

## National Education Policy, 2020—An Observational Study On Policies In Higher Education In India

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### ABSTRACT

Education being one of the major services directly impacting the nation's growth, the sector has been ever growing with changing nature of national and international demands. The globalization has brought significant demands for changes in the education sector and keeping in view of the national and international expectations, Government of India initiative Education Policies to enhance the access, facility and empowerment of people through implementation of policies. Right from the inception of Kothari Commission on Education, the Education Policies introduced in India have focalized on various dimensions such as value spent on education, providing equitable opportunities, Universal Enrollment and empowering School Education, Professional Education, Higher Education and strengthening of education to all.

**Objectives:** The paper presents the study on scenario of Government spent on expenditure to Education Sector and present the critical issues on New Education Policy, 2020 pertaining to Higher Education. An Attempt is made to present the key observations on NEP, 2020 with an aim to draw challenges ahead for implementation of policy.

**Methodology:** Study is based on Descriptive Research Design and sources of data primary include Economic Survey Reports, reports of MHRD, UNO and NITI Aayog Reports.

**Key Observations:** Study explored the policy statements and its concerned issues pertaining to Higher Education. Study further

drawn insights on the new Education Policy, 2020 and issues to be considered for the effective implementation of NEP, 2020.

Keywords: GDP, HEIs, Pedagogy, SE Ratio,

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Nation's prosperity and progress hugely relies on inclusive development of the country. Education sector is considered as one the foremost sectors contributing for the inclusive development of the country. Education not only promotes the nation's development but also fosters human development and achieving of equitable growth of the society. According to Sustainable Development Goals set by UNO, Goal 4 contributes "ensures inclusive equitable equality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

An attempt is made to critically examine the existing National Education policies and key highlights of the policies. Studies of Anbazhagan A(2020) are included to draw the key points. These include:

- a. Ever since inception of Education Policies, the literacy rate among the population has increased from over 39% to 74% between 1991-2018.
- b. Even though the literacy rate has been increased, the unemployment rate remained in the range of 6.7 to 7.7 between 1991 to 2018.
- c. The spent on Tertiary education has been decreased as the Government has mainly focused on Primary and Secondary Education.

## 2. Historic Backdrop of Educational Policy

The Education policies by Government of India dates back 1968 when Congress Party lead Government under the leadership of Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime minister has introduced the First National Education Policy(1968) based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. The policy highlighted on three broad objectives:

- a) Introduction of Third language in Secondary Education, i.e., a regional language to be included with existing languages Hindi and English.
- b) About 6 percent of national Income to be spent on Education
- c) Compulsory education to be provided to the children upto the age of 14 years as per the right to education provided by Constitution of India.

**A) National Education Policy, 1986**

The Second National Education Policy was introduced by Shir Rajiv Gandhi, the prime Minister of India in the year 1986. Some of the key initiatives of National Education Policy are:

- a) Providing equitable opportunities for marginally deprived castes, i.e., SCs and STs.
- b) Primary Education moving towards Child Centered approach
- c) "Operation Blackboard" to improve the primary school education.

**B) National Education Policy, 1992**

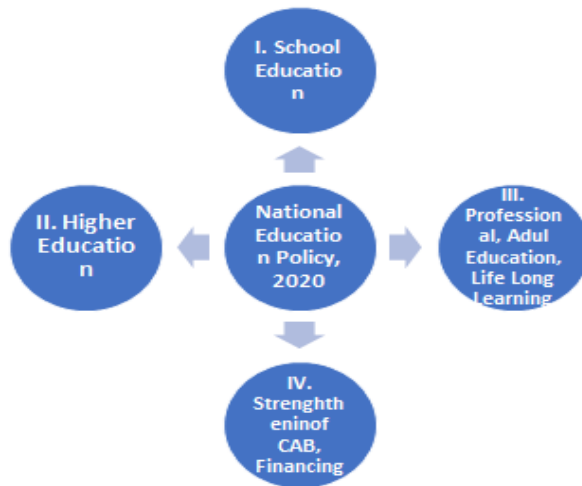
Through initiating several new adoptions, the New Education Policy, 1992 replaced by existing policy under the leadership of P.V.Narasimha Rao, the then Prime Minister during 1986. Some of the key initiatives of Education Policy are:

- a) Universal Enrollment and retention of Children
- b) Reducing the disparities between Rural and Urban
- c) Common Entrance Examinations for admission to Technical and Professional Courses across the Nation.

