

A fresh outlook towards Higher Education

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Abstract

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) is a visionary policy that aims to revolutionize India's educational environment over the next 20 years, from 2020 to 2040. This report outlines the key elements of the NEP reforms for higher education, vocational education, and research & research training, including preliminary steps taken since the launch of NEP. We are living in the golden era where India's global significance is ever-expanding. Hence, global integration and cross-border involvement in the field of education is becoming increasingly crucial. Considering this, the article provides a rapid analysis between the education system of countries like Australia and Singapore and the Indian education system after the NEP 2020 will be implemented. The findings of this article show that the majority of the Indian education system's long-standing difficulties are expected to be resolved with the implementation of the NEP 2020. The emphasis has changed away from learning ideas and toward getting practical experience, which is expected to help students compete on a global scale.

Concept

Various factors indicate the necessity for significant educational transformation. Learners must acquire not only what they know, but also the skills, attitudes, and values that will enable them to be capable individuals. For this to happen, students must actively participate in and be inspired by their learning.

Universal high-quality education is an exceptional way forward in developing and maximizing our country's skills and resources for the growth and betterment of individuals, ultimately contributing

to the greater good of the society, the country, and the world. The potential problems that the policy aims to solve- surged citizens' expectations about the New Education Policy, 2020. With the remarkable changes happening in almost all the parameters of education, the NEP 2020 was successful in leaving an imprint of a high potential roadmap for the on Higher Education. Higher education is an integral stage of education for personal growth of students, as they step out as students from their comfort zones. This phase teaches them how to think critically and solve difficulties. The enhanced cognitive and logical abilities make them better persons capable of

resolving real-life situations.

Higher education institutions that provide high-quality education will be empowered with more autonomy under the NEP 2020. Thus, with the goal of revolutising higher education, NEP 2020 has proposed a wide range of improvements.

Let's delve deeper!

Everyone is aware that the primary pre-requisite of the schooling system is to ensure that children are enrolled in and are regularly attending school. Through initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (now the Samagra Shiksha) and the Right to Education Act, India has made remarkable strides in recent years in attaining near-universal enrolment in elementary education. The data for subsequent grades, on the other hand, suggests some major concerns.

The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), one of the statistical metrics used in the education sector, is used to determine the number of students enrolled in school at various grade levels. Despite the enormous increase in the number of Higher Education Institutions, India's GER is 26.3 percent, which is lower than the global average.

In India, successful completion of the 12th grade at the higher secondary school level is required for admission to further education, leading to a ripple effect of lower volume of college graduates. Several factors, including economic imparities, gender inequality, linguistic barriers, and socio-economic compulsions, also contribute to a decline in the number of students in higher secondary grades. This shortfall continues to be a key obstacle to improving GER in higher education.

While countries like Australia and Singapore, focus on a holistic development, Indian education has long emphasized on theory-based education. In Singapore, more focus is placed on creative thinking and collaborative learning, while schools are given more flexibility in developing their own curriculum and specialty. In general, an Australian student will practice the ideas first before moving on to the theory. When it comes to the Indian educational system, on the other hand, the theoretical framework takes precedence over the practical idea of learning.

The NEP 2020 identified following major problems in higher education of India:

- system fragmentation;
- rigid separation of disciplines;
- less emphasis on learning outcomes;
- limited access in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas;
- limited teacher and institutional autonomy;
- less emphasis on research; poor governance and leadership;
- a lack of opportunities for meritorious faculty; and
- an ineffective regulatory system

Considering the aforesaid scenario as a top priority, a comprehensive and coordinated effort will be undertaken to promote universal accessibility and affordability of educational opportunities for all children in the country in order to bring them under the ambit of holistic growth.

As a result, the National Education Policy 2020 stated a target of 50% GER by 2030. NEP 2020

aspires to do this via restructuring the curriculum and pedagogy, as well as reforming assessments. While it appears excellent on paper, implementation on the ground will necessitate severe measures.

