

IMPACT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY-2020 ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr.R.G. Pawar

Director DLLE-SUK

Mobile No:-706654605

Mrs. Asha Mane

Research student, Department of Commerce, Mamasahab Mohol College, Erandawane, Pune

Email-id:- ashamane90@gmail.com

Mobile no:- 9049001004

Abstract: - The National Education Policy announced by Government of India (NEP 2020) was a welcoming change and surprising Nationals to all of us surrounding the world due to the challenges posed by Covid19 pandemic. The announcement of NEP 2020 was purely surprising to all. The changes that NEP 2020 has recommended were something that many educationists never saw coming. Though the education policy has impacted school and college education equally, this paper mainly focuses on NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education. This paper also focuses on important features of NEP and analyses how they affect the existing education system.

Keywords: Challenges, Education, National Education Policy.

Introduction: - Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and Promoting National Development providing equal access to quality 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 world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. Education Policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities both the ‘foundational capacities of literacy and numeracy and higher –order’ cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving – but also social, ethical, and emotional capacities and dispositions.

The main problems faced by the Indian higher education system includes enforced separation of qualifications, early specialization and student streaming into restricted research areas, less focus on research at most universities and schools, and lack of competitive peer-reviewed academic research funding and large affiliated universities leading to low levels of undergraduate education. Institutional restructuring and consolidation aim to end the fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary, creating well-rounded and innovative individuals, and transforming other countries educationally and economically, increasing the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, including vocational training, from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.

Holistic and multidisciplinary education should strive in an integrated way to improve all human capacities-mental, cultural, social, physical, emotional, and moral. In the long term, such a comprehensive education shall be the method for all undergraduate programs, including those in medical, technical, and vocational disciplines. Optimal learning environments and support for students offer a particular approach including adequate curriculum, interactive pedagogy, consistent formative assessment, and adequate support for students.

Previous Policies: - The implementation of previous policies on education has focused largely on issues of access and equity. The unfinished agenda of the National Policy on Education 1986, modified in 1992 (NPE 1986/92), is appropriately dealt with in this Policy. A major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education.

National policy :- To bridge the gap between the current state of learning outcomes and what is required, a National education policy was recently released by the Ministry of Education (MoE), known as the National Education Policy 2020. The National education policy is the first education policy of the 21st century to address our country’s various growing developmental aspects. This policy proposes revamping and revising all aspects of the education structure,

like its regulation and governance, to make a National system aligned with the goals of 21st-century education. Changes in the education policy are a major way to provide the nation with better students, professionals & better human beings. The government of India introduced a National policy to globalize education from preschool to the secondary level. NEP 2020 aims to replace the present 10+2 system with the latest 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years.

Objectives of the study:-

The primary objective of this research is to study the impact of National Education Policy 2020 on higher education. The study also outlines the salient features of NEP and analyses how they affect the existing education system.

Research methodology: - This research is a descriptive study. The necessary secondary data was collected from various websites including those of Government of India, magazines, journals, other publications, etc. This data was then analysed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

Salient features of NEP 2020:-The salient features of NEP 2020 were formulated based on the foundational pillars of Access, Quality, Equity, Affordability and Accountability. The revised policy is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It focuses on remolding India into a global knowledge superpower by making school education more holistic, multidisciplinary, flexible, and suited to 21st-century requirements and aimed at bringing out the individual capabilities of each student.

1. Ensuring universal access at all levels of school education:- National Education Policy 2020 focuses on ensuring universal access to school education at all levels. Some of the ways to achieve this are:

- Infrastructure support
- Tracking the progress of students and their learning levels
- Facilitating different modes of learning, including both formal and in-formal education modes
- Introduction of counsellors and well-trained social workers into the schooling system.
- Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes for classes 3, 5 and 8 through the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools.
- Secondary education programmes equivalent to classes 10 and 12.
- Vocational education courses/programmes from preschool to Grade.

2. The National NEP has been introduced with an aim to formalize changes in the system from school level to college/university level. Keeping in mind the developing scenario, education content henceforth, will focus on key-concepts, ideas, applications and problem-solving angles. The National Education Policy is expected to bring positive and long-lasting impact on the higher education system of the country. The fact that foreign universities will be allowed to open campuses in India is a commendable initiative by the government. This will help the students experience the global quality of education in their very own country.

3. The policy of introducing multi-disciplinary institutes will lead to focus on every field such as arts, humanities and this form of education will help students to learn and grow holistically. Thus, students will be equipped with stronger knowledge base.

4. The introduction of single common entrance test is another positive step which will reduce the stress of multiple competitive exams and ease off the pressure of preparing for so many of them. It will also ensure a level playing ground for all student applicants going forward.

5. Establishing Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is definitely a robust idea to store the academic credits that students earn by taking courses from various recognized higher education institutions. A student can earn scores by completing a course and these will be credited to the ABC account. One can then transfer these credits if he/she decides to switch colleges. If a student ever drops out for some reasons, these credits will remain intact which means he/she can come back years later and pick up from where the student had left.

6. The National higher education regulatory structure will ensure that distinct administrative, accreditation, financing, and academic standard-setting roles are performed by separate, autonomous, and empowered bodies. These four structures will be established as four independent verticals within a single umbrella institution, India's Higher Education Commission (HECI).

7. There are a lot of reforms and National developments which have been introduced by NEP in the higher education sector. Single regulatory body for higher education:

8. Tech- based option for adult learning through apps, TV channels: Quality technology-based options for adult learning such as apps, online courses/modules, satellite-based TV channels, online books, and ICT-equipped libraries and Adult Education Centres, etc. will be developed.