**C) National Education Policy, 2020**

The BJP led NDA Government under the leadership of Shri. Narendra Modi initiated a committee to formulate National Education Policy under the chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary T.S.R.Subramanian. On the basis of recommendations of the committee, the Ministry of Human Resources and Development introduced a draft in 2019 for the public. Later, the suggestions are included in the existing draft and the Cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi has launched the policy on 29<sup>th</sup> July, 2020. The National Education Policy released by Ministry of HRD, Government of India contains the Policy segmented into 4 parts. Key areas covered in 4 parts are presented in Figure-1.

**Figure-1:** Key areas covered in National Education Policy, 2020



**Source:** Compiled from NEP, 2020 report issued by MHRD, Government of India, New Delhi.

#### **Part-I: School Education:**

In the part-I, the policies are made to transform existing Academic structure with launch of new pedagogical and cultural Structure, where existing two groups are converted into Foundation(up to age of 3 to 6 years (Anganwadi/pre school, Class 1&2,), Preparatory (Class 3 to 5), Middle (Class 6 to 8) and Secondary (Class 9 to 12). Early Childhood care and Education was launched with introduction of National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8 years. The policy has given importance to Foundational literacy and Numeracy as urgent and necessary prerequisite for learning. Policy focused on reducing dropout rates, ensuring the access to Education at all levels, restructuring school curriculum and pedagogy in a new 5+3+3+4 design, curriculum and pedagogy in schools to shift from conventional mode to holistic, integrated, enjoyable and engaging. The equitable and inclusive Education, efficient resourcing and standard setting and accreditation for school Education are the major issues covered under School Education.

#### **Part-II: Higher Education:**

This part majority covered the Quality Universities and Colleges as a new and forward looking vision for the nation's Higher Education System. Policies are introduced to restructure and consolidate the existing institution system to transform to holistic and multidisciplinary education. The optimal learning environment and support for students, Motivation system, recognition of Capable Faculty, Equity and inclusion, Teacher Education, reimagining vocational education, Transformation of existing Regulatory System of Higher Education, Catalyzing Quality Academic Research in New National Research Foundation and

Effective Governance and Leadership for Higher Education Institutions are covered in this part.

### **Part-III: Other Key Areas of Focus**

In this part, Professional Education, Adult Education and Life Long Learning are covered. The promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture are explained. Technology Use and integration, online and digital education for ensuring equitable use of Technology are covered in this part.

### **Part-IV: Making It Happen**

In this part, policies for strengthening the Central Advisory Board of Education, Financing the affordable and Quality Education for All and implementation issues are covered.

## **3. LITERATURE REVIEW**

An attempt is made to examine the literature pertaining to the studies on NEP, 2020 with special reference to issues of NEP, 2020. Key observations extracted from the existing literature is summarized and presented here.

Lakshmi V and Ugandhar T(2020) in their joint contribution have focused on Higher Educational Institutions and role of NEP, 2020. Authors have observed that, existing Education policies have led to several flaws and the New Education Policy, 2020 must focus on minimizing the bias and promote the research and progress in India. The authors have further suggested that, higher educational institutions must study the policies pertaining to Vocational Education and Distance Learning to bring more development in the higher education system through facilitating the increase in the student enrollment ratio.

