

Research Paper

## National Education Policy 2020: Current Issues and Reimagining the Future of Higher Education

Prasenjit Das<sup>1\*</sup>, Gouri Das<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Pranab Barman<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

The New Education Policy 2020, introduced on July 29, 2020, is the first education policy of the twenty-first century. Higher education is crucial in a developing nation like India because it promotes human development. India's higher education system has grown astronomically since its independence. It will aid the country's growth by disseminating specialised information and abilities. This study aims to investigate how NEP 2020 has impacted the higher education system. It also emphasises the problems and difficulties facing India's current higher education system. The data used in this study are secondary data which are descriptive in nature and analysed according to the objective of the study. Here, the researchers have collected the data from various journals, books, reports, internet sites, newspapers etc. The higher education system in India is to be modernised as part of NEP 2020. The NEP 2020 will significantly advance Indian higher education. The NEP 2020 is a very forward-thinking document with a firm understanding of the current socioeconomic landscape and the potential to tackle future challenges. It could turn India into a global hub for education by 2030 if appropriately implemented.

**Keywords:** *National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education System, Impact, Issues and Challenges*

The National Education Policy 2020, introduced on July 29, 2020, is the first education policy of the twenty-first century. To ensure continuous learning, NEP 2020 strongly emphasises five pillars: accessibility, affordability, equity, quality, and accountability (Chandra, 2021). It has been designed to the requirements of the people, who regularly seek new information and skills to succeed in society and the economy. According to the Policy, all dimensions of the educational system, including its governance and regulation, are to be re-examined and restored. The focus of NEP 2020 is to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality education and opportunities for lifelong learning, which result in appropriate jobs and productive employment as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (Inamdar & Parveen, 2020). The NEP 2020 argues for significant changes to

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Scholar, Department of Education, Raiganj University, W.B., India.  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0578-8792>

<sup>2</sup>M.A. in Education, Netaji Subhash Open University, Kolkata, W.B., India.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Raiganj University, W.B., India.  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3783-0097>

\*Corresponding Author

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elementary and secondary education and higher education that will equip the next generation to compete and prosper in the new digital economy (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). The policy offers a complete framework for education from primary through higher education and vocational training in rural and urban India. The policy's goal is to overhaul India's educational system by 2021. It will result in radically altering India's educational system. The policy aims to increase enrollment and foster egalitarian, internationally benchmarked literary trends. The National Education Policy emphasises various dimensions of education, including early childhood education, curriculum and pedagogy reform, changes to the examination process, and teacher preparation initiatives (Aithal & Aithal, 2019).

The New Education Policy's consultation process was started in January 2015 by a committee led by former Cabinet Secretary Subramanian. The committee report states that a panel led by former Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) director Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan submitted the NEP proposal in June 2017, which was finalised in 2019. The Draft New Education Policy (DNEP) 2019 was made public by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) following numerous public meetings for consultation, and there were 484 pages in the Draft. The aim of the NEP 2020 is "National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that directly contributes to the transformation of our country into a vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all" (Goel, 2020, p.15).

Higher education is crucial in a developing nation like India since it promotes human growth. After Indian independence, higher education has grown massively. It promotes the development of the country by disseminating specialised knowledge and abilities. The policy's main objectives are to improve the quality of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and establish India as a hub for international education (Das, 2022). The emphasis is on offering a flexible curriculum via an interdisciplinary approach, allowing multiple exit points in a four-year undergraduate degree, accelerating research, boosting faculty support, and promoting globalisation (Das & Barman, 2023).

### *Objectives of the Study*

The investigators have conducted his study based on the following objectives:

- O<sub>1</sub>**. To highlight the significant changes in the higher education system according to NEP 2020.
- O<sub>2</sub>**. To study the current issues and challenges of the present higher education system.
- O<sub>3</sub>**. To study the impact of the New Education Policy 2020 on higher education.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study was purely descriptive in nature which was based on qualitative work and the data used in this study were secondary. The study only used theoretical information; therefore, content analysis of the accessible materials was performed. Therefore, the researchers have collected the data from various journals, books, reports, magazines, internet sites, newspapers etc.

