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National Education Policy 2020: Challenges & Opportunities in Higher Education in India

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ABSTRACT: "*Education is the most powerful weapon to be used to change the world*. "Nelson Mandela
Education is important for the economic and social development of nation. The weapon may proved to be harmful if it is misused. Due to proper interpretation and implementation of policies, the generations may be benefitted. It will result in strong economic and social development. The national policy in education ,1986 was replaced by New National Education Policy.[NEP 2020]
National Education Policy is the holistic reform in the education across all levels stages of education in India. It made reforms in primary,secondary and higher education in single policy document .It is the evolution in the field of education in India. This study is based on secondary data, the available literature on the topic is referred.
This paper aims at discussing challenges and opportunities in National Education policy 2020 with respect to higher education in India. This paper will help the researchers, academicians and policy makers as an insight in the NEP policy.
KEYWORDS:HEIs [higher educational institutes],NEP[NationalEducation Policy], challenges & opportunities in NEP

I. INTRODUCTION

Kothari Commission [1964-66] had recommended a 6 % allocation of GDP,National Education Policy,2020 is an evolution in the education field. It tried toincrease access, equity, and inclusion as one of thekey changes. Internationalization of higher education is one of the aims in the NEP.

NEP promoted more and more philanthropic activity in the education sector. NEP tries to imbibe that education is a concurrent subject.

NEP suggested a 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment.

II. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 : MAJOR PRINCIPLES

- Sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres
- Multidisciplinary and a holistic education to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge disciplines
- Emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams
- Creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation
- Promoting ethics, human & Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, etc.
- Promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning
- Life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience
- Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning
- Respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy
- Full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system
- Teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions
- Outstanding research as a co-requisite for outstanding education and development
- Continuous review of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts.

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III. CHALLENGES TO HEIs IN IMPLEMENTING NEP 2020

Following are the challenges in front of higher educational institutions while implementing National Education Policy 2020.

1. Gross Enrollment Ratio[GER] : The GER is 27.1 in 2019-20 (AISHE 2019-20) .Total enrollment of students in higher education institutes in India is around 342.5 lakh, with 50.4 % male and 49.6 % female enrolments.

The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER)for women in 2019-20 is 27.3 % as compared to 26.9 % for men. It means that more eligible women as compared to men are attending college and university in India. Increasing the GER is one of the key aims of the National Education Policy (NEP). The Modi government wants to touch a 50 % GER by 2035 through various reforms included in the NEP.

2. Inclusion & equity: **National Education Policy ,(NEP)2020** is based on the principles related to diversity, equity and inclusion .Equitable and inclusive education as per NEP 2020 aims to ensure that every child should get opportunity to learn and excel. Special emphasis will be given on socially and economically disadvantaged groups which include: gender identities, socio-cultural identities, geographical identities, and socio-economic conditions. A separate 'Gender Inclusion fund' will be created as also 'Special Education Zones' for disadvantaged regions and groups. Gender parity index is 1.01 as per AISHE 2019-20.

3. Quality benchmark: One of the core values of NAAC is 'quest for excellence'. The new quality benchmarks being declared by the National Accreditation & Assessment Council [NAAC], Bangalore for accreditation purpose. Likewise, NEP is also based on the fundamental pillars of access, affordability, equity, quality and accountability. So, quality initiatives and quality improvement programs are must.

4. Infrastructural facilities: In the present situation, the ICT enabled infrastructural facilities with high speed WI-FI connection is the prime necessity. It is required in order to keep pace with the fast changing technology.

5. Effective and visionary leadership in HEIs: The visionary leadership in the field of higher education and higher education institutes is the need of an hour. Intervention of politics in education should be existed to the extent it is required for effective policy framing and implementation.Timely decision by Ministry of Education ,investment for future, releasing grants, approvals ,etc. are some of the issues to be handled smoothly.

