

## **National Education Policy 2020**

### **Opportunities and Challenges in Higher Education**

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#### **Abstract:**

Education is a fundamental right of a person to attain human potency and to contribute to the process of national development. With the quickly changing employment scenario and global ecosystem it is necessary to adapt holistic, research based, learner centred education policy. India has decided to bridge the gap in the education policy and came up with a new one after a long period of 34 years. The Ministry of Education has issued a new education policy known as National Education Policy 2020. Lastly it was updated in 1986. NEP 2020 was formed by the suggestion of students, parents, educationalists and lots of other members who are directly or indirectly involved in the education sector. Very first time in India for making any policy, suggestion and consultation were taken into consideration on such a large scale. NEP is released to bring substantial changes to render our nation's knowledge and skilled based students and professionals. NEP 2020 is formulated with the vision to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in accordance with the United Nations by 2030. This article is focused on the key features of NEP in higher education institutes. An effort was made to identify the problems with the current policy that gave rise to NEP 2020. Also it tried to work out the challenges and opportunities based on implementation of NEP. It will be interesting to see how well NEP 2020 functions because it is a policy that has a lot of potential.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Higher Education, Dual Degree, Opportunities, Policy, GER.

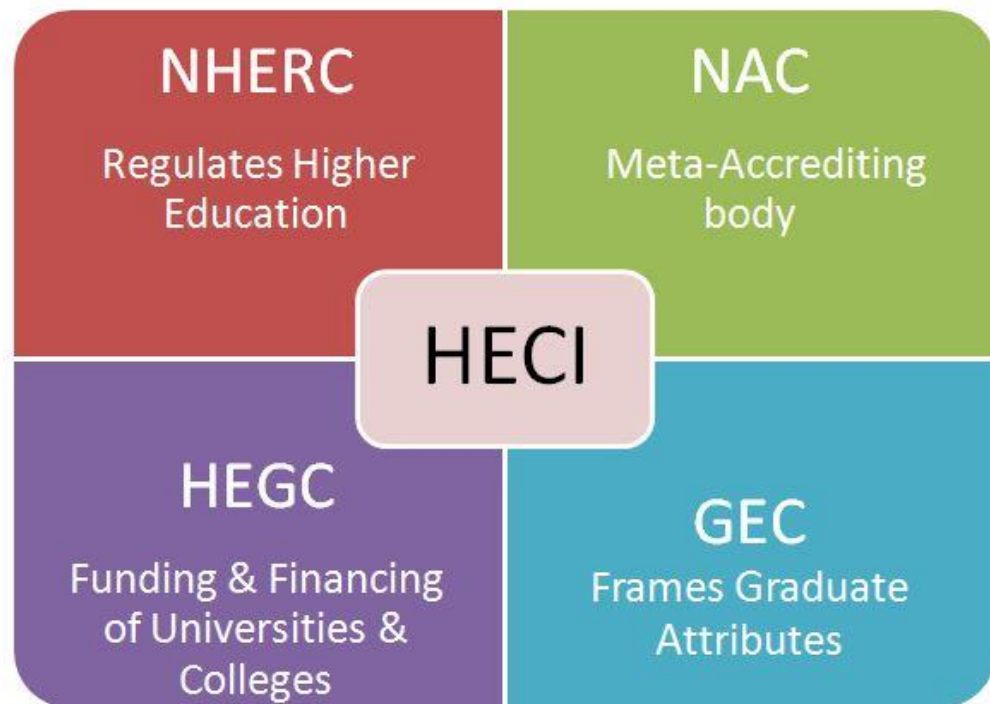
#### **Introduction:**

In NEP 2020 the highest priority is given to reach fundamental literacy and numeracy for all the students. Conceptual understanding, learning life skills, learning new technologies are

main features of NEP. The focus of this policy is to develop skills, encourage entrepreneurship and generate employment. Prominent attribute of this policy is the pedagogical structure of 5+3+3+4. This structure is designed as a foundational stage (3 to 8 years), preparatory stage (8 to 11 years), middle stage (11 to 14 years) and secondary stage (14 to 18 years). By 2030 the government intends to raise GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) to 100% in preschool to secondary level while by 2035 it aims to increase GER from 26.3% to 50% in higher education. The framework is formed for Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). Admission, teacher appointments, reservation quota exemption, support for research, staff layoffs, and other freedoms will be granted. Private institutions can set their own norms for admission and fees structure. But public institutions have to abide by directions given by the government in this regard. NEP prescribes for a multi-disciplinary approach of education which should focus on skill creation and make students employable. It suggests a 4-year undergraduate programme leading to a multidisciplinary bachelor's degree with a variety of exit alternatives. These will be put into practice and cover professional and vocational fields. Based on the recommendations of this policy the students can pursue dual degree programs either in physical or online or hybrid or ODL mode. The autonomous institutions can award self-degrees both at undergraduate and postgraduate level.