Madhukar B and Sarma S(2020) emphasized on the hits and misses of NEP 2020. In the study, authors have clarified the positive issues that can be advantageous to various stakeholders. Authors also emphasized on the misses in terms of unclarified issues under NEP, 2020. According to the authors, lack of clarity pertaining to pre primary learning and engagement of Anganwadi as most of the Anganwadis are running with poor infrastructure and sheds, facilitating the pre primary learning for primary education is questioned in the study. Authors have further concluded that, NEP, 2020 must address the loopholes and clarifications that are been posed to strengthen the education system in India especially related to school education.

Venkateshwarlu B(2020) has examine the NEP, 2020 policy document and presented the key concerns under the head 'criticism on NEP, 2020'. Author has opined that, NEP, 2020 has not properly addressed the strategy of coherent implementation and further, spending up to 6% of GDP for education is a tough

challenge to tackle with. Author has suggested for the implementation of RTE Act to address the universalisation of education.

Panigrahi and S and Gupta(2021) in their study have examined the NEP, 2020 policy and specifically examined the assessment system prescribed under NEP, 2020. Authors have written that, Quality of education is the major challenge in the existing higher education system, hence authors have recommended that NEP 2020 implementation require integrated approach to fulfill the challenges ahead in the higher education.

Verma H and Kumar A(2021) in their joint contribution have described the various provisions that are required for implementation of NEP,2020 to strengthen higher education. Authors have explained the various economic and social indicators which are needed to improve the quality in higher education. Authors have expressed the view that in order to implement NEP,2020 there is a higher need for implementing the system through enriching the infrastructure facilities.

On the basis of existing literature, it is noticed that, most of the studies were concentrated on analyzing the provisions, policies and emerging areas of National Education Policy, 2020. Based on the examination, research gap is noticed pertaining to statistical based observations expenditure on education as percent of GDP, critical issues pertaining to Higher Education and key observations and challenges in the implementation of NEP, 2020.

#### **4. OBJECTIVES**

The study aims to explore the NEP, 2020 with special focus on Higher Education. More specifically, the study covers the following sub objectives.

- a) To study the scenario of Government spent on expenditure to Education Sector
- b) To identify the critical issues on New Education Policy, 2020 pertaining to Higher Education.
- c) To present the key observations on NEP, 2020 with an aim to draw challenges ahead for implementation of policy.

#### **5. METHODOLOGY**

The study is based on secondary sources of data. Existing literature is drawn from the studies covered on Education Policies and implementation in India. Statistics on Education are extracted from Economic Survey Reports, reports of MHRD, UNO and NITI Aayog Reports. The study is based on Descriptive research design.

#### **6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

From the extensive analysis on the reports accessed from Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, MHRD and other national level agencies, the analysis is made with a view to provide justification to the objectives. Analysis on key issues is discussed here.

**I.Statistical view on Government spent on Education**

Education is considered as one of the core pillars of Human Capital development. The strength of Human capital formation in India relies more on Health and Education. The National Education Policy(NEP) is designed with a broader objective to facilitate growth and development in the sector with high provision of infrastructure facilities equipped with quality of education. The trends in social services expenditure by Central Government (including state and central) witness the scenario of Education Sector. The government expenditure on Education, which is one of the key determinant of Human Development is been largely stagnated as the figure clearly show no significant growth in the past 8 years. Ever since, the NDP government has been under ruling, the expenditure on Education as percent of GDP is stagnated at 2.8 percent between 2015-16 to 2018-19 and during 2019-20 to 2022-23, the growth has increased to a single decimal growth reaching 2.9 percent. India has not achieved one of the goals set in it’s first Education Policy to spend 6 percent of national income on Education. Table-1 presents the detailed statistical scenario on expenditure on Education as percent of GDP.

**Table-1: Spent on Education between 2015-16 to 2022-23**

Year	Total Expenditure	Expenditure on Social Service	Expenditure on Education as percent of GDP
2015-16	3760611	915500	2.8
2016-17	4265969	1040620	2.8
2017-18	4515946	1139524	2.8
2018-19	5040747	1278124	2.8
2019-20	5410887	1364906	2.9
2020-21	6353359	1479389	2.9
2021-22	7453320	1944013	2.9
2022-23	8008684	2132059	2.9

**Source:** Economic Survey Report, 2023 accessed from Ministry of Finance, Government of India, New Delhi.

Despite the fact that Education Sector is been one of the major services sector severely get impacted by the COVID-19, yet the sector has not witnessed the transformation from conventional to hybrid form.

