



Importance of National Education Policy-2020 In Higher Education

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ABSTRACT:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a comprehensive framework introduced by the Government of India to reform the education system across the country. The policy includes several significant changes and recommendations for higher education. In this study, I have tried to show through qualitative document analysis how the National Education Policy 2020 has brought new changes in Indian higher education and taken it further. Some of the radical changes that NEP 20-20 has brought about in Indian higher education are: Multidisciplinary Approach, Flexibility and Choice, Curricular Reforms, Technology Integration, Research and Innovation, Quality Assurance, Internationalization, Inclusive Education. It's important to note that NEP 2020 sets a broad vision for the future of education in India, and its successful implementation depends on various factors, including government initiatives, institutional reforms, and stakeholder participation.

Key words: *NEP2020, Higher Education, Higher Education Council of India (HECI)*

INTRODUCTION:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which was introduced in India, outlines several significant reforms and changes in the education system. Among these reforms is the introduction of various measures to enhance and transform higher education in the country. Here's an introduction to the higher education provisions in NEP-2020:

1. **Multidisciplinary Approach:** NEP-2020 encourages a multidisciplinary approach in higher education, allowing students to choose subjects from different disciplines. This approach promotes holistic and well-rounded learning, enabling students to develop a broader understanding of various subjects and enhancing their critical thinking abilities.
2. **Flexibility and Choice:** The policy emphasizes providing students with flexibility and choice in selecting their courses and programs. It encourages a wide range of subjects, including vocational courses, skill-based education, and professional programs. This enables students to pursue their interests and develop skills relevant to the job market.
3. **Research and Innovation:** NEP-2020 focuses on promoting research and innovation in higher education institutions. It encourages the establishment of research-intensive universities, funding for research projects, and collaboration between academia and industry. These measures aim to foster a culture of innovation and enhance the quality of research in India.
4. **Technology Integration:** The policy recognizes the importance of technology in education. It emphasizes the integration of technology in teaching and learning processes, including online courses, e-learning resources, and virtual laboratories. This integration aims to enhance access to quality education and improve the overall learning experience for students.
5. **National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF):** NEP-2020 introduces the NHEQF, which is a comprehensive framework that allows for the seamless transfer of credits between different higher education institutions. This framework enables students to pursue education across various institutions and promotes a flexible and interconnected higher education system.
6. **Autonomy and Governance:** The policy promotes autonomy in higher education institutions, allowing them to have more decision-making powers in academic and administrative matters. It emphasizes the importance of transparent and effective governance structures, empowering institutions to function more efficiently and adapt to changing needs.
7. **International Collaboration:** NEP-2020 encourages international collaboration and partnerships in higher education. It aims to promote the exchange of knowledge, faculty, and students between Indian and foreign institutions. This collaboration facilitates the sharing of best practices, exposure to diverse perspectives, and the global mobility of students and researchers.

These are some of the key provisions introduced by the NEP-2020 to reform and enhance higher education in India. The policy envisions a more flexible, inclusive, and globally competitive higher education system that prepares students for the challenges of the 21st century.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

- What is the Importance of National Education Policy-2020 In Higher Education?
- What is stated about higher education in National Education Policy-2020?
- What is structure of higher education in National Education Policy-2020?
- What are salient features of NEP2020 related to higher education?

METHODOLOGY:

According to the nature of the topic, the researcher has used qualitative method. The present study is document analysis qualitative research. The primary source of the data collection to National Education Policy 2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The necessary secondary data was collected from various websites including those of Government of India, magazines, journals, other publications, etc. This data was then analysed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

SALIENT COMPONENT OF NEP RELATED TO HIGHER EDUCATION:

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) in India introduced several significant reforms and changes across various sectors of education, including higher education. One of the salient components of NEP-2020 related to higher education is the restructuring of the higher education system itself. Here are some key aspects:

1. **Holistic Multidisciplinary Education:** NEP-2020 emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach in higher education, allowing students to choose courses from various disciplines and promoting the integration of different fields. It encourages the breaking of traditional boundaries between arts, sciences, and other fields to foster a well-rounded and comprehensive education.
2. **Flexibility and Choice:** The policy promotes flexibility in course selection by allowing students to choose their subjects based on their interests and abilities. It encourages the integration of vocational education with mainstream education, providing students with multiple pathways to acquire knowledge and skills.
3. **Multiple Entry and Exit Points:** NEP-2020 introduces a new concept of academic credit transfer, enabling students to enter and exit higher education programs seamlessly. It allows students to earn credits for completed courses and facilitates the transfer of these credits if they wish to switch between institutions or take a break from their studies. This approach encourages lifelong learning and promotes a student-centric education system.
4. **Research and Innovation:** NEP-2020 emphasizes the importance of research and innovation in higher education. It encourages the establishment of research-intensive universities and institutions and aims to create a vibrant research ecosystem. The policy promotes the integration of research and teaching, providing students with opportunities to engage in hands-on research activities.
5. **Technology Integration:** NEP-2020 acknowledges the significance of technology in education and emphasizes the integration of technology in higher education. It promotes the use of online and digital learning resources, e-learning platforms, and virtual classrooms to enhance accessibility, quality, and reach of education.
6. **Autonomy and Governance:** The policy aims to grant higher levels of autonomy to higher education institutions, allowing them to make decisions regarding curriculum design, faculty recruitment, and resource allocation. It emphasizes the creation of an enabling regulatory framework that fosters academic freedom and institutional autonomy while ensuring accountability and quality assurance.

These are some of the salient components of NEP-2020 related to higher education. The policy envisions a comprehensive transformation of the higher education system in India, focusing on student-centric learning, multidisciplinary approaches, research, technology integration, and institutional autonomy.

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK (NHEQF):

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) is a policy document released by the Government of India that outlines the vision and goals for the transformation of the education system in the country. While the NEP-2020 emphasizes several key reforms across all levels of education, including school education, vocational education, and higher education, it does not specifically mention the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) by name.

However, the NEP-2020 does highlight the need for a more flexible and multidisciplinary approach to higher education. It emphasizes the importance of promoting critical thinking, creativity, and multidisciplinary learning among students. The policy encourages the integration of vocational education, liberal arts, and humanities within the higher education system, providing students with a holistic and well-rounded education.

In line with the goals of the NEP-2020, the implementation of a national qualification framework for higher education is crucial. While the NEP-2020 does not explicitly refer to the NHEQF, it aligns with the broader objective of establishing clear standards and promoting quality assurance in higher education.

It's worth noting that the NEP-2020 emphasizes the importance of flexible pathways and credit transfer within the higher education system. It encourages the adoption of a credit-based system that allows students to accumulate credits from different institutions and programs, promoting mobility and facilitating lifelong learning.

In summary, although the NEP-2020 does not explicitly mention the NHEQF, its goals and principles align with the objectives of a national qualification framework for higher education. The policy emphasizes flexibility, multidisciplinary learning, and credit transfer, which are essential elements for the development and implementation of a robust higher education qualification framework in India.

HIGHER EDUCATION COUNCIL OF INDIA (HECI):

As of my last knowledge update in September 2021, there is no specific mention of a "Higher Education Council of India" in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. However, it's important to note that the NEP 2020 proposes significant reforms in the higher education sector in India.

Under the NEP 2020, the regulatory framework for higher education in India is set to be revamped. The existing regulatory bodies, such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), are expected to be replaced with a single overarching regulatory body called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The HECI is intended to function as a common regulator for all higher education institutions in the country.

The NEP 2020 aims to promote autonomy, multidisciplinary education, and flexibility in the higher education system. It emphasizes the integration of vocational education, skill development, and research into the curriculum. The policy also encourages the establishment of multidisciplinary universities and colleges to offer a wider range of courses and promote interdisciplinary studies.

It's worth noting that the implementation of the NEP 2020 is an ongoing process, and there might have been updates or changes since my last update in September 2021. For the most accurate and up-to-date information, I recommend referring to official government sources or the Ministry of Education in India.

NEW AND FORWARD-LOOKING VISION FOR INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM:

The development of India into the democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and compassionate country preserving liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all that is envisioned in its Constitution depends greatly on higher education. The nation's economy and ability to sustain livelihoods are both greatly aided by higher education. Young Indians are more likely to pursue higher education as India transitions to a knowledge economy and society. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India has already laid down a comprehensive framework for transforming the higher education system. Building upon the NEP 2020, a new and forward-looking vision for India's higher education system can focus on the following key areas:

Implementation and Execution: The new vision should prioritize the effective implementation and execution of the reforms proposed in NEP 2020. This requires setting up clear timelines, establishing monitoring mechanisms, and ensuring the active involvement of all stakeholders.