9. E-courses to be available in regional languages: Technology will be part of education planning, teaching, learning, assessment, teacher, school, and student training. The e-content to be available in regional languages, starting with 8 major languages

10. Foreign universities to set-up campuses in India: World's top 100 foreign universities will be facilitated to operate in India through a National law. According to the HRD Ministry document, "such (foreign) universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India."

ANALYSIS OF IMPACT OF NEP ON HIGHER EDUCATION:-

- Regulatory System of Higher Education: A significant change in NEP 2020 is the proposal to set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), as an umbrella body for higher education, excluding medical and legal education. HECI is expected to have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard-setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation. To have uniformity in education standards, a single umbrella body was always a requirement and this has been a vision of numerous educationists. This is considered as the right step in streamlining education policy. However, to ensure quality of higher education, institutes must be measured based on relevant parameters like research, industry linkages, placements and academic excellence.
- The concept of "empowerment and autonomy to innovate" is one of the key features in NEP 2020 which supports a "phasing out" strategy from Affiliated Colleges to Autonomous Institutions. The increased flexibility offered to autonomous institutions also gives hope in curriculum enrichment. It also says that with appropriate accreditations, Autonomous degree granting Colleges could evolve into Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities, if they so aspire.
- The announcement of setting up Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) in the country gives more hope. These institutions will be at par with the existing IITs and IIMs and will aim to showcase multidisciplinary education for the Indian students.
- Another important change the NEP 2020 suggests that the National Testing Agency will serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for undergraduate and graduate admissions and fellowships in Higher Education Institutions. The high quality, range, and flexibility of the NTA testing services will enable most universities to use these common entrance exams - rather than having hundreds of universities each devising their own entrance exams - thereby drastically reducing the burden on students, universities and colleges, and the entire education system. It will be left up to individual universities and colleges to use NTA assessments for their admissions. It also surely helps the students to easily transfer their degrees and credits to universities abroad.
- Internationalization at home: NEP 2020 also allows foreign universities and colleges to come to India and this brings out a challenge for the native institutions to improve the quality of education provided by them. The Indian higher education sector is buzzing all around as the opportunity of paving the way for foreign universities to set up campuses in the country. India has one of the largest networks of higher education systems in the world, with more than 900 universities and 40,000 colleges. But GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) of India in higher education is 26.3%, which is significantly low when compared to other BRICS

countries like Brazil (50%) or China (51%), and very much lower when compared with European and North American nations which would be more than 80%.

- India must achieve a significant growth in the area of global higher education for obtaining a sustainable economic growth, which should not be driven by natural resources, but by knowledge resources. As per the reports, India will need another more than 1,500 National higher education institutions by 2030 to accommodate a huge inflow of students, that's why the Indian government wants to promote FDIs (Foreign Direct Investment) and open up the ECB (External Commercial Borrowing) route to strengthen the capital investment for the education sector.
- The ministry is also trying to boost India's image as an education center because already more than 7 Lakhs of Indian students are studying abroad. So, the intention of this policy is that, allowing foreign universities will enable world-class education available locally at a significantly lower cost without travelling and will considerably reduce the human capital migrating to other countries for study and job prospects.
- According to the different global surveys, cross-border education is beneficial for the economy and brings a wider level of global awareness, culturally perceptive, and competitiveness. Foreign collaborations enable local institutes to design their curriculum in alignment with international pedagogy and offer a diverse portfolio of subjects and specialization to students.
- More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education: The NEP 2020 claims that, a holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields.
- Environment education will include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living.
- Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also lifeskills; lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of a holistic education. As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.
- The structure and lengths of degree programmes: In the context of the National Education Policy 2020 scheme, any undergraduate degree in any institution will be of duration of three or four years. One can leave the degree within this period. Any educational institution will have to give to the student a diploma degree after the student completes two years of study, a degree after the student completes three years of study and a certificate to those students who complete one year of study in any professional or vocational course of their choice.
- The Government of India will also help in establishing an Academic Bank of Credit for storing the academic scores digitally. This will enable the institutions to count the credit at the end and put it in the degree of the student. This will be helpful for those individuals who might have to leave the course mid-way. They can start the course later on from where they left off and not start from the beginning once again.
 - NEP 2020 says that Higher education institutions will be given the freedom to start PG courses there may be some difficulty in designing One Year PG Degree for students who have completed 4 Year UG Degree and a Two Year PG Degree for students who have completed 3 Year UG Degree.

CONCLUSION:- The NEP introduces a whole surprise of changes and reads largely as a very progressive document, with a firm grasp on the current socio-economic landscape and the prospect of future uncertainty. Education for a National generation of learners has to essentially engage with the increasing dematerialization and digitalization of economies, which requires a completely National set of capabilities in order to be able to keep up. This seems to be an even more vital prerequisite now, with the trend towards digitalization and disruptive automation being quickened by the pandemic. Overall, the NEP 2020 addresses the need to develop professionals in a variety of fields ranging from Agriculture to Artificial Intelligence i.e. data science. India needs to be ready for the future and the NEP 2020 paves the way ahead for many young aspiring students to be equipped with the right skillset.

With policy initiatives of government like Digital India, Skill India and the National Industrial Policy to name a few, in order to effect a coherent structural transformation. Hence, policy linkages can ensure that education policy addresses to and learns from Skill India's experience in engaging more dynamically with the corporate sector to shape vocational education curriculum in order to make it a success. NEP has reassuringly provisioned for real-time evaluation systems and a consultative monitoring and review framework. This shall empower the education system to constantly reform itself, instead of expecting for a National education policy every decade for a shift in curriculum. This, in itself, will be a remarkable achievement. The NEP 2020 is a defining moment for higher education. Effective and time-bound implementation is what will make it truly path-breaking.

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