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Significant Changes in Higher Education System According to NEP 2020**

Higher education's organisational structure will change once the NEP 2020 is fully implemented. Here is a list of some of the significant modifications made in this regard:

### ***Four-year Undergraduate Programme***

The undergraduate programme is now a three-year curriculum. However, the New Education Policy (2020) will offer a four-year undergraduate degree.

- Certificate Programme for the first year.
- Advanced Diploma Programme, second year
- Bachelor's degree in the third year.
- Bachelor's degree with research in the fourth year.

### ***Multiple entry and exit options***

The four-year, interdisciplinary Bachelor's degree offers multiple entry and existing options. For instance, if a student completes only one year of his undergraduate degree before leaving the institution, he or she may enter the programme in the second year rather than begin again (Gupta & Gupta, 2021).

### ***Academic Bank of Credit***

The Academic Bank of Credit is one of the fundamental components of National Education Policy 2020's Credit-Based system, which is a crucial component. When a student enrolls in a programme and is evaluated, all of his marks or credits will be put to the credit bank against his/her name, precisely as how a person's bank account represents his/her debits and credit information. As a result, individuals can easily monitor and see their credits anytime they want to (Gupta et al., 2021).

### ***Termination of the M.Phil. programme***

After completing a master's degree, the M.Phil. is now regarded as a higher education degree. This situation has changed as a result of the New Education Policy. The M.Phil. degree will no longer be offered; hence the higher education system will only provide bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees (Gupta & Choubey, 2021).

### ***One year of Master degree programme***

Students who complete their undergraduate programme in four years, including a year of research activity, can get their master's degree in one year. On the other hand, students who finish their undergraduate studies in three years, indicating they did not complete their last year of research, are still eligible to apply for admission to the master's degree programme. However, their master's degree will only take two years to complete (Kumar, 2021).

### ***The cap for private institution fees***

Several Indian colleges demand very costly fees in order to provide higher education. Consequently, many students need help to afford further education and drop out. Hence, to raise enrollment to 50% by 2035, the government implemented CAP on the fees for private institutions, colleges, and universities. That implies that there will not be any more fees above the CAP. For example, if the CAP is 50,000 rupees, an institution or university may charge only the CAP, regardless of the subject in which the students are enrolled. This has aimed to make education more affordable (Kumar, 2020).

### **Current Issues and challenges of the present higher education system in India**

Higher education plays an important function that must be considered. Therefore, India's higher education system deals with various issues. Several of these problems are covered below.

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- **Enrollment:** India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is just 25.2%, which is relatively low compared to developed and major developing nations (Kakodkar, 2022).
- **Quality:** India's higher education system suffers from rote learning, a lack of employability, and skill development due to its poor educational system.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** India's higher education faces additional problems due to insufficient infrastructure. Although higher education in India has advanced tremendously, there are still many colleges, institutions, and universities where even the most basic amenities still need to be improved (Menon, 2020).
- **Lack of Access and Equity:** The biggest problem facing higher education in India is the need for more access and equality.
- **Need for more faculty:** The number of professors in colleges and universities is another issue that affects higher education.
- **Financing of Higher Education:** There needs to be more resources in higher education institutions. Lack of funding causes a quality drop.

### Impact of New Education Policy 2020 on higher education

#### *Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education*

The regulatory framework must be revamped entirely to re-energise the higher education sector and allow its success. The higher education regulatory framework assures that different, autonomous, and empowered authorities will carry out the various duties of regulation, accreditation, financing, and academic standard setting. This is crucial for establishing checks and balances inside the system. To ensure that the four institutional organisations performing these crucial tasks operate separately while collaborating to achieve their shared objectives. These organisations would be established as separate verticals under the control of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) (Das, 2023).

The National Accreditation Council, a "meta-accrediting organisation" will be the second vertical of HECI (NAC). NAC would provide a suitable number of institutions responsible for acting as recognised accreditors (Kalyani, 2020). The third organisation under HECI, the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), would transparently manage funding and finance for higher education. Scholarships and cash for establishing new priority areas would be given to HEGC to distribute.

