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NEP: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Dr. Jaykar S. Macwan

ABSTRACT:

It is essential for the economic and social growth of a nation that its “primary & secondary education systems” & its “higher education system”, conform to a clearly outlined and prospectively focused education policy. Educators in various countries adjust their methods according to the specific requirements of their pupils at each stage of their education—from early childhood to high school and university. “National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on July 29, 2020”, outlines objectives that are intended to be achieved by the country of “India’s future educational system”. The previous “National Policy on Education from 1986” has been replaced by this more recent policy, which has taken precedence. This strategy lays forth a comprehensive plan for the schooling of Indian youngsters, from kindergarten all the way through college, taking into account urban & rural settings. Objective of strategy - to perform a comprehensive overhaul of “India’s educational system”. The government made it abundantly plain not long after the idea was presented that English would not be abandoned as the medium of instruction in favour of a regional language. This statement was made not long after the proposal was presented. It is the intention of the “NEP’s language policy” to serve just as a broad framework, with the implementation of the policy being left up to the discretion of individual governments, groups, and educational institutions. Education is a topic that is frequently discussed on the Concurrent List in India. In its first iteration, “New Education Policy 2020” has been approved for implementation. The whole Indian higher education system should be in compliance with the “national educational policy”.

KEYWORDS: Higher Education, National Education Policy 2020, NEP-2020, Overview & Analysis, Implementation Strategies, Approaches, Challenges, Opportunities of NEP 2020.

BACKGROUND

“National Education Policy of 1986” is expected to be succeeded by the “National Education Policy of 2020 (NEP 2020)”. “The consultation process for the New Education

Policy” got underway in January of 2015, and it was directed by a committee that had been constituted by the previous “Cabinet Secretary T. S. R. Subramanian”. According to their report from June 2017, the committee that was chaired by an ex-chairman of the “Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)”, Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, filed their sketch of the “New Energy Policy” in 2019. Later on, the “Ministry of Human Resource Development” made the “Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019” announcement&it was followed by a series of meetings with members of the public. The T74 New Equipment Plan was drafted on a total of 484 pages. As part of the lengthy consultation process that the Ministry of Water Resources undertook in order to draught the drought policy, it received over two million recommendations from over “two and a half million Gram Panchayats, six thousand blocks, six thousand Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and 676 districts”.

INTRODUCTION

India now has over “845 universities and approximately 40,000 higher education institutions (HIEs)”, which serve as an illustration of the general high level of fragmentation, which operates across the country, in addition to the numerous smaller HEIs that are connected to these larger institutions. When compared to the expected trend towards a multidisciplinary form of higher education, it has been found that over forty percent of such smaller-sized institutions are functioning using a single programme approach. In addition, it has been noticed that only 4% of colleges enrol more than 3,000 students annually as a result of geographical disparities in educational opportunities, moreover, more than 20% of institutions register fewer than 100 new students each year, making it impossible for them to improve the kind of education they provide. This is due to the fact that they provide a lower quality education. The following are some of the factors that contribute to fragmented character of “India’s higher education system: It is anticipated that India would have a GDP of \$11 trillion by the year 2032”, which will place it as the third largest economy in the world. It is quite obvious that the country’s economic expansion to a level of 10 trillion dollars will be driven by its knowledge resources rather than its natural riches. The government that is in power in India at the moment has made the decision to revamp the educational system in the country by putting in place a brand new “National Education Policy 2020”. This is consistent with the plan that the “Prime Minister” has outlined, which is for India's future success by employing the Fourth Industrial Revolution as a driving force, and the aforementioned action. The recently formulated “National Education Policy 2020” has as its overarching objective the provision of educational opportunities of an exceptionally high standard for each and every one of India’s residents, with the intention of assisting in our country's metamorphosis towards a knowledge society that is both equitable and prosperous.

CONCERNS OF 2020 NEP

The major concerns for implementation of NEP 2020 are as under:

- Separation of pupils into their respective majors at an early age.
- The present low gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 25% may be directly attributed to the fact that not enough people can afford higher education. This is especially true in economically depressed regions.
- Fewer pupils enrolling in higher education due to a lack of creativity from teachers and institutions.
- Inadequate tools for faculty and administrative advancement and career management.
- Most Institutes don’t do enough to advance knowledge and provide new approaches to old problems.
- Low quality administration and leadership in universities.

- A rigged system that benefits fraudulent educational institutions at the expense of legitimate ones that are stifled in their ability to innovate.

