

**IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS**

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**Abstract:**

The National Education Policy (NEP 2020) announced by Government of India was a welcoming change and fresh news amidst all the negativities surrounding the world due to the challenges posed by pandemic COVID-19. The announcement of NEP 2020 was purely unpredicted by many. 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 article mainly focuses on NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education. This paper also highlights the prominent features of NEP and analyse how they affect the existing education system.

**Keywords:**

National Education Policy, Higher education, HECI, HEI, Academic Bank of Credit

**1. Introduction**

There are a set of policies formulated by the Government of India to promote education amongst Indian people. National Education Policy (NEP) is basically a comprehensive framework to guide the development of education in the country. The urge of such a framework was first realized in the year 1968 which was then revisited and revised in the year 1986. This was again reviewed and updated in 1992 as per the need of the hour. Since then, the entire world and the overall sector has witnessed massive changes. Hence, in the year 2020, the government decided to revise these policies to make them more relevant and compelling for the education ecosystem.

The NEP 2020, which was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on July 29, 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. The policy is a comprehensive framework for elementary education to higher education as well as vocational training in both rural and urban India. Keeping in mind the developing scenario, education content henceforth, will focus on key-concepts, ideas, applications and problem-solving angles.

Quality higher education must aim to develop such individuals who are excellent, thoughtful and creative. It must enable a person to study one or more specialized areas of interest at an in-depth level and develop character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, service spirit etc. It is emphasizing to inculcate skills of the 21<sup>st</sup> century across a range of fields, including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, personal, technological and vocational subjects. The new education policy brings some fundamental changes to the current education system to make it more effective resulting in betterment of all the stake holders. The key highlights of NEP 2020 are; multidisciplinary universities and colleges, revamping student curricula, pedagogy, evaluation, support for enhanced student experience, establishing a National Research Foundation to support excellent peer-reviewed work and effectively seed study at universities and colleges.

The main problems faced by the existing Indian higher education system includes enforced separation of qualifications, early specialization and student streaming into restricted research areas, less focus on research with lack of competitive peer-reviewed academic research funding and large affiliated universities leading to low levels of undergraduate education. Here, in the paper the study mainly focuses on provisions of NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education. It also highlights the prominent features of NEP and investigates how they affect the existing education system.

## **2. Objectives**

The NEP 2020 has many initiatives to improve the quality and the broadness of the education system in India. Following are the main objectives considered in the present paper to study the impact of NEP 2020 in Higher Education:

- To highlight the prominent features of NEP 2020 and
- To analyze how these features of NEP 2020 affect the existing education system.

### **2.1 Prominent Features of NEP Related to Higher Education**

The new NEP 2020 has been introduced with an aim to formalize changes in the overall education system from elementary to higher level of education. Moreover, the proposed NEP is expected to bring positive and long-lasting impact on the higher education system of the country. To allow foreign universities to have campuses in India is a commendable initiative taken by the government of India. This will help the students experience the global quality of education in their very own country and develop them to compete globally. The policy of introducing multi-disciplinary institutes will lead to a renewed focus on every field such as arts, humanities which will help students to acquire knowledge in the field of their interest. Thus, students will be equipped with stronger knowledge base. Some of the prominent features of NEP 2020 related to Higher Education are:

- The institutions like University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Medical Council of India (MCI), Dental Council of India (DCI) etc. that monitors and controls the Higher Education will be merged with Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single regulator for Higher Education Institution (HEI).
- National Accreditation Council (NAC) will replace the current Accreditation Institutions such as NAAC and NBA.
- National Research Foundation (NRF) will be established for funding research in universities and colleges.
- The existing fragmented HEIs will be consolidated into Multidisciplinary Universities (MU) and Multidisciplinary Autonomous Colleges (AC) with the campus having more than 3,000 students. The Timeline to become multidisciplinary is by 2030 and to have 3,000 and more students by 2040.
- Research-intensive Universities and Teaching-intensive Universities will be the two types of Multidisciplinary Universities.
- Every existing College will develop into either degree granting Autonomous College or migrated into a Constituent College of University and becomes fully a part of the University.
- There will be an increase in Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in HE including Vocational education from current 26.3% (in 2018) to 50% by 2035.
- Higher Education Institutions which deliver the highest quality will get more incentives from the Government.
- All existing affiliated Colleges will eventually grow Autonomous degree-granting Colleges with the mentoring support of affiliated University by improving and securing the prescribed accreditation level.
- The various nomenclatures used currently such as deemed to be university, affiliating university, central university, affiliating technical university, unitary university, etc will be replaced by 'University' after fulfilling the required criteria as per norms.
- At UG and PG level research will be included. Also, there will be a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach
- Pedagogy in HEIs will focus on communication, presentation, discussion, debate, research, analysis, live projects and interdisciplinary thinking.
- Establishment of An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) which would digitally store the academic credits of all registered candidates earned from various recognized HEIs (SWAYAM & ODL mode) that can be taken into account while awarding degrees by the college or university

