NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY: 2020-CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Volume - II

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FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

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NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (2020): A MUCH-NEEDED INTERVENTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

The NEP-2020 envisions India to become a global knowledge powerhouse in next few decades by giving a special thrust on creating academic leadership and enhancing employability of the university graduates through vocational training. It is trying to make education more inclusive and accessible. However, since implementation of an education policy is a gradual process, for the success of NEP-2020, not only the current government but many successive governments will have to be equally committed. If vocational training is to be integrated with the regular degree programmes, we will have to create infrastructure for vocational training. For making the Indian higher education globally competitive, the universities will have to be free from political influences, and should be academically, administratively and financially autonomous.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Highlights, Implementation, Principles of NEP

Introduction

The National Education Policy 2020 heralds a new era for education in India. We often have seen that while India has been moving ahead, education policy (not to be mistaken for educational institutions) was lacking the dexterity of the times that are changing so fast. Many venerable experts produced volumes of reports before this policy was announced. All these reports came, ignited hope and then received a silent burial. This one survived the silent treatment and has been now announced once again raising a lot of hopes.

The need was ever felt, especially since the fault lines started appearing in the industrial work experience and the limitations of the workforce involved. Students have themselves been complaining about the lack of individualized tutelage and a rigid focus on grades and marks obtained. As we're heading towards an era where big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence might challenge the new jobs being created, it becomes pivotal that we put the focus on building skilled learners who can adapt to the rising changes. The growing concerns

around climate change, sustainable growth and epidemics will be confronted by the leaders of tomorrow for a better future and it is only possible when the educational machinery is equipped with the required tools.

As we are heading towards a post-pandemic era where we will confront newer challenges, we will need leaders and free thinkers. The National Education Policy (2020) opens up new boundaries which were hitherto absent in the policy. The efficacy of any educational change is determined by the investments made now and how such changes are implemented. The question that remains as of now is how well the administrators of accrediting institutions will foresee the changes required as mandated by the new education policy. Will they be able to rationalize the new policy with new parameters, metrics and benchmarks or they will continue to use the old system to measure the new one.

NEP 2020 brings structural changes to the system by opening up multiple possibilities in higher education by dissolving the strictly demarcated degrees with specializations. Students will have much more access to various intersections of courses and hence a more robust and market-driven under-graduate degree. The four-year degree is introduced. India's informal industry runs on unskilled labour who due to unfortunate social problems remain amiss of any formal trade training. The multiple exit points provide for proper training of the students, making them ready for the industry or their own ventures. A special focus has been put on experiential learning and critical thinking, which not only helps the industry but enhances the overall growth of the individual along with everyone involved. One of the major tenets of the NEP (2020) is the focus on the multidisciplinary nature of education for the future. Students have been provided with the choice to opt for various interdisciplinary courses. At such a time when the entrepreneurial spirit has been all-time high, students must be provided with the toolkit which helps them sail across various hurdles. An interdisciplinary education will help not only entrepreneurs but the industry as well.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is:

- To find out the national education policy 2020.
- To find out the basic principles of NEP 2020
- To examine the perception and Challenges of NEP in India.

Framework Analysis

The main intention of the study is to find out the national policy 2020 and its challenges faced by education in India.

The National Education Policy 2020; Principle

The fundamental principles both for the entire education system as well as individual institutions included in it are as follows:

- Recognizing, identifying and fostering the unique capabilities of each student. This is to

be achieved by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic

- Achieving foundational literacy and numeracy by all students by Grade 3 as the highest priority
- Flexibility incorporated in the process of learning so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programs and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests.
- No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc., to eliminate harmful hierarchies among and silos between different areas of learning
- Multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities and sports to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge.
- Emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning for examinations.
- Creative and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation.
- Ethics and human and constitutional values such as empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice

National Education Policy(NEP) & It's Implementation

NEP 2020 has been unveiled, with lot of thought process, optimism, as well as fanfare by Government of India. The proposed delivery of education is extremely broad based, circumspect and all-encompassing. There are no specific compartments, boundaries and divisions. The predicted timespan is significantly prolonged, with nearly 20 + years of duration envisaged. It starts at the grass root; school level goes through the graduate and even higher level of education. Main thrust as contemplated is on multidisciplinary, holistic and broad-based education. There is also main emphasis on vocational education, which is supposed to start earlier in school phase itself. The policy is mainly divided in to three parts of delivery as per the level of the learner and fourth part as the ways to make it happen. The levels are school, higher education and other areas, specifically professional education.

Challenges in the Current Higher Education System

1. Fragmented higher education ecosystem
2. Poor learning outcomes and development of cognitive skills of students
3. Rigid, inflexible separation of disciplines for eg: An arts stream student cannot study any science related subject at HE.
4. Lack of quality higher education in socioeconomically challenged areas
5. Low teacher and institutional autonomy to innovate and excel
6. Inadequate career management and progression for faculty/institutional leaders
7. Lack of research funding across disciplines

8. Sub-optimal governance and leadership of HEIs
9. Poor regulatory mechanism that inhibits growth of excellent and innovative HEIs
10. Large number of affiliations to universities resulting in poor undergraduate performance

A Flexible Higher Education System

The NEP called for a flexible higher education system, the most prominent feature of which is a multiple entry-exit system. For instance, if a student completes only one year of a course, a certificate will be given, those completing two years of higher education will be given a diploma, and graduation degrees would be awarded to those who complete three years.

Conclusion

There are many other issues that will have to be addressed for effective implementation of the NEP–2020. However, many of the issues will automatically get addressed if the autonomy that the policy envisages for higher education, is implemented in spirit and action. The autonomy has been existing on paper even prior to NEP–2020 but it is minimally effective. NEP–2020 implementation will have to reassert minimal regulation but maximal accountability. For making the Indian higher education globally competitive, the universities will have to be free from political influences, and should be academically, administratively and financially autonomous.