**II. Critical Examination on NEP, 2020 on Higher Education**

NEP, 2020 is divided into four parts and Part-II focalized on Higher Education. Key examination of Policy on Higher Education revealed the following observations.

As per the policy, the term 'Quality' is used 136 times but no where it is explained the criterion to assess the Quality. Even the term "Quality Universities" is not explained in the existing National Education Policy, 2020. As per the point9.3, "policy envisions a complete overhaul and re-energizing of the higher education system to overcome these challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion".

According to this criterion, the possibilities of moving to strengthen and revamp the curriculum are explained in the policy. But, the future of the outgoing students from Higher Education is not explained. Even, the equity and inclusion is no where been followed in the Recruitment System of NITs, IITs, IIMs and Central Universities which are primarily picking the candidates seeded from their education farm, leaving the opportunities for State Universities and Private Institution candidates. Due to lack of faculty members, many state universities and private institutions have not been successful in attaining the NIRF grading and better NAAC accreditations. Many unclarified issues are prescribed under NEP, 2020 policy and pertaining to Higher Education, the following observations are made.

**Table-3: Key Observations on Higher Education in NEP, 2020**

Sl.No.	Part & Policy Number	Policy statement	Issue
1.	Part-II, 9.3(h)	"Lighter but tight" regulation	Light but tight regulation by a single regulator for Higher Education- A policy which is negatively propagating the regulation impact on Education
2.	Part-II, 9.3(e)	Institutional Leadership through merit appointments and Career Progression	This policy is critically challenged as majority of the Government lead institutions are over relying on Retired rather than providing the opportunity to next level awaiting for Service
3.	Part-II, 10.4	Transparent system of Graded Accreditation	Existing system over relying on documentation rather than the reality.
4.	Part-II, 10.7	By, 2040, all higher education institutions(HEIS) shall aim to become Multidisciplinary institutions and shall	Achieving this mission require Hundreds of Faculty members as the present scenario of encouragement



		aim to have larger student enrollments preferably in thousands'	for faculty in Higher Education is a tough challenge ahead.
5.	Part-II, 10.7	HEIs will firstly plan to become multidisciplinary by 2030	To become as Multidisciplinary in a span of seven years through integrating various departments and prepare the Multidisciplinary courses and syllabus is a herculean task
6.	Part-II, 10.8	More HEIs shall be established and developed in underserved regions to ensure full access, equity and inclusion	Eg: Telangana Government has launched new private universities and all emerging universities located at Hyderabad and Warangal, far developed regions compared to remaining 31 districts.
7.	Part-II, 10.10	Institutions will have the option to run Open and Distance Learning(ODL) and online programmes, provided they are accredited to do so, in order to enhance their offerings to improve access to provide opportunities for life long learning	Eg: As per 2022-23 statistics of UGC on ODL, only 5 universities from Telangana out of 28 universities only launched the ODL courses during 2022-23, challenges of Grading and percentages to the students pursuing courses in ODL
8.	Part-II, 11.2	Assessments of educational approaches in undergraduate education that integrate the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) have consistently showed positive learning outcomes	The over domination of STEM has put Humanities, arts and Social Sciences to suffer and integration with STEM will put the negative consequences in the results ratio
9.	Part-II, 11.3	As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners	The present collaborations provided by UGC, ICSSR for joint collaborations between Indian and foreign universities are providing in single digit opportunities.
10.	Part-II, 11.10	The M.Phil Programme Shall be discontinued	The Scholars possessing M.Phil Programme is entirely nullified which has created huge injustice to the research programme acquired by the candidates
11.	Part-II, 13.1	Acknowledging the criticality of faculty in achieving the goals of higher education, various initiatives have been introduced in the past several years to systematize recruitment and career progression, and to ensure equitable representation from various groups in the hiring of faculty.	Over emphasis on HEIs with special reference to Government Sector risen the gap between the monetary and career growth of public sector faculty and private sector faculty which is not covered in NEP, 2020

12.	Part-II, 13.5	Excellence will be further incentivized through appropriate rewards, promotions, recognitions, and movement into institutional leadership	The rising gap of vacancies in public sector institutions, lack of support for faculty from private sector is a tough challenge to address
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**Source:** National Education Policy, 2020, Ministry of HRD, Government of India, New Delhi.