#### *Internationalisation at home*

NEP 2020 also enables international universities and faculties to return to Asian countries, which challenges local institutions to raise the level of education they provide. The possibility of paving the way for foreign universities to establish campuses within the nation is causing the Indian education sector to boom everywhere. The Asian country has one of the world's largest networks of higher education systems, with over 900 universities and 40,000 colleges. However, the GER (Gross Entering Ratio) of Asian countries in education is only 26.3%, which is significantly lower when compared to other BRICS nations like China (51%), Brazil (50%) and other countries in the region. It is also significantly lower when compared to European and North American countries, where the GER may be higher than 80%. Asian countries should experience substantial development in the field of global education in order to develop a new economic mechanism that is not based on natural resources but rather on knowledge resources. According to reports, Asian countries may need another 1,500 new higher education facilities by 2030 to accommodate a significant increase in students (Das, 2020).

For this reason, the Indian government must encourage FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) and make the ECB (External) industrial Borrowing) route available to strengthen capital investment in the education sector. Because more than seven lakh Indian students are already studying overseas, the ministry strives to improve India's reputation as a hub for education. This programme aims to drastically reduce the amount of human capital that migrates to other nations for study and employment opportunities by enabling overseas universities to provide the finest education available locally at a much-reduced cost while remaining in place. According to several international studies, cross-border education benefits the economy and fosters a greater sense of global awareness, cultural sensitivity, and combat. Foreign partnerships provide educational institutions an additional way to hone their curriculum in line with global pedagogy and offer students a wide range of specialisations and topic options (Gupta, 2020).

### ***Towards a More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education***

A holistic and interdisciplinary education would combine the development of a person's moral, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual faculties. Even engineering Institutions like the IITs would transition to a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary curriculum emphasising the arts and humanities. Arts and humanities students would aim to study more science and include more vocational and soft skill disciplines. The curriculum of all HEIS should contain credit-based courses and projects in community participation and service, environmental education, and value-based education to achieve such a comprehensive and interdisciplinary education. The undergraduate degree would take three or four years to complete, and there would be many opportunities to graduate with the proper credentials throughout this time (Yadav & Yadav, 2023).

On the other hand, the 4-year interdisciplinary Bachelor's programme should be the recommended choice. The Indian government will also set up an academic bank of credit to assist in digitally storing academic results. This will make it much easier for the schools to add credit to the student's degree. A solid proposal for storing the academic credits students earn from attending classes at several reputable higher education institutions is establishing an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) (Nithish, 2023). If a person wishes to change colleges, credits may be transferred.

### ***Motivated, Energised and Capable Faculty***

The quality and dedication of a faculty member are critical components of a higher education institution's success. The teachers should have access to opportunities for professional growth. Faculty who fails to uphold fundamental standards will be held responsible. To hire faculty, HEIS would have independently determined, transparent, and well-specified procedures (Batra, 2020).

### ***Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students***

The foundations of high-quality learning include the curriculum, pedagogy, ongoing assessment, and student assistance. In order to ensure that every student has a stimulating and engaging learning experience, institutions and motivated professors will construct curricula and pedagogy, and ongoing formative evaluation will be employed to advance the objectives of each programme. The HEI should also make decisions on all assessment processes, including those that result in final certification. Changes will be made to the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) to encourage creativity and adaptability (Govinda, 2020).

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Furthermore, each institution will include its academic plans, from curriculum enhancement to the effectiveness of classroom interactions, into its comprehensive Institutional Development Plan (IDP). Teachers would be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to interact with students as instructors, mentors, and advisors. On the other hand, for students from socioeconomically challenged families to successfully move to higher education, they need help and encouragement. As a result, universities and colleges would be compelled to establish top-notch support centres and be provided with sufficient funding and academic resources to do so successfully (Panditrao & Panditrao, 2020; Das & Barman, 2023).

### ***The structure Lengths of Degree Programmes***

Each college degree at any institution lasts three or four years in the framework of the National Education Policy 2020 theme. Any institution may be required to provide the code with a certificate after two years, a degree after three years, and a certificate for those students. United Nations agency finishes a year of study in any chosen profession or career course. The government of an Asian country will also assist in constructing a tutorial Bank of Credit for electronically keeping the educational results. This may change the establishments to count the credit at the tip and include it in the degree of code. This might be helpful for students who might need to drop out of the course in the middle. Even if students restart the course from the beginning, they will pick up where they left off in the future. According to NEP 2020, educational institutions are free to start PG programmes; there might be a planning issue with One Year PG Degree for college students United Nations agency has completed four Year UG Degree and a 2 Year PG Degree for college students. United Nations agency has completed three Year UG Degree (Saxena, 2020).

