

Transforming Higher Education in India: A Review of the National Education Policy 2020's Impact

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Abstract

Higher education is being approached from a different perspective thanks to "the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020", a historic overhaul in India's educational system. This study explores the many ways that NEP 2020 will affect students, higher education institutions, and the educational environment overall. According to the examination of several studies, cooperation between governmental organisations, academic institutions, students, industry partners, and the general public will be necessary for the NEP 2020 influence on higher education to be successful. NEP 2020 also brings about a significant change with the creation of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), which are based on U.S. and U.K. institutions and provide high-quality education in many fields. Furthermore, since the pandemic-driven digital revolution, "Open Distance Learning (ODL)", which presently serves 11% of students in higher education, is anticipated to grow rapidly.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), Open Distance Learning (ODL), National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA), Higher education, Digital transformation, Multidisciplinary education, etc.

1 Introduction

To reform the country's educational system, the Indian government created "the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP)", an extensive policy framework. Higher education is one of the many facets of education that it encompasses. The NEP has the ability to have a big effect and seeks to significantly

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alter the higher education industry. These are a few of the main ways that the NEP has affected higher education [1]. Additionally, this strategy promotes a multidisciplinary approach to higher education by letting students choose courses from many fields. This method allows students to pursue a variety of professional choices and promotes their overall development. It encourages the convergence of academic and extracurricular activities, professional and vocational education, and the arts and sciences [2]. As a result, NEP suggests reorganising undergraduate programs to provide students more freedom and options. Students may tailor their education and develop skills related to their job aspirations because to this flexibility. By establishing a strong structure for certification, the NEP aims to improve the quality of higher education [3]. It seeks to create "the National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NHERA)", an independent organisation, to supervise the accreditation process and guarantee that schools uphold quality standards. Better teaching and learning outcomes will result from this focus on quality assurance [4].

A. Background of the New Education Policy-2020

Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the federal Cabinet enacted "the National Education Policy 2020" on July 29, 2020. On December 15, 2018, "Dr. K. Kasturi Rangan, a former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation", headed the Committee for Draft National Education Policy in presenting the Draft National Education Policy 2019 to the Ministry of Human Resource Development [5]. The National Education Policy is divided into four parts: Part I covers school education; Part II covers university education; Part III talks "Other Key Areas of Focus," which includes online education, adult education, and the promotion of Indian languages; and Part IV, "Making it Happen," addresses the policy's execution. Under NEP, a 5+3+3+4 curricular framework will take the place of the 10+2 framework. With three years of pre-schooling or Anganwadi, the new system calls for twelve years of schooling. The period between the ages of three and six is widely acknowledged as critical to a child's mental development [6].

B. Transformational Reforms in Higher Education

When given financial independence and educational framework, organisations and institutions will be able to expand their departments and offer more courses. However, universities will inevitably turn to the students if they do not get support from government agencies. The cost of tuition will rise significantly for all students enrolled in that university, not just those in that specific department [7]. Due to this and another feature of NEP, which is several options for leaving university, dropout rates will increase. If a student chooses to drop out of school in the middle of their course under the multiple exit and entrance option, they will be given the proper certification for the credits they have earned up to that point, which will be digitally recorded in an "Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)" [8]. A bachelor's degree, bachelor's degree with research, certificate, and diploma will be awarded for each year of a four-year program. More students will leave out each year as a consequence of financial autonomy placing a financial strain on them and making certification available [9]. This leads to a huge gap between pupils who can afford it and those who can't. Students with more financial resources will have more educational

possibilities and be able to take advantage of better prospects. This would once again result in the Right to Education Act being diluted [10].

C. Multidisciplinary Educational System

In light of these and other issues preventing the nation's higher education institutions from operating effectively and advancing, the policy calls for a "complete overhaul" of the system. Naturally, the policy makers would advocate a redesign of curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and educational administration. The strategy, it should be noted, proposes a somewhat fundamental overhaul of the higher education system. Autonomy, adaptability, and multidisciplinary are essential components of this change [11]. These essential components provide this educational stage life and freshness. Since the courses would be credit-based, the decision to remove the rigid barriers between disciplines and to allow students to freely join and depart will really liberate them. They are free to decide what they want to learn, how they want to learn it, and when. These days, one may choose to study music and physics or Sanskrit and maths. An institutional or formal contact between the social sciences, humanities, and sciences was not possible due to the previous, very rigid, stream segregation. Individuals were unable to grow in a healthy way as a result [12]. In order to develop towards holistic and diverse education, the Policy's plan to combine engineering courses with the arts and humanities at universities like IIT will undoubtedly inspire all creative beings. The development of human abilities—intellectual, artistic, social, physical, emotional, and moral—should result from this all-encompassing strategy [13]. Regarding multidisciplinary, the policy's main goal is to stop higher education from being fragmented by reorganising institutions into sizable clusters of multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and higher education institutions (HEIs), sometimes known as knowledge hubs. While the goal of all such multidisciplinary institutions is to participate in "teaching, research, and community engagement," some would become more focused on teaching, while others would focus more on research [14].