### III. Key Observations and Challenges to NEP, 2020

- a) The prepared NEP which was approved by Union Cabinet on 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2020 did not present the Feedback survey report made on 2.5 lakh stakeholders through two national Parliamentary level committees.
- b) Through the emphasis on Education for all with special importance to local languages, yet the national level testing agencies were unable to bring the content and information in vernacular languages.
- c) The study on NEP, 2020 highlights on increasing the seats from 26.3% to 50% in a period of next 5 years. Over emphasis on increasing the enrollment ratio may hamper the quality in education.
- d) As per the NEP, 2020, Government is planned to increase the existing Gross Enrollment Ratio to be doubled by 2035. The statistics estimations show that, to achieve these, there is a need to establish over 10 times of existing HEIs to serve the Gross Enrollment.
- e) To the national education policy 2020, students willing to complete their graduation have to study for four years while one can easily complete his/ her diploma degree in two years. This might encourage the pupil to leave the course midway.
- f) According to the national education policy 2020, students of the private schools will be introduced to English at a much earlier age than the students of the Government schools. The academic syllabus will be taught in the respective regional languages of the Government school students. This is one of the major new education policy drawbacks as this will increase the number of students uncomfortable in communicating in English thus widening the gap between sections of the societies.
- g) In order to increase Gross Enrollment ratio(GER) from 26.3% to 50% by 2035, there is a desperate need to fill the faculty positions in Higher Educational Institutions. As per the Indian Express report (2023), over 6000 vacancies are found to be vacant in Central Universities in India and about 4500 vacancies in IITs and 496 vacancies in IIMS are yet to be filled. Further,

the vacancy system in regional universities show pathetic situation of rising gaps.

- h) The debate on Language system is still a puzzle for the implementation. Teaching in local language may increase the Language fear on English and this may further lead to students' cope up in terms of facing interviews, interpersonal communication in the era of globalization.
- i) Early exit system in graduation such as the facility to complete degree in two years actually hamper the proportion of graduates and the Diploma holders ratio may tend to increase.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The extensive analysis on the various provisions prescribed under NEP, 2020 clearly reveals that there are considerable number of deviations and discrepancies that are to be addressed. In order to meet the expectations of 21<sup>st</sup> century education needs, the policy prescribed under NEP, 2020 need to be updated dynamically. The literature on NEP, 2020 clearly highlights on negligence on "bottom-most strata" of society. The observational study on NEP, 2020, it is found that, lags are found especially related to lack of integration in approach between technology and pedagogy, language debate, pedagogical limitations, overambitious objectives such as increase in spent of GDP towards education and legal complexities. Increase of GE Ratio is another challenging objective to achieve. Further, implementing the inter-disciplinary learning in higher education would certainly lead to a herculean task to the universities and higher educational institutions which are suffering from lack of skilled faculty members.

The statistical analysis on expenditure spent on Education clearly reveal that, over past 8 years, the spent on Education is in the range of 2.8 to 2.9 percent of GDP. Right from Education Policy, 1968 to Education Policy, 2020, the spent on education is meager and did not reach the desired goal of 6 percent. Evaluation on Recruitment system prevailed in higher education sector show a further evidence of inequality to access the opportunities. The over emphasis on Central Government led educational institutions are hampering the job aspirants brought out from State universities. The policy statements under Part-II are focusing on over ambitious goals and the reality check leads to major concerns need to be considered.

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