The target of 50% GER fixed by the government has left everyone pondering over the feasibility of the target. This statement underpinned several questions with different parties giving different opinions.

Are the targets too high? Are they achievable?

The NEP-2020 initiative intends to increase the gross enrolment rate (GER) in higher education. To accomplish this, 3.5 crore extra seats in India's higher education institutions will be added by 2035.

In addition, the following steps are aimed to be executed:

- By 2030, the NEP aims to establish at least one multidisciplinary HEI in or near each area of the nation, both in the public and private sectors, with regional or local, or both, languages as the medium of teaching.
- The government intends to expand the number of students to thousands in order to maximize the use of resources and facilities. The GER will improve to 50% with the provision of higher education possibilities, including vocational education, in every district.
- These universities will also provide Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and online courses with suitable certification. We shall make every effort to give high-quality degrees and diplomas.

- Efforts shall be made to recognize and reward the achievements of students from the SC, ST, OBC, and other Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).
- The National Scholarship Portal will be enhanced to help, develop, and track the success of scholarship recipients.
- Private higher education institutions will be pushed to provide more free courses and scholarships to their students.

NEP-2020 aspires to provide students with world-class education while fostering moral values and job oriented skills in the youth. But to achieve this ambitious target, India would require 3.3 million additional instructors in higher education by 2035, based on a teacher pupil ratio of 1:15, a 235 percent increase from the present availability of 1.4 million.

This will be a major challenge for a country like India since teaching is not the most sought-after career. As a result, one major task for the country would be to create a pool of dedicated and qualified teachers eager to work for the country's upliftment and to impart adequate training to them. Teachers in Singapore receive around 100 hours of training every year, which can be used as a benchmark for training our instructors. India now aims to compete at the global level. With the goal to make Indian education more effective, NEP 2020 proposes to convert the three-year undergraduate study framework into a four-year pattern with various entrance and exit points, making higher education more suitable for subsequent employment.

The undergraduate degree can be undertaken in a duration of 3 or 4-year duration, with multiple

exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications provided on successful completion of set duration and credits, example, a certificate after 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme. The four-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's course, on the other hand, is the preferred alternative since it allows students to experience the entire spectrum of holistic and multidisciplinary education, as well as a concentration on major and minor disciplines based on their preferences.

NEP-2020 proposes to establish an academic credit bank similar to some foreign educational systems, wherein students can transfer between institutions as per their needs and obtain credits depending on their work. These credits can be accumulated, transferred, and applied toward the ultimate degree awarded. Multiple entrance and departure points in academic programmes offered by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) would remove strict limits and open up new opportunities for students to select and learn the subject(s) of their choosing.

The government intends to develop an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) to allow Transfer of Credits for lateral entrance to other institutes. The ABC is an academic service mechanism designed to make it easier for students to become academic account holders. With proper "credit transfer" methods, it will enhance the flexibility of the curricular framework and interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary academic mobility of students throughout the country's HEIs.

This will be a favourable position for Indian students, and they will be able to compete with

students from countries such as Australia, where, under the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF), students are given flexibility, choice, and better career planning as long as their student visa requirements are met.

Furthermore, the suggested multiple entry and exit criteria will achieve the following goals:

- Remove strict barriers and open up new opportunities for learners
- Reduce dropout rates and boost GER
- Offer innovative combinations of disciplines of study, allowing you various entrance and exit points
- Students would be given curriculum flexibility and unique course alternatives in addition to discipline-specific specializations

While numerous academics have applauded the move, some have expressed their displeasure and concerns They have voiced the concern that given the flexibility of exit options, families from weaker socioeconomic groups may use this option excessively, even for no justifiable cause, lowering the likelihood of a student getting further education.

The government should address this issue and make provisions to lessen the risk of increased dropouts that only advantage can be gained by using the exit alternatives.

With this NEP 2020, the government anticipates a similar rate of evolution.