### ***Financial Support for Students***

Financial and economic assistance may help students achieve their objectives. NEP 2020 has made the following suggestions in this regard:

- The HEIs should provide financial aid to needy students so that no student is denied the opportunity to pursue higher education (Gupta, 2020).
- To ensure students' financial assistance, the "National Scholarship Portal" will be enlarged to include publicly funded institutions' stipends, board, and lodging (Banerjee et al., 2021).

### ***Access Equality***

Entrance into a top-notch university opens doors to opportunities that may help lift people out of vicious cycles of disadvantage and help communities. Hence, one of the top priorities must be making a platform for high-quality higher education available to everyone. All pupils will have equal access to high-quality education by the year 2020, with a focus on socioeconomically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs) (Majhi, 2021).

### ***Evaluation System***

The institutions and faculty can determine the curriculum and pedagogy to ensure that every student has an exciting and engaging learning experience. The HEI must also approve any evaluation programmes that result in final certification. The Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) will be redesigned to provide flexibility and change. A more constant and thorough review process will replace high-stakes exams (Banerjee et al., 2021).

### ***Vocational Education***

There is a perception that vocational education is inferior to general education and intended primarily for pupils who cannot succeed. This unfavourable perception heavily influences the

decisions that students make. That is a significant issue; thus, the best approach to handle it is to reconsider how students will be provided with vocational education in the future (Wankhade, 2021).

### ***Research and Innovation in Higher Education***

Encouraging substantial research and development investments from the public and commercial sectors is one of NEP 2020's main focus areas. This will promote creativity and imaginative thinking. For industry-led skilling, up skilling, and reskilling to be possible, there has to be a strong industry commitment and close academic engagement. Also, it is essential to develop the skills necessary to promote an understanding of "Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)" and their protection in order to reap their advantages (Banerjee et al., 2021).

### ***The National Education Technology Forum (NETF)***

The NETF that NEP 2020 intends to create is a step in the right direction. Institutions of higher learning would be able to respond fast if quality Ed-tech tools were hosted across all delivery dimensions for teaching and learning. The focus should be on hosting local EdTech products on "open-source development platforms" with integrated cyber security resilience to assure "privacy & security" in addition to adherence to cyber security standards, adoption of firewalls, and Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) against external threats and vulnerabilities. This will protect each student's "personal privacy" (Kumar, 2020). Empirical data of the present study very strongly poses that optimism is related with physical and mental health. Optimistic individuals have fewer physical and psychological complaints with their life. If there is any problem like illness of her child then also, mothers with optimistic outlook help themselves to cope with the situation.

## **CONCLUSION**

Higher education has a significant role in determining a nation's economy, social standing, level of technological adoption, and healthy human behaviour. The responsibility of the country's education department is to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) so that all citizens have access to higher education opportunities. The National Education Policy of 2020 is working towards this goal by implementing creative policies to raise higher education quality, affordability, and supply while opening it up to the private sector and enforcing tight quality controls in all higher education institutions (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). The National Education Policy has a favourable and long-lasting influence on India's higher education system. The government's decision to let international colleges establish campuses in India is laudable. This would enable students to get a high standard of education in their nation. Establishing interdisciplinary institutions would result in a revitalised emphasis on every discipline, such as the arts and humanities. This kind of education would allow students to study and develop holistically. Hence, learners would possess a strong knowledge basis (Das & Barman, 2021). The goal of NEP 2020 is to modernise higher education in India. Overall, the NEP 2020 tackles the need to train experts in various fields, from agriculture to artificial intelligence. India needs to be prepared for the future. NEP 2020 provides the door for many young aspirant pupils to have the appropriate skill set. The NEP 2020 is a crucial turning point for higher education. It will only be revolutionary with effective and constrained implementation.

### ***Limitations of the Study***

During this work, several limitations have been discovered since there are few examples of studies regarding the impact of higher education in the context of NEP 2020. This restriction could be caused by the fact that the NEP 2020 was not implemented, and also review's scope

was restricted to looking for existing articles in the databases. Moreover, it should be noted that the investigator selected only secondary data which are descriptive in nature.

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