Role of NEP 2020 Policy in the Higher Education System

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to reshape higher education in India by introducing a broad framework that encourages innovation, creativity, flexibility, and learning across different subjects. It seeks to reform the current system by promoting a more well-rounded approach to education, encouraging students to think critically, and offering opportunities for lifelong learning. NEP 2020 emphasizes creating large, multidisciplinary institutions, offering flexible programs, and encouraging research and development at all levels. It also restructures undergraduate and graduate programs to provide multiple entry and exit points, allowing students to customize their education based on their individual needs. Additionally, NEP 2020 focuses on making Indian universities more globally connected and aims to increase the gross enrolment ratio to 50%.

Keywords- NEP 2020 Policy, Higher education system, NEP scope.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Government of India launched the National Education Policy (NEP) to encourage education in the country. Behind the evaluation of this policy covers education from elementary school to college, in urban and rural areas. The first NEP was implemented in 1968 under Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the second in 1986 under Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, and the most recent, the NEP 2020, on July 29, 2020, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. NEP 2020 outlines a new vision for India's education system. It provides a detailed framework for primary and education combined with vocational instruction, for both rural and urban regions.

The policy aims to reform the education system by 2021, with the goal of fully implementing the changes by 2030. It is advisory in nature, meaning State and central Universities, Private Institutions, and Schools have the flexibility to decide how they will execute it. A key focus of the NEP is the reorganization of higher education institutions into larger multidisciplinary institutions. NEP seeks to develop versatile, creative individuals while contributing to the nation's educational and economic progress. It has set an ambitious goal to raise the gross enrolment ratio in higher education, including vocational programs, from 26.3% in 2018 to 50% by 2035. Additionally, the traditional 10+2 structure of schooling will be replaced by a new 5+3+3+4 model, aiming for a more holistic approach to education.

The policy also sets a goal for investment in the education sector, aiming for the State and Central Governments to invest 6% of the country's GDP in education. Indian higher education is already being influenced by international trends. As a result, the structure of higher education programs has changed significantly, focusing on developing high-level skills and abilities that are in demand.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Education plays a pivotal role in building a nation, shaping its future, and determining the destiny of its people. It has a profound and lasting impact on the growth and development of society. In today's globalized world, the importance of education cannot be underestimated. When comparing the pre-independence and post-independence eras in India, we see significant expansion and progress in the education sector. After 34 years, the Indian government has introduced the third amendment to the National Education Policy (NEP), which is expected to bring transformative changes to the country's education framework (Kalyani & Pawan, 2020).

The NEP 2020 primary goal is to prepare India to tackle the challenges of the twenty-first century and to establish itself as a global hub for multidisciplinary and liberal education. In a study by Aithal, P.S. et al., key elements of the NEP were compared with the traditional education system, highlighting the innovative aspects introduced by the policy. NEP 2020 focuses on fostering innovation and is anticipated to have wide-ranging implications for the Indian education system. It provides a detailed framework to ensure its effective implementation.

However, Jha, P. et al. (2020) pointed out potential challenges and drawbacks of NEP 2020, offering a critical perspective on the obstacles that could arise during its implementation. NEP 2020 is the third such policy in India's history, following the earlier versions of 1968 and 1986. The formulation of this policy took 34 years, reflecting the scale of its vision and impact.

One of the most notable aspects of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on providing autonomy to college and university teachers, allowing them to choose their teaching methods and encouraging more research and innovation. Additionally, the policy proposes granting operational and financial autonomy to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), which is viewed as a significant step toward modernization and reform in Indian education. This autonomy is expected to promote flexibility and progress in the way institutions operate, ultimately benefiting the entire educational ecosystem.

Objectives of the Study:
1.   To study the impact of NEP 2020 on higher education.
2.   The study decides the salient features of NEP and analyses how they affect the existing education system.

III.   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive in nature. To gather secondary data for this, we visited a number of websites, including the Government of India's, periodicals, newspapers, and so on. The choices and conclusions were then reached after this data was examined and analyzed.

IV.   IMPACT OF NEP 2020

The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is the main authority responsible for overseeing higher education, except in the medical and legal fields. Although some institutions are still managed by bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), HECI operates through four branches. These include the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), which handles regulations; the General Education Council (GEC), which sets academic standards; the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), responsible for funding; and the National Accreditation Council (NAC), which manages accreditation. The standard of universities and other higher education establishments is judged based on factors like research output, industry connections, student placements, and academic excellence. Under the NEP 2020, the National Testing Agency (NTA) was established as an independent body to conduct entrance exams for both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, as well as for fellowship opportunities. This centralized approach ensures a fair and standardized process for admissions and scholarships across the nation.

V.   FEATURES OF NEP 2020

New National Education Policy (NEP) guidelines was developed to bring important reforms to the education system, from school to college level. It focuses on key concepts, ideas, practical applications, and problem-solving skills. The NEP is expected to have a positive and lasting impact on higher education in India. One major change is the creation of multidisciplinary institutes, which will place equal importance on all fields of study, including arts and humanities. This strategy allows children to study and advance in a structured manner while also guaranteeing that all pupils have equal opportunities.

The formation of an Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is an important part of the NEP. This allows students to store academic credits they earn from different accredited higher education institutions. When a student completes a course, the credits they earn will be added to their ABC account. Additionally, the new higher education regulatory system will separate

different roles, such as administration, accreditation, funding, and academic standard-setting, and these functions will be handled by independent, empowered agencies under the HECI.

VI. CONCLUSION

Education for a new generation of learners must fundamentally interact with the increasing disintegration and digitization of economies, requiring an altogether new set of competencies to keep up. Overall, the NEP 2020 addresses the demand for professionals in a wide range of sectors, including agriculture and artificial intelligence. Our country must be prepared for the future, and the NEP 2020 lays the framework for many young aspiring students to be equipped with the requisite skillsets, such as Skill India and Digital India, in order to develop "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat". To adapt to rapidly changing changes and convulsions, more evidence-based decision-making is essential. There will be a remarkable achievement. The NEP 2020 represents a historic point in higher education.

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