NEP 2020 APPROACHES

1. **Subject Matter and Curriculum:** The NEP's goal is to make preschool and kindergarten part of the regular school day, moving away from the current 10+2 arrangement. The "NEP 2020" also emphasises streamlining the curriculum to allow room for critical thinking and, ultimately, produce citizens equipped with the tools they'll need to thrive in the twenty-first century. Therefore, it is necessary to reorganise all areas of teaching and learning in order to achieve these objectives. One of the obstacles to a smooth transition is adapting curricula to the "National Curriculum Framework". Teachers also need to revise their assessment criteria for course material and update their course materials accordingly.
2. **Redesigning the Curriculum and Providing Improved Resources for Teachers:** The educational course is going to need some changes because of the new policy. However, in order to establish a trouble-free shift to the new educational model, institute & relevant authorities will need to train instructors and get familiar with the pedagogical requirements. This will ensure that the curriculum can be adequately provided. In addition, the focus should be transferred from the teacher to the student in order to cultivate the young person's potential for collaborative problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making. According to one piece of study, there will be over 250 million children attending primary and secondary schools in India by the year 2030. Over seven million extra teachers are going to need to be hired so that schools can keep up with the rising number of pupils. Due to the fact that teachers are among the lowest paid professionals in India, it would be challenging to execute education that is based on experience as well as concepts. Before there is an increase in the salary of teachers, it will be impossible to put the NEP 2020 into operation.
3. **Use of Technology:** "The National Education Policy Act of 2020" puts the focus on the application of technology in the education of young people. Establishing digital infrastructure such as digital classrooms, remote expertise-driven teaching models, and augmented reality/virtual reality tools to fill gaps in physical teaching and laboratory facilities is a very difficult task because the majority of schools were not designed to accommodate these technologies. In addition to this, not all schools have the financial resources necessary to make investments in digital infrastructure. In addition, the use of digital teaching tools is not feasible in rural areas of the country where Internet connectivity is nearly nonexistent. As a result, the government need to work towards improving the fundamental infrastructure that serves as the basis for the digital infrastructure worldwide.
4. **Examination Structure:** The examination structure of the NEP is designed to reflect the program's emphasis on formative rather than summative evaluation for learning purposes. The continuous monitoring of student performance is the primary objective of the revised assessment system, which has as its primary purpose the facilitation of said monitoring. In spite of this, schools and instructors need to come up with inventive evaluation procedures and assignments in order to keep up with the continual assessment requirements. The utilisation of technology as well as engagement from both students and teachers is required for these initiatives. According to a poll that was conducted not long ago, 75% of India's 1.5 million schools receive funding and operation from the public sector. The remaining eighty percent of private schools are referred to as "budget private schools," a category that includes more than four hundred thousand establishments. Consequently, it is challenging to develop a system of continuous evaluation in these classrooms due to this reason.

DIFFICULTIES OF 2020 NEP

1. The opening of one new university every week requires a significant amount of work. In India, there are currently more than a thousand different colleges and universities to choose from. One of the goals that have been publicly stated for the strategy is to increase the “Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education” by a factor of two by the year 2035. In order for us to accomplish this objective, we will need to launch a brand-new organisation once per week for the next 15 years. The ongoing challenge that comes with inaugurating a new institution each and every week.
2. The introduction of changes to our educational system reveals similarly worrying statistics. “The National Education Policy 2020” has set as its primary objective the re-enrolment of two different categories of children who are not currently attending school. No matter how you slice it, accomplishing this goal within the next 15 years will require the opening of around 50 new schools every single week.
3. The Covid era presents considerable challenges from a financial point of view; this endeavour is not for those who lack courage or determination. The National Education Policy 2020 forecasts that by the year 2020, yearly spending on education would increase from 4.6% of GDP to 6% of GDP, which is equivalent to about INR 2.5 Lakh cores. The monies will be put to good use in the construction of K-12 and higher education buildings around the country, the employment of talented educators, and the financing of continuing expenditures such as providing students with free breakfast. The lockdowns that have occurred as a result of the Covid-19 virus have had a disastrous effect on the economy, tax revenues by the government are at an all-time low, and the budget deficit was already substantial before the virus was revealed, which makes the timing of this policy challenging.
4. The rate of execution has slowed down as a result of recent attempts to enhance both the economy and healthcare. Economists have been arguing for big stimulus packages that would sum to double digit percentages of GDP notwithstanding the load that this would have on the Treasury Department.
5. The realisation of the increasing the number of qualified educators in the K-12 sector is a good development, as is the policy’s objective of a complete structural re-designs of the curriculum. This would be considered a positive development. On the other hand, we will be unable to successfully provide this curriculum in its entirety in the absence of teachers who are well-versed in and acquainted with the pedagogical prerequisites. Many of the modifications to the curriculum require significant mental adjustments on the part of the instructors as well as the parents.
6. The fact that the “National Education Policy 2020” places such a strong put more emphasis on learning across disciplines is a very encouraging step towards the much-required cultural shift in higher education that will be brought about by inter-disciplinary teaching and learning. Over the course of several decades, universities, particularly those located in India, have been more compartmentalised and departmentalized. The “National Education plan 2020” consists of a number of different projects, all of which are intended to broaden and improve the educational options available to Indian residents.