6. Lack of funds: Aabout 3% of GDP is spent on education in India in 2019-20.The expectation is around 6% in NEP.

The share from the budget of Central and State Government need to be increased more to channelize funds towards strengthening higher education. For the department of higher education an amount of Rs.40810.34crore (revenue) has been allocated. [ICNN News]

7. Capacity building, training, retraining and un-training to faculty: the capacity building workshops, training to faculty of HEIs is important and should be frequently arranged. The initial training,retraining and un-training (wipe out old, outdated matter and train with new concepts and viewpoints).Industry and academia need to be bridge gap for employability or self-employability.Lack of specific skill development courses or add on courses for employability or self-employability. New Education Policy is not just about the degree. It is all about equipping students for employment or self-employment. The student development programs [SDPs]to be conducted on need based system.

8. Faculty recruitment & promotions: The permanent faculty to be recruited as per the requirement. The permanent faculty try to establish and develop the departments and higher institutions. It creates positive impact on institutional development in the long run.

9. Mind-set of students towards education - Due to multiple entry and exits in NEP 2020, there is high chance of increase in dropout rate in HEI. The time will provide the correct scenario on this aspect. Orientation and motivation to students for post-graduation is to be augmented. The scholarships for the deserving students, imbibing research aptitude and scientific temper amongst the students will help them for sustainable development. It is being observed by few studies that due to fast pace of the world,the students are facing certain emotional and mental disorders.

A congruence between emotions and behaviour of the students is required in order to develop them as a socially responsible citizen. To achieve this, following remedies are suggested-cultivating student's key competencies, giving freedom to express views, incorporation of moral values, enhancing life survival skills, creating readiness for self-learning in them. (Bhatnagar 2021)

Choice based credit system[CBCS] will help the students to learn the subjects of their likings and credits earned are deposited in Academic Bank of Credit[ABC].Handholding and mentoring cell in the institution may orient the students in difficult

situations.

10. Dependence on ICT: The new policy focuses on online and e-learning. MOOCs, courses on Swayam, NPTEL, Coursera ,etc. are gaining importance due to their contents and course delivery. Online education will play an important role to bridge the gap between the students and the institutes.

The virtual world will become more real than the real world with digital and video centric approaches. [Sheth 2020]

11. Huge number of colleges : There are 1043 universities, 42343 colleges and 11779 stand alone institutions(AISHE Report 2019-20) .This number is increasing day by day and adds into the competition with existing institutions. There should be motivation and a positive force for accreditation and certification from the apex bodies for institutions. It could be achieved through making cluster of institutions to help each other ,support of management ,declaring benchmark for quality purpose ,ranking of college/university as per NIRF, Times etc. Participating and updating the reports in AISHE and following guidelines as per RUSA is important for the institutions. Institutions need totry hard for their image and goodwill building.

12. Internationalization & foreign universities: Internationalization of higher education has received its due importance in NEP, to make India hub for international students. HEIs will play a vital role in attracting foreign students in India. The universities will also have to be alert and keep themselves ready to welcome students.

IV. OPPORTUNITIES TO HEIs IN IMPLEMENTING NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 paves the way towards less regulation and more autonomy for institutions through an effective self-regulatory framework. New Education Policy is not just about the degree. It is all about focus on life skills and vocational courses. [Sheth 2020]

1. Education Hub : India is having great opportunity to attract foreign students and foreign universities as India has become education hub .As compared to many countries ,the India has lesser cost on education .Education tourism is the new and emerging field today.
2. Promoting students for progression : Institutions and universities try to motivate students to pursue graduation ,post-graduation education or professional courses.
3. Handling lesser number of students : The teacher- student ratio should be kept minimum for the purpose of close supervision on student's progress. The teacher's efficiency will definitely increase for lesser teacher -student ratio.
4. Encouraging students in classroom participation: Due to multiple entry and exit, student will find the NEP flexible and convenient for education. Students will be more equipped with KSA-knowledge, skills and attitude in classroom with peer learning and experiential learning etc.
5. Hard internship not only for the sake of completion certificate: The internship should be strictly observed, so that students can get practical knowledge. It will also help to create strong linkages between institution and the organizations offering the internships.

V. CONCLUSION

The researcher has put up the views on challenges and opportunities in National Education Policy 2020 mainly for higher educational institutions. The views mentioned by the researcher are compiled through reading and experience. However the researcher is optimistic that NEP will proved to be a boon in the long run.

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