**Principal components of NEP:**

- Regulatory body of Higher Education
- A Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up to regulate higher education. The council's goal will be to increase the gross enrollment ratio. The HECI will have 4 verticals:
  - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC)
  - National Accreditation Council (NAC)
  - Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC)
  - General Education Council (GEC)



### **Changes in present education policy - Need of the hour**

#### **Downside of current education policy:**

The higher education system in India dealing with a number of significant issues like:

- Less focus on enhancing learning outcomes and cognitive skills
- Rigid discipline division, early specializations, and student streamlining into focused fields of study
- Limited teachers and institutional autonomy
- Less focus on research
- Scarcity of funding for research across all disciplines
- An ineffective regulatory system
- Impact on the quality of undergraduate education due to wide number of affiliated universities

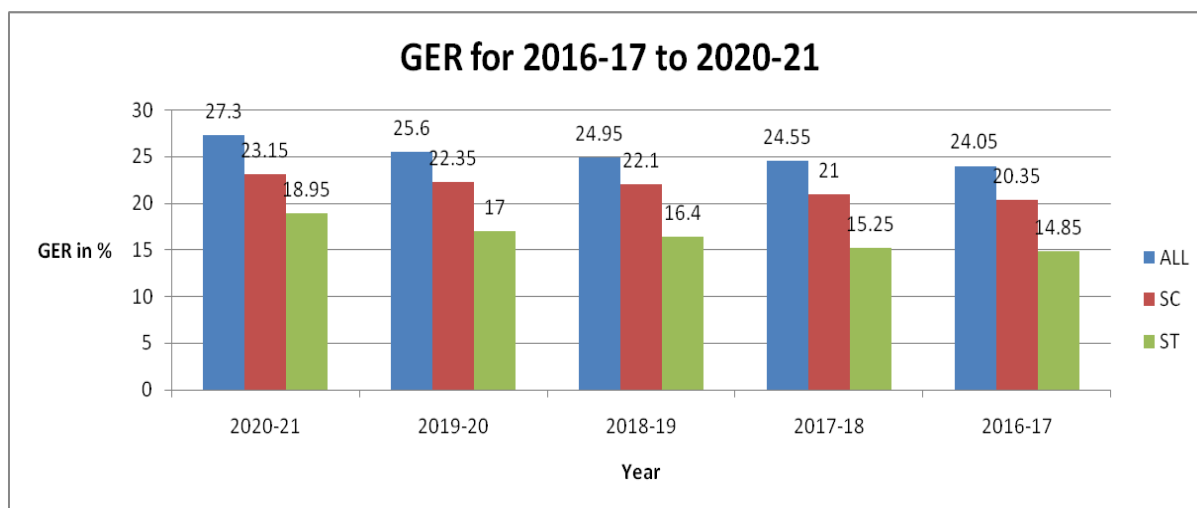
In order to produce good, intelligent, all-around, and creative people, higher education must be of top quality. Equitable and inclusive education motto should be adapted. Some of the features of NEP 2020 for higher education are discussed here.

### Overview of Higher Education in NEP 2020:

- **By 2035, aim to increase GER (Gross Enrollment Ratio) to 50% in higher education**

#### GER is lower.....Why?

- In India, passing the 12th grade is the primary requirement for admission to higher education. Poor enrollment after higher secondary education is the primary cause of the low GER.
- High dropout rates at the higher secondary level, gender distinction, language of learning, and socioeconomic pressures are some aspects of low GER. It definitely brings out progressive decline in the number of students enrolled in upper secondary education.



Though the above chart shows an increasing trend of GER, still it remains below the global average and much below that of the most industrialized nations.

#### How can GER be increased?

- To boost the eligible students to go for higher education. The government should make more of an effort to encourage pupils to pursue further secondary education.

- Higher education quality, accessibility, affordability and relevance for employment will definitely improve GER.
- To raise GER make sure there are enough qualified professors available in all higher education institutions, and see to it that there is capacity building at all levels of employment.
- Establish an environment that encourages higher education institutions to focus on research and innovation.
- Three or Four years of Undergraduate education with multiple exit options and relevant certification at different stages will raise GER.

### **Higher Education and regional languages:**

NEP has stressed on the use of regional languages at primary and secondary levels as medium of learning.

Merits of studying regional languages in higher education:

- Rapid rise in student enrollment.
- Reduce the disparity between the number of people who speak English and those who speak their native language.
- Positive impact on pupils' academic performance in schools and colleges.
- Enhanced parental support and involvement in studies.
- Improvement in performance in Science and Maths.

The question arises here whether it is practically possible to shift to a regional medium.

Issues related to learning in Native languages:

- Less accessibility of quality material for study in regional languages
- Difficulty in proper translations of study material in native languages
- Availability of faculty teaching in regional languages
- Managing the global standards
- Uncertainty of employability of graduates in regional languages
- Incapability for capturing the benefits of internationalization of education

Way forward:

- Mother tongue plus English approach
- Use of translation tools

### **Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education:**

The value of a multidisciplinary education has been steadily increasing due to the highly competitive environment. The term "Multidisciplinary Education" refers to a special method that aids students in learning certain courses or curricula from various fields. Multiple courses can be studied under one topic in a curriculum.