2 Literature Review

(Ashokkumar et al., 2025)[15] With the goal of changing the educational landscape of the nation, "the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)" represents a critical turning point in India's educational system. This study offers a thorough examination of NEP 2020, examining how it aligns with international trends in education, how it emphasises competency-based progression, and how it can affect teacher preparation, student learning results, and educational infrastructure. The policy's scientific relevance stems from its capacity to advance quality, innovation, and justice in Indian education, resolving long-standing issues and equipping students for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

(Kurien & Chandramana, 2020)[16] Amidst the global negativity brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic, the Government of India's announcement of "the New Education Policy (NEP 2020)" was a welcome shift and new information. Many were completely unprepared by the announcement of NEP 2020. Many educationists were surprised by the modifications that NEP 2020 suggested. Even both college and high school education have been equally impacted by the education policy, the majority of this article is on the National Education Policy 2020 and its implications on higher education. The key

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elements of NEP are also described in this study, together with an analysis of their implications for the current educational system.

(Rashmi & D.N, 2023) [4] With the goal of drastically changing the higher education business, NEP is poised to make a major splash. From 2018 to 2035, the NEP plans to increase the GER in higher education (including vocational education) from 26.3% to 50%, and from 2030 to 2030, it will rise to 100% in nursery through secondary school. Examining the effects of National Education Policy 2020 on rural education and identifying the difficulties encountered by Karnataka higher education instructors are the goals of this research. Secondary data has been gathered in order to achieve this goal. According to the current study, NEP 2020 has the potential to revolutionise higher education by encouraging inclusive education, research, flexibility, transdisciplinary learning, and innovation. Its effective use may create a higher education system that is prepared for the future and gives students the information and abilities they need.

(Naik & M.Radhika, 2022)[5] The new plan aims to make elementary and secondary education available to all students by 2030 and to raise "the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)" of college students to 50% by 2025. The education community has both possibilities and problems when NEP 2020 is implemented. This paper traces the educational system in India, reviews the National Education Policy (NEP) in light of higher education (HE), analyses the NEP's effects on educators, highlights the benefits and drawbacks of implementing the NEP, and describes the steps taken to introduce the NEP.

(Barman & Rabbani, 2024)[17] Well-considered and innovative educational strategies that enhance the economic and social situation are essential at all levels of schooling. Sharing specialised information and skills would help the country flourish. The aim of this research is to examine how the higher education system is affected by NEP 2020. This research used secondary, descriptive data that were analysed in line with the investigation's objective. Researchers collected the material in this case from a number of sources, including books, journals, reports, newspapers, and websites. The higher education system in India must be modernised, according to NEP 2020. NEP 2020 will result in a significant development in higher education in India.

(C, 2022) [13] Covering both urban and rural areas, "the new National Education Policy" was adopted by the Indian Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020. One hundred percent gross enrolment in K-12 schools and fifty percent in postsecondary institutions by 2030 and 2025, respectively, are the goals of the new strategy. In implementing NEP 2020, education has several opportunities and challenges. Opportunities and Difficulties Associated with the National Education Policy's Effect on Higher Education looks at India's educational past, the effects of the NEP on educators, the difficulties in implementing the NEP, and the NEP's prospects.

(Dhokare et al., 2022)[18] A multidimensional effect of NEP 2020 on higher education institutions, students, and the educational environment is examined in this research report. To meet policy objectives, institutions are modifying their curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation methods, according to the report. Faculty growth, infrastructural improvement, and financial sustainability are all examined to

highlight difficulties and triumphs. Exploring the policy's impact on regional inequalities and the digital divide, successes and places for improvement are discussed. How autonomy and regulation interact in higher education institutions reveals the challenges of preserving educational standards while stimulating innovation.

3 Conclusion

With a focus on teacher preparation, regulatory changes, and early childhood care, "the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020" aims to reshape higher education in India. The policy acknowledges the growing need for digital skills and interdisciplinary education, preparing students for a rapidly evolving global economy. However, its success depends on addressing key challenges such as funding, faculty development, equitable access, and regulatory frameworks. Ensuring regional balance, effective assessment methods, and accountability will be crucial. Indian universities are characterised by interdisciplinary islands of brilliance, including IIT, IIM, and AIIM. A major shift under NEP 2020 is the establishment of Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), modeled after institutions in the U.S. and U.K., to provide quality education across diverse disciplines. Additionally, Open Distance Learning (ODL), currently serving 11% of higher education students, is expected to expand significantly, particularly after the pandemic-driven digital transformation. Collaboration between government bodies, institutions, industry, and society will be essential for successful implementation. Continuous monitoring, dialogue, and adaptation will ensure that NEP 2020's vision for accessible, inclusive, and high-quality higher education becomes a reality, contributing to India's educational and economic progress.

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