The purpose of this research on the National Education Policy for 2020 is to:

- (1) With the goal of highlighting & summarising the policies of the recently adopted “NEP 2020 higher education system”.
- (2) In order to evaluate the present “Indian education policy” against the goals of the “National Education Policy 2020”.
- (3) A search for the novelties of the “2020 national policy on higher education”.

- (4) The goal of this study is to foresee how “NEP 2020 would affect India’s higher education” landscape.
- (5) To argue in favour of “NEP 2020’s policies for higher education”.
- (6) Suggestions for making “NEP 2020” even more successful in achieving its objective.

Goals and Schedules The policy’s primary goals and the dates by which they must be achieved are as follows:

- By 2040, the complete policy will have been put into effect. - Achieve a Gross Enrolment Ratio of 100 percent for all grades pre-K through 12 by the year 2030.
- By the year 2030, educators should be ready for new types of evaluation.
- Equal academic requirements for all schools.
- The goal is to ensure that all third graders have a firm grasp on basic literacy and numeracy skills.
- Adopting a universal pre-K programme by the year 2030. At least half of all students should enrol in a vocational programme by 2025.

NEP 2020 OPPORTUNITIES

“New Education Policy” begins with the purpose of the “Education Policy-1986” that was never completed. In 1986, when the NEP was first conceived, India was a very different place. A great deal of improvement may be seen, both in terms of accessibility & justice, throughout the course of time. While attendance in primary and secondary schools, as well as colleges and universities, has expanded, overall enrolment in basic education has reached almost “universal levels (GER: 26.3%)”. There has been, nevertheless, a reduction within the standard of education provided by the public schools, which has been followed by a movement of people from more affluent socioeconomic levels. As a direct consequence of this, restrictions were eased, which created a number of problems. Despite historically low returns on investment, remuneration structures in the public sector have been progressively increasing over the past few decades.

1. School Education

- Change from a 10+2 configuration to a 5+3+3+4 layout. The pre-primary years will now be incorporated into the new pedagogical and curricular framework. As this was previously glossed over in formal education policy texts, the change is welcome.
- For Early Childhood Education (ECCE), NCERT will be creating a whole new curriculum and instructional framework. Short-term and long-term programmes are outlined in the policy to foster the growth and education of Anganwadi educators. An encouraging trend towards systematising ECCE provision.
- Make sure that by third grade, you have a firm grasp of basic arithmetic and reading. The “Ministry of Education (MOE)” will work to improve this by creating a national mission to oversee the initiative in a missionary capacity.
- A distinct “national book policy” to expand library availability & reading motivation at all levels. In India, public libraries are few; it would be great if “public education policy” helped to foster this.
- There will be a nutritional upgrade to lunches, and regional options will be offered wherever feasible. Eggs remain a divisive issue in policy debates, therefore governments often avoid addressing the topic altogether. Dropout prevention measures developed in coordination with “Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment”.
- The part on the language used in the classroom tends to get more emphasis than it deserves. However, the clause is still quite open, so as to avoid any possible issue. This

adaptability possible outcome of a combination of factors, including a commercial drive towards English & paternal excellence concept.

- Policy also encourages studying other languages and does not favour one language over another. Also suggested for secondary education are the languages of Korea, Japan, Thailand, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, and Russia.
- The phrase “socio-economically disadvantaged groups” (SEDGs) is new to policy. Technical writing has not before made use of this as a social category. Although the word minority is only mentioned briefly, following parts stress identities such as caste, ethnicity, disability, and transgender. Despite the policy’s technical flaws, it calls for a large number of programmes specifically geared at these communities in an effort to boost enrolment and retention.