- There is possibility of four years Bachelor degree with multiple exit options; one to two years Master's degree based on the number of years spent in Bachelor degree as four or three respectively and option to do Ph.D. for four years Bachelor degree with research.
- There is also possibility of framing two years Master's degree with full research in the second year or one year's Master's degree for four years Bachelor degree holders, and five years integrated Bachelor/Master's degree holders.
- All HEIs will focus on research and innovation by setting up; Start-up incubation centres; Technology development centres; Centres in frontier areas of research; Centre for Industry academic linkage; Interdisciplinary Research Centres including humanities and social sciences research etc.
- There will be a student-centered teaching & learning process instead of teacher centered teaching model.
- Choice Based Credit System is revised by an innovative and flexible Competency Based Credit System.
- Examination system will change from high-stakes examinations (Semester End system) towards a more continuous and comprehensive evaluation examination system.
- In order to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being of students there, will be professional, academic and career counseling centres with counselors in all HEIs.
- All HEIs will develop, support, and fund for topic-centred clubs and activities organized by students with the help of faculty and other experts as needed, in the area of science, mathematics, poetry, language, literature, debate, music, sports, etc.
- Encouragement for Online Distance Learning (ODL) courses as a part of degree programmes to include the credit system.
- In the view of achieving a global standard of quality, Degree programmes may contain physical class teaching, Online teaching components and ODL components with the ratio of 40:30:30.
- HE quality will be improved to global quality level to attract more international students and the credits acquired in foreign universities will be counted for the award of a degree.
- National Scholarship Portal will be strengthened and expanded to help the financial needs of merit based students. Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of freships and scholarships to their students.

## **2.2 Comprehensive Analysis of Impact of NEP on Higher Education**

### **2.2.1 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. This will usually bring out a question that what will happen to the present University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)? HECI is aiming at reforming the higher education sector; the bill will separate the academic and funding aspects of the sector. According to the new bill, HECI will not have any financial powers. The funding processes which were handled by the UGC will be taken care by the Ministry of Education (MoE) presently known as the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). However, this change is expected to clear the regulatory mess in India's Higher Education system.

HECI is expected to have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulations, General Education Council (GEC) for standard-setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for assessment and accreditation of HEIs.

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, performance of institutes must be measured based on relevant parameters such as research, industry linkages, placements and academic excellence, etc. If HECI play the pivotal role and can manage in a defined way, the benefits to its biggest stakeholder - the youth of India, might be significant.

### 2.2.2 Graded Accreditation and Graded Autonomy

One of the key features in NEP 2020 is the concept of “empowerment and autonomy to innovate” which supports a “phasing out” strategy from Affiliated Colleges to autonomous institutions. The autonomous institutions are offered with increased flexibility which gives hope in curriculum enrichment. It also mentions 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 hope for becoming India rich as was in past. These institutions will be at par with the existing IITs and IIMs and will aim to showcase multidisciplinary education for the Indian students.

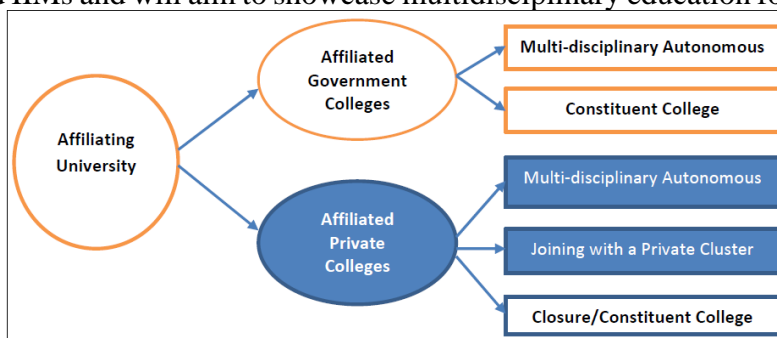


Fig. 1 : Fate of Affiliated Colleges while implementing NEP 2020

### 2.2.3 Common Entrance Examination for all colleges

NEP 2020 suggests another important change with providing autonomy National Testing Agency (NTA) to serve as a premier and expert sole organization to conduct common entrance examinations for undergraduate, graduate admissions and fellowships in Higher Education Institutions keeping the examination optional.

The high quality, wide range and flexibility of the NTA services will enable most universities to use these common entrance examinations rather than having hundreds of universities each devising their own entrance examinations. It will drastically reduce the burden on students, universities and colleges and eventually the entire education system. It will be choice of individual universities and colleges to use NTA assessments for their admissions. It will surely help the students to easily transfer their degrees and credits to universities abroad.

### 2.2.4 Internationalization at home

NEP 2020 also allows foreign universities and colleges to have campuses in India which will bring out 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, Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) 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%.

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. Therefore, the intention of this policy with allowing foreign universities will enable world-class education available locally at a significantly lower cost without travelling. Also it 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 curricula in alignment with international pedagogy and offer a diverse portfolio of subjects and specialization to students.

### 2.2.5 More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

The NEP 2020 claims that, a holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings including intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral capacities in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals that



possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across. It includes arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. The NEP 2020 envisions one large multidisciplinary Higher Education Institution (HEI) in or near every district by 2030.

Towards the attainment of such a holistic and multidisciplinary education, the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based 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. Finally, as a part of 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.

### ***2.2.6 The structure and lengths of degree programmes***

In the context of the NEP 2020 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 resume the course later on. Even though 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 four year UG Degree and a two year PG Degree for students who have completed three year UG Degree.

## **3. Conclusion**

Higher Education is an important aspect in deciding the economy, social status, technology adoption and healthy human behaviour in every country. Improving GER to include every citizen of the country in Higher Education offerings is the responsibility of the government's education department. NEP 2020 is marching towards achieving such objectives by making innovative policies to improve the quality, attractiveness, affordability and increasing the supply by opening up the higher education for the private sector and at the same time with strict controls to maintain quality in every higher education institution.

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