- **Autonomy and Academic Freedom:** Encouraging institutional autonomy and academic freedom is essential to foster innovation, creativity, and critical thinking in higher education. The new vision should promote a culture that empowers institutions to make decisions in areas such as curriculum design, faculty recruitment, and research priorities.
- **Multidisciplinary Education:** NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary education. The new vision should support the establishment of interdisciplinary schools and programs that bring together various disciplines to address complex societal challenges. This will promote holistic learning and equip students with diverse skill sets.
- **Research and Innovation:** The new vision should strengthen the research ecosystem in higher education institutions. This can be achieved by increasing funding for research, establishing research centres of excellence, and promoting collaboration between academia, industry, and government organizations. Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship should also be a priority.
- **Industry-Academia Collaboration:** The new vision should further enhance collaboration between academia and industry. Industry partnerships can provide valuable insights into industry needs, facilitate internships and work-integrated learning opportunities, and promote the development of industry-relevant curricula. This collaboration will help bridge the gap between academia and the job market.
- **Technology Integration:** Leveraging technology can enhance access, equity, and quality in higher education. The new vision should focus on integrating technology effectively, including online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and digital resources. This will enable flexible and personalized learning experiences for students, especially in remote areas.

- **Inclusivity and Access:** The new vision should prioritize inclusivity and ensure equal access to quality higher education for all sections of society. This requires addressing the digital divide, providing scholarships and financial aid, and expanding higher education infrastructure in underserved regions. Special attention should be given to marginalized communities and persons with disabilities.
- **Teacher Training and Professional Development:** The new vision should emphasize comprehensive teacher training programs to enhance the quality of teaching in higher education. Continuous professional development opportunities, exposure to emerging pedagogical practices, and research-based teaching methodologies should be provided to faculty members.
- **Global Engagement:** Promoting global engagement and internationalization of higher education is crucial. The new vision should encourage student and faculty exchange programs, research collaborations with international institutions, and recognition of international qualifications. This will facilitate the exchange of knowledge and promote a global perspective among students.
- **Outcome-Based Education:** The new vision should focus on outcome-based education, where the emphasis is on acquiring relevant skills and competencies rather than rote learning. This involves incorporating practical learning experiences, project-based assessments, and industry-relevant learning outcomes in the curriculum.
- By aligning with these principles, India's higher education system can build upon the NEP 2020 and evolve into a progressive, inclusive, and globally competitive ecosystem that prepares students for the challenges of the future.

MAJOR CHANGE INTRODUCED BY NEP-2020 IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

One of the major changes introduced by the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) in higher education is the shift from the existing system of undergraduate education, which consists of a three-year bachelor's degree, to a more flexible and comprehensive approach. NEP-2020 proposes the introduction of a four-year multidisciplinary undergraduate program with multiple exit options. Here are the key features of this change:

Four-year Undergraduate Program: NEP-2020 recommends the implementation of a four-year undergraduate program, which will provide students with a broader and more holistic education. This extended duration allows for greater in-depth study of chosen subjects, integration of research and experiential learning, and the opportunity to explore diverse fields.

Multiple Exit Options: The new undergraduate program will have multiple exit points, which means students can choose to exit after completing specific durations of study and receive appropriate certification. For example, students who complete one year will receive a certificate, those who complete two years will earn a diploma, and those who complete three years will be awarded a bachelor's degree. This flexibility provides students with options to pursue higher education or join the workforce at different stages.

Academic Bank of Credits: NEP-2020 proposes the establishment of an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), which will be a digital repository of academic credits earned by students for the courses they complete. This credit-based system enables students to accumulate credits from multiple institutions and transfer them seamlessly, facilitating mobility and allowing for the recognition of prior learning.

Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Studies: The new undergraduate program emphasizes interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches. It encourages students to pursue courses from multiple disciplines, breaking the traditional silos between arts, sciences, and other fields. This integration of diverse subjects aims to foster critical thinking, creativity, and a comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

Emphasis on Research and Experiential Learning: NEP-2020 highlights the importance of research and experiential learning in higher education. It encourages undergraduate students to actively engage in research projects, internships, industry collaborations, and community-based activities. This hands-on approach aims to develop practical skills, problem-solving abilities, and a deeper understanding of real-world challenges.