2. Higher Education:

The notion has to be considered in light of the present atmosphere at public universities and the controversy that just occurred at prestigious schools. The state has been steadily chipping away at the autonomy of universities in recent years. Not so long ago, the government of India let loose with its peculiar brand of brutality on one of the most prestigious public colleges in the whole nation. It is common practise to pick university presidents and provosts based more on political considerations than on the candidates’ credentials as educators, researchers, or administrators. The article places a strong emphasis on regulatory independence; nevertheless, if by “independence” they mean “financial independence,” there is reason for alarm.

- To achieve this “imagined” independence, the University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education (UGC and AICTE) would need to be abolished. The Higher Education Commission of India’s new structure relies on the principle of functional specialisation.
- Education is not a commodity, as the policy contends. However, this same scope welcomes international students and academic institutions to India. The number of private universities offered by Indian establishments has increased dramatically. If the objective was to encourage competition, that makes sense. But including it in the sentence doesn’t change anything.
- It makes sense to put emphasis on forward-thinking curricula, and it is also important to establish a distinct organisation whose sole purpose is to facilitate the integration of technology in educational settings.
- It’s also a good idea to establish a national research foundation. There is little hope, however, if these positions are occupied by people with ideological goals.
- It will soon be legal for universities in India to open campuses in other countries; the gulf markets are a particularly promising location for this trend. The Indian Diaspora has a significant need for high-calibre educational services.

CRITICISM OF NEP 2020:

Here is a rundown of some of the complaints that have been raised, or might be raised, about the NEP 2020.

- Parliamentary review, debate, and approval of the NEP were sidestepped. This appears like a hurried attempt to make a political statement, given that it was introduced when parliament was not in session because to COVID-19. Furthermore, this is not the first instance of its kind. Over the last six years, lawmakers have been routinely excluded from high-stakes debates, making it difficult for them to provide critical feedback on legislation and make amendment proposals.

- The policy is a vision statement, but it doesn't include the poor, women, or caste/religious minorities, and it doesn't address a major problem with education that has persisted for a long time: unequal access to it. Neither a detailed plan nor unified approaches for carrying out this visionary plan now exist.
- There is a lack of detail around key milestones and the financial commitment needed to put this strategy into action. Example: "The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in the Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest." There is no unambiguous promise to which the government may be held.
- Though the policy does not mandate the use of the three-language formula, it is written in such a way as to give little room for manoeuvre for the students, instructors, and schools. It also goes against the ruling of the Supreme Court. It's hard not to think of the 1965 anti-Hindi movement, when people protested the federal government's plan to make Hindi the official language of the country, when reading this. South Indian political parties regard this as an attempt by the Modi government to impose Hindi on states where it is not spoken. Of course, this is despite the fact that the centre has made clear that it will not impose any language on any state, and that each state would be free to make its own choice.
- The RTE Act is not included in the NEP 2020, despite the fact that it is essential to achieving universal education. The RTE does not have any means of connecting elementary and secondary schooling. The central government or state is under no obligation to comply. As the RTE forum noted, in a statement: "The final policy talks about the universalization of school education from 3-18 years, without making it a legal entitlement. For this reason, neither the federal nor state governments are compelled to make this a reality. Universalization is a daunting task without the RTE Act.

CONCLUSION:

The degree of higher education that is made available to the population of a country is a significant factor in determining the health of that country's economy, social status, level of technological adoption, and human behaviour. Higher education possibilities should be made available to every member of a country's population, and it is the responsibility of the government to make that happen. This objective is being worked towards by the National Education Policy of India 2020, which is allowing higher education to be provided by the private sector while also maintaining tight controls to ensure that all higher education institutions continue to provide a quality education. This will lead to an increase in the supply of higher education in India, as well as an improvement in the quality, attractiveness, and affordability of this education. NEP-2020 encourages merit-based admissions with free-ships and scholarships, merit-based & research-based continuous performers as faculty members, merit-based & proven leaders in regulating bodies, and strict monitoring of quality through biennial accreditation based on self-declaration of progress through technology-based monitoring. This is done so that the organisation can accomplish its goals by the year 2030. Either the affiliated colleges of all current universities will transition into completely autonomous institutions with the capacity to confer degrees in their own right, or else they will transition into being constituent colleges of their respective parent universities. The National Research Foundation is an autonomous institution that awards financial support for innovative research projects in the areas of basic science, applied science, as well as the social sciences and the humanities. The higher education system will eventually become more student-centred as a result of the opportunity to pick and choose between obligatory and optional courses within and between areas. Educators have the freedom to pick and choose from a variety of techniques to teaching and assessing student learning while still operating within the confines of the policy framework that has been developed. The 2021–2022

academic years will mark the beginning of these alterations, which are expected to continue until 2030, when the first discernible consequences are expected to become apparent.

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