The establishment of an apex institution to foster a strong research culture and research capability across all fields in higher education is next on the

agenda.

- The government plans to build multi-disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) on par with Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) to improve both the quality and capacity of academic research.
- To promote 'Online Education and Digital Education,' a specialized unit will be established to enable the development of digital infrastructure, digital content, and to address e-education demands at both the school and higher education levels.
- Furthermore, 'Open and Distance Learning' will be made more relevant through credit-based recognition of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), bringing these courses up to level with the top quality in-class programmes.
- The government will also establish an autonomous entity, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), to serve as a forum for the open exchange of ideas on the use of technology to improve learning, evaluation, planning, and administration.

educational experience with the integration of technology in the classroom. NEP 2020 should make certain amendments and emphasize the role of technology in a student's education in order to develop a technologically enabled future workforce without delay. Moreover, to ensure proper implementation and administration, the Higher Education Commission of India will have four independent verticals (shown in figure 1).

The HECI will have four independent verticals – National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) primarily for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard setting, learning outcomes, and a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) will be formulated by the GEC. There will be Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding. Another component will be the National Accreditation Council (NAC), which will serve as a 'meta-accrediting body' for accreditation.

It has been stated that an ambit of optimal learning environment and support for students under Higher Education in the NEP 2020 will be ensured.

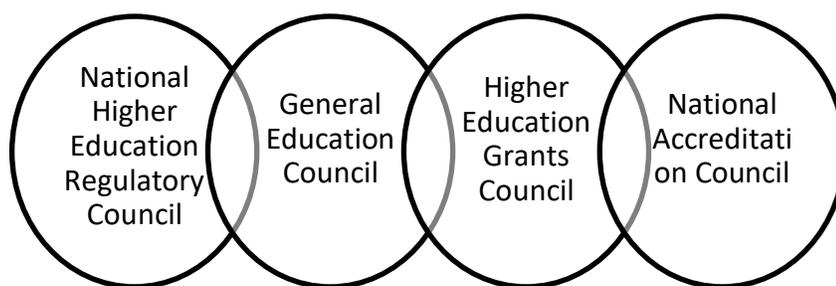


Figure 1. Four Verticals of Higher Education Commission of India.

Since the advent of technology, the world has been swiftly changing. Technology and education can no longer be separated. Many countries, such as Australia, are committed to improving the

Proposing a rationalized institutional architecture, Higher education institutions will be transformed into large, well resourced, vibrant multidisciplinary institutions providing high

quality teaching, research, and community engagement. The definition of the university will allow a spectrum of institutions that range from research-intensive universities to teaching-intensive Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges," said the statement from the HRD.

According to the new policy adopted by the Union Cabinet last month, the affiliation system will be phased away over 15 years, and a stage-by-stage process for providing graded autonomy to institutions would be formed through a transparent system of graded accreditation. Over time, each college is expected to evolve into either an autonomous degree-granting college or a constituent college of a larger university.

It can be stated that the NEP-2020 will support a broader and more dynamic society and economy by promoting research and innovation. The National Research Foundation (NRF) will serve as a catalyst for the country's research and innovation. The NRF will nurture, promote, and support academic research, as well as honour great research. Furthermore, professional education will be an important component of the higher education system. It would be focused on critical and interdisciplinary thinking, discussion, and a variety of other activities. Good governance will be a future discussion subject since each HEI will be managed by an Independent Board, ensuring a clear line of authority and accountability within the institution.

Conclusion

The new strategy tries to reduce low literacy by addressing all the underlying issues. It intends to establish a comprehensive approach to higher

education in order to prepare our young for employment. The emphasis has changed from improved marks on paper to personal development.

The effectiveness of this new education policy will be determined by how well it is executed. The goals are ambitious, and the road ahead is not without bumps, but India can attain them with focused and concerted efforts. This will empower India to have the world's finest workforce with excellence in a variety of fields. The shortcomings of Indian education are expected to be resolved to a wide extent, with the implementation of this policy.

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