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## NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY-2020: CHALLENGES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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### **Abstract:**

*As education leads to economic and social progress hence well-defined and futuristic education policy is essential for a country at school and college levels. National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and was approved by Indian cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020, aims to address the many growing developmental requirements of our country. The policy aims revision and restoring of all aspects of the education structure to create a new system that is aligned with the ambitious goals of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. This paper highlight NEP 2020 and study on challenges in the higher education system. Various innovations and predicted implications of NEP 2020 on the Indian higher education system along with its merits are discussed. Finally, some suggestions are proposed for its effective implementation towards achieving its objectives. It was found that one of the main objectives of NEP 2020 is to increase student's enrolment in all educational institutions such as elementary school, professional and higher education by 2030.*

**Keywords:** Higher Education, National Education Policy 2020, NEP-2020, Challenges.

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### **Introduction:**

Change is the endless rule of the universe. The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge with various dramatic scientific and technological advances, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence. Many unskilled jobs worldwide may be taken over by using machines hence there is a need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science, in aggregation with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The growing appearance of epidemics and pandemics will also call for concerted research in infectious disease management and development of vaccines. As a result, there is a need of multidisciplinary learning. As India moves towards becoming a developed country there will be a growing demand for humanities and art for that education must move towards less content, and more towards learning with critically and problems solving thinking. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics. So as to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded and fulfilling to the learner. Education must build character and enable learners to be ethical, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment. The gap between the current state of learning outcomes undertakes major reforms that bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early school education to higher education.



The National Education Policy 2020 is the third education policy of independent India. In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development had drafted the new education policy to enhance the quality of education, promote innovation and research. Under the new education policy of 2020, the educational system has been fixed by 2030. The curriculum will be divided on the basis of the educational system of 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 in place of the currently running 10 + 2 model. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education with vocational training in both rural and urban India. Shortly after the release of the policy, the government clarified that no one will be forced to study any particular language and that the medium of instruction will not be shifted from English to any regional language. There are around 400 million Indians today in school-going or college-going age groups. The vision of the Policy is to install among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, in thought, spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills and values to fulfil the requirement of global India.

Higher education (HE) plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal wellbeing in developing India. Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. As India moves towards becoming a knowledge economy and society, more and more young Indians are likely to aspire for higher education. India will have the highest population of young people in the world over the next decade, and our ability to provide high-quality educational opportunities to them will determine the future of our country. The 21st century requirements are quality higher education must to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. It must enable an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level, and also develop character, ethical and Constitutional values, scientific temper, creativity, across a range of disciplines including sciences, arts, humanities, professional, technical, and vocational subjects.

### **1.1 Major Problems in HE:**

Some of the major problems currently faced by the higher education system in India include:

- a severely disorganized higher educational ecosystem;
- less emphasis on the development of cognitive skills and learning outcomes;
- a rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialisation and streaming of students into narrow areas of study;
- limited teacher and institutional autonomy;
- lesser emphasis on research at most universities and colleges, and lack of competitive peer reviewed research funding across disciplines;
- large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education.

The policy's vision includes the following key changes to the current system:

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- moving towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages;
- moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education;
- moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy;
- revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences;
- reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service;
- establishment of a National Research Foundation to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges;
- governance of HEIs by high qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy;

The attainment of such a holistic and multidisciplinary education, the flexible and innovative progressions of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education[1]. As part of a holistic education, students at all HEIs will be provided with opportunities for internships with local industry, businesses, artists, crafts persons, etc., as well as research internships with faculty and researchers at their own or other HEIs/research institutions, so that students may actively engage with the practical side of their learning and, as a by-product, further improve their employability. HE will focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres; technology development centres; centres in frontier areas of research; greater industry-academic linkages; and interdisciplinary research including humanities and social sciences research. Given the scenario of epidemics and pandemics, it is critical that HEIs take the lead to undertake research in areas of infectious diseases, epidemiology, virology, diagnostics, instrumentation, vaccinology and other relevant areas. HEIs will develop specific hand holding mechanisms and competitions for promoting innovation among student communities [2]. The NRF will function to help enable and support such a vibrant research and innovation culture across HEIs, research labs, and other research organizations.

### **1.2 Challenges of NEP 2020:**

- Opening universities every week is an enormous task: In India today around 1,000 universities. One of the goals of the policy is doubling the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education by 2035 which mean for the next 15 years every week we must open one new university. Opening one University every week is a massive challenge.

- Funding is a big challenge in the Covid era: The National Education Policy 2020 predicts an increase in education spending from 4.6% to 6% of GDP, which amounts to INR 2.5 lakh crores increase per year. This money will be spent for building schools and colleges across the country, appointing teachers and professors, and for operational expenses.
- Requirement of Trained Teachers: In school education, the policy predicts a structural re-design of the curriculum a very welcome step. In order to deliver this curriculum effectively, trained teacher's needs. Many of the curricular changes require substantial mindset shifts on the part of teachers, as well as parents [3].
- Inter-disciplinary higher education demands for a cultural shift: In higher education, the National Education Policy 2020's focus on inter-disciplinary learning is a very welcome step. Universities, especially in India, have for decades been departmentalized.

The National Education policy 2020 has many initiatives to improve the quality and the broadness of the education system in India

### **1.3 Opportunities of NEP 2020 in Higher Education**

There has been continuous erosion of university autonomy by the state. Political appointments of university leaders who are at best the instruments of state, as opposed to being focused on teaching, learning, research or administration. Though the document highlights regulatory autonomy, it would be worrisome if the document also meant financial autonomy.

- This 'imagined' autonomy is envisaged through replacement of UGC (University Grants Commission) and AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education). New body Higher Education Commission of India is based on the idea of division of functions and separation of activities[4].
- Policy also argues against commercialization of education. This allows for foreign universities to come to India in the same breadth. There has been significant increase in number of private universities by Indian providers. If the idea was to increase competition, it makes sense.
- Focus on futuristic curriculum and a separate body dedicated to focus on integrating technology in institutions National Research Foundation is a great idea for higher education. However, if these spaces get filled by individuals who are driven by ideological agendas, there is a large change is expected.

### **Conclusion :**

NEP 2020 is a document that has been perceived with a lot of hope and optimism in bringing about a model change in higher education system of the country. On the part of the Indian government a lot of changes would be required to be brought to the curriculum of



higher education including trained teacher for receiving skilled manpower. Higher education is an important aspect in deciding the social, economic, technology adoption, and healthy human behaviour. National Education Policy of India 2020 achieve such objective with the implementation of innovative policies. By encouraging merit-based admissions with scholarships, research based continuous performers as faculty members and strict monitoring of quality through accreditation based on self-declaration of progress through science and technology-based monitoring, NEP-2020 is expected to fulfil its objectives by 2030. Faculty members get independence to choose curriculum, methodology, pedagogy and evaluation models within the given policy framework. An impartial agency National Research Foundation will fund for innovative projects in priority research areas of basic sciences, applied sciences, and social sciences & humanities. These transformations will continue so that the first level of transformation is expected too visible in 2030.

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