala, K. (2020). NEP An Uncertain Future for Indian Higher Education. *vuqla/kku vUosf" kdk*, 7.

Singh, K. K. (2023). IMPLEMENTATION OF NEP-2020 IN HIGHER EDUCATION ITS PROBLEMS AND REMEDIES. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 23(2), 274.

Rachna, P. S. Innovation in Higher Education: A Study of NEP 2020.

- Umachagi, A. E., & Selvi, R. (2022). National education policy 2020 and higher education: A brief review. *Sumedha Journal of Management*, 11(2), 19-26.
- Inamdar, S., & Parveen, S. (2020). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020-Galvanizing the Rusting Higher Education in India. *Vidyawarta Interdisciplinary Multilingual Peer Reviewed Journal*, September, 9.
- Sarta, A. (2020). National Education Policy (NEP 2020): An analytical insights into the reforms it will bring in school and higher education in India. *International Journal of Advance Research in Management and Social Science*, 11(3), 103-113.
- Chauhan, A. K., & Ahmad, I. (2024). The Attitude of Experts in Higher Education Towards New NEP-2020. *Virtual Lifelong Learning: Educating Society with Modern Communication Technologies*, 26.
- Wankhade, R. S. (2021). Higher Education and NEP-2020. *International Journal of Researches in Social Science and Information Studies*, 8(1), 51-56.
- Gupta, B. L., & Choubey, A. K. (2021). Higher education institutions—some guidelines for obtaining and sustaining autonomy in the context of NEP 2020. *Higher Education*, 9(1).
- Singh, S. U., & Baghel, S. S. (2020). Insights and perspectives of NEP in transforming Higher Education in India. *International Research Journal of Humanities and Interdisciplinary Studies (IRJHIS)*, 1(2), 30-41.
- Yenugu, S. (2022). The new National Education Policy (NEP) of India: will it be a paradigm shift in Indian higher education?. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 26(4), 121-129.
- Varughese, R. (2017). National policy on education and higher education. *Higher Education for the Future*, 4(2), 158-165.
- Kurien, A., & Chandramana, S. (2020). Impact of new education policy 2020 on higher education. *Atma Nirbhar Bharat: A Roadmap to Self-reliant India*.
- Smitha, S. (2020). National Education Policy (Nep) 2020-Opportunities and Challenges in Teacher Education. *International Journal of Management (IJM)*, 11(11), 1881-1886.
- Yadav, M. S., & Yadav, M. K. (2023). Implicit Impact of English Language Pedagogical Enhancement Policies in Higher Education Under the Indian NEP 2020: Challenges, Curriculum, Approaches, Opportunities, and Implementations. *American Journal of Education and Technology*, 1(4), 1-12.