Hits of Multidisciplinary education:

- Choice for students to choose subjects, courses and programs from different institutes
- Discovering interest in teaching and learning path
- Pragmatism and flexibility

Misses of Multidisciplinary education:

- Distraction from core subjects
- Confusion of choosing subjects/courses
- Only jack, no master-No knowledge in-depth of core subject

### **Dual Degree Program:**

According to NEP 2020 dual degree programs are introduced both at UG and PG levels. This facility is initiated for students to get two degrees simultaneously for all available courses or for a combination of courses. This will definitely help students for their employment opportunities. Another facility available during dual degree programs is multiple entry and exit. If a student exits after the first year of honors he will get a certificate, exit in the second year will give a diploma and at the third year degree. After completion of four years he will get Bachelor's with research. To avail the facility of multiple entry and exit Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) are to be established to transfer the credits to secure admissions to other institutes later.

### **Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education:**

Any policy's implementation must take into account diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). NEP 2020 has made an effort to take into account all these crucial factors. Inclusion involves promoting a sense of value and empowerment among kids, instructors, and parents whereas diversity is about highlighting differences. Equity is about ensuring equitable access. NEP 2020 focuses on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).

This group includes:

- Gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals)
- Socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities)
- Geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts)
- Disabilities (including learning disabilities)
- Socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars)

To ensure equity and inclusion for socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, NEP 2020 has highlighted below guidelines:

- Specific scholarships
- Cash transfers with conditions to encourage parents to enroll their kids in school
- Employing bicycles as transportation
- Create an early childhood care and education ecosystem.
- Employment of counselors and educators who collaborate with and link children, parents, schools, and teachers to enhance attendance and academic results
- Put more emphasis on Special Education Zones (SEZ), which have a lot more SEDGs.
- To enhance access to high-quality education in every region of India.
- More schools similar to Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas and Kendriya Vidyalayas should be built throughout the nation, particularly in impoverished areas, Special Education Zones, and aspirational districts.

- Encourage SC, ST or OBC students to achieve their goals.
- Focused policies towards girls
- Inclusion of Gender Fund
- Alternative Schools/ Certificate Courses

### **Higher Education and Research:**

The scientific journey hasn't been good for India so far. India only spends about 0.69% of its GDP on research, compared to Germany, the US, China, and Japan. These countries spend 3%, 2.8%, 2%, and 3.2% of their GDPs on research, respectively according to the World Development Indicators released by the World Bank. This demonstrates that Indian R&D is not only insufficient but also unbalanced. The main causes of this awful performance are the industry's and higher education's poor participation, as well as the absence of cooperation between these organizations. R&D inadequacy in India can be attributed to a number of factors, including a lack of financing, sensitivity to taking risks, and a focus on the short term rather than the long term.

Vision of NEP 2020 towards Research:

- NRF(National Research Fund)

The NRF will aim to support research and innovation activities by providing seed money, funding, coordination, and oversight.

- Patent policy structure

A patent policy framework at the university level is necessary to support more patent applications and the engagement between academia and industry that the NEP envisions. The interests of all the parties concerned will be protected by such a policy. It will also provide an area which will help for research and guarantee adherence to all applicable rules and regulations. More patents with financial advantages will act as incentives for ongoing, sustained research efforts.

- A multidisciplinary approach in education



This approach will help for the purpose of formulating the proper research questions and achieving the necessary and pertinent results/solutions. It will also help in analytical and critical thinking abilities.

As a result, this strategy will play a key role in fostering innovation and research. It will be another important signpost for India's long-term and sustainable research endeavor.

### **Opportunities of NEP 2020:**

According to official figures, 11.4% of Indians with college degrees were unemployed. If we consider the figures 66% of India's population is under 35 and that half of the country's population is under 25. By 2027, India will account for over one-fifth of the world's workforce. The policy clearly aims to make India a global knowledge superpower as long as graduated students become employable. This will definitely increase GDP and here NEP plays a huge role in the creation of opportunities in many ways. Developed scientific temper, practical knowledge, value based education, vocational training will open doors to students in the huge world outside. Obviously more employment will have a positive impact on the Indian economy. Many students are unable to go abroad due to a variety of reasons. But as NEP is allowing foreign colleges to have their set up here the students will have more exposure. NEP-2020 promises to expand India's startup ecosystem and provide students and young people with new career and entrepreneurial options. NEP will affect society as well as the global community.

### **Conclusion:**

The New Education Policy that was proposed in 2020, we are now about to implement it. It is an ambitious move to rejuvenate the Indian education system with a modern approach. No matter how good this may look, the implementation of any policy has its own importance. An efficient implementation can make a policy a huge success and on the other hand, if the implementation is not good, it can be a huge disaster. The article discusses the features, opportunities, challenges and issues in the implementation of NEP 2020. The on-ground reality is that the most important 3 pillars- infrastructure, funding, and a well-detailed plan strategy are still missing. Many other factors have not been discussed in this paper but each

factor is genuine in its own term. The analysis of the goods and bads is very important to point out. The NEP 2020 may look good on paper but it is much more complicated in a Real-world environment.

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