Focus on Professional and Vocational Education: NEP-2020 promotes the integration of professional and vocational education with mainstream academic programs. It seeks to bridge the gap between academic learning and industry requirements, enabling students to acquire both theoretical knowledge and practical skills relevant to their chosen professions.

These changes introduced by NEP-2020 in the higher education system aim to create a more flexible, comprehensive, and inclusive learning environment. The emphasis on multidisciplinary education, research, experiential learning, and the integration of vocational training prepares students for the dynamic demands of the modern world and equips them with a diverse skill set.

FINDINGS:

As of my last knowledge update in September 2021, the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 had been introduced in India with the aim of transforming the education system, including higher education, in the country. While I cannot provide specific details about any developments or changes that may have occurred since then, I can provide an overview of the key goals and objectives of the NEP 2020 for higher education.

The NEP 2020 emphasized several important aspects related to higher education, including:

1. **Flexibility and multidisciplinary education:** The policy encouraged a multidisciplinary approach, allowing students to choose subjects from various disciplines and providing them with a broader education experience.

2. Research and innovation: The NEP 2020 aimed to promote research and innovation in higher education institutions by establishing a National Research Foundation (NRF) and encouraging collaboration between academia, industry, and government.
3. Holistic development: The policy emphasized holistic development, focusing not only on academic learning but also on developing life skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities among students.
4. Quality assurance: The NEP 2020 aimed to establish a robust quality assurance framework to ensure the standardization and improvement of higher education institutions. Accreditation and assessment mechanisms were proposed to ensure the quality of education.
5. Technology integration: The policy recognized the importance of technology in education and advocated for the integration of technology in teaching and learning processes. It aimed to promote online and digital learning resources and platforms.
6. Internationalization: The NEP 2020 aimed to promote internationalization of higher education by encouraging the establishment of international collaborations, attracting foreign students, and enabling credit transfer and mobility programs.
7. Professional development of faculty: The policy emphasized the importance of continuous professional development for faculty members, including training in the latest teaching methods, research, and pedagogical practices.
8. Autonomy and governance: The NEP 2020 proposed greater autonomy for higher education institutions, enabling them to make decisions regarding curriculum, faculty recruitment, and governance, while ensuring appropriate regulatory mechanisms and accountability.

It is important to note that the implementation and impact of the NEP 2020 may vary over time and depend on various factors, including government initiatives, institutional capacity, and stakeholder engagement. For the latest and most accurate information on the NEP 2020 and its specific implications on higher education, I recommend referring to official government sources and updates from relevant educational authorities in India.

CONCLUSION:

The policy makes a wide range of modifications and generally reads as a fairly progressive text with a clear understanding of the existing socio-economic landscape and the possibility of future unpredictability. An entirely new set of skills are needed to keep up with the growing dematerialization and digitalization of economies, which is what education for a new generation of learners must essentially address. With the pandemic hastening the trend towards digitalization and disruptive automation, it appears to be an even more important prerequisite now. In its whole, the NEP 2020 tackles the need to train experts in a range of disciplines, from agriculture to artificial intelligence. India must be equipped for the future. Additionally, the NEP 2020 lays the door for many young, ambitious students to acquire the necessary skill set.

The new education policy has an admirable vision, but its effectiveness in bringing about a cogent structural transformation will depend on how well it can be integrated with other government policy initiatives like Digital India, Skill India, and the New Industrial Policy, to name a few. Therefore, policy linkages can ensure that education policy takes into account and learns from Skill India's experience in working more actively with the corporate sector to create vocational education curriculum in order to make it successful. To respond to the fast-changing transmutations and disruptions, there is also a need for more evidence-based decision-making. NEP has comfortably included provisions for real-time evaluation systems and a framework for collaborative monitoring and review. Instead of relying on a new education policy for a change in curriculum every ten years, this will enable the educational system to continuously reform itself. This accomplishment alone will be impressive. Higher education is at a turning point with the NEP 2020. What will make it genuinely ground-breaking is effective and timely deployment.

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