



An Appraisal of National Education Policy 2020 of India for Higher Education

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Abstract

Every country requires a well-defined, imaginative, and futuristic education policy as it is the primary driver of socio-economic advancement. Different countries adopt various educational systems based on distinct traditions and cultures. India is one such country that has distinct and diverse, traditions and cultures. Therefore, the present study emphasizes the New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) launched by the Government of India. This policy endeavors to provide quality education to transform the citizens of India into a more equal and prosperous literary community. It also bridges the gap between the current state of learning outcomes with high quality, equity and integrity in the system. It is a positive move that results in a paradigm shift in India's educational system, thus transforming it into one, that is modern, progressive, and has an equal structure. In addition to highlighting the vision, focus thrust areas, and principal guidelines, the current article aims to explain the background and emergence of NEP 2020 in higher education and analyze stakeholder responses to a survey that was administered with teacher and student assistance. A total of 141 responses were received from teachers and students. Survey results indicate that 65% of respondents agree on the need for policy change, with 74.2% believing that NEP 2020 will positively influence students' academic and career prospects. The concept of multiple entry/exit points in degree programs received favorable feedback from over 50% of participants, who view it as a step towards greater educational flexibility. Additionally, 81% of respondents support the digitization of education, acknowledging its role in enhancing accessibility and resilience, especially in the context of disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the responses, most of the respondents believe that the introduction of foreign universities and the digitization of education will improve their chances for employment.

Keywords: Education System, Education Policy, NEP2020, Paradigm Shift, Reforms

1. Introduction

The Cabinet of the Indian Union approved the New National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020), presented by Government of India (GOI) on July 29, 2020, outlining new concept for the Indian education system. A National Conference on Reimagining Indian Universities was organized by The Association of Universities from 17 to 18 August 2020, where many eminent scholars shared their views (Panditrao, 2020; Mamidala, 2020; Rupesh & Umesh, 2021). AIU has compiled an inspiring book entitled "Reimagining Indian Universities" (Mamidala, 2020). All this is aimed at explaining NEP2020 in depth. We cannot solve our problems with the same mentality that we used to create them," Albert Einstein famously said. As a result of the corollary and the same logic, the present-day difficulties, particularly those relating to education and it is impossible to solve the implementation of policies relating to it using the old/out-of-date policies India is changing, and Education policy in the "new" India needed to be revised, reinvented and reimagined. An apt solution to all these is the New Education Policy 2020. (Anand et al., 2021). The implementation of policy depends to a greater extent on stakeholders (Aithal & Shubhrajyotsna, 2020; Aithal & Aithal, 2020). Deb's (2020) article, "Vision for Foreign Universities in the National Education Policy 2020: A Critique," examined the goal of internationalizing Indian higher education as part of the NEP 2020. Suryavanshi, S. (2020) compared teacher education in Indian and Chinese universities and found that autonomy is crucial for faculty and institutional leaders to innovate in teaching, research, and service. The paper suggests that NEP-2020's proposal for individual autonomy in universities is a positive step forward. Pawan (2020) studies the implications of NEP 2020 with a detailed survey from stakeholders. Very few studies were conducted on quantitative survey of NEP till date (Chandvekar et al., 2023). Qualitative analysis of NEP has been done by some researchers who felt that NEP is going to get mixed response from Indians. (Satish et al., 2022; Yoganandam et al., 2022; Rahul et al., 2022; Sunita et al., 2022). NEP 2020's goal of integrating vocational training with academic learning is similar to the Finnish model, but with a greater emphasis on incorporating local context and needs. (sahlberg, 2011). The focus on holistic development in NEP 2020 is consistent with Singapore's attempts to equip pupils for a constantly changing world (Tan, 2018). South Korea has deployed considerable digital resources and e-learning platforms as part of its educational reform efforts, particularly during the COVID-19 epidemic. This overseas example aligns with NEP 2020's goals to improve digital infrastructure in Indian schools (Kim, 2021). Germany's education system is well-known for its flexible routes, which include vocational training and dual education programs that combine job and study. NEP 2020's emphasis on vocational education and career readiness is similar to Germany's approach (Kreckel, 2012). NEP has visions and goals that will affect all five pillars, giving impetus to atmanirbharbharat campaign. The systematic implementation of the proposed policy through the creation of autonomous, multidisciplinary, postgraduate higher education institutions with students of various disciplines at UG, PG, and research levels, led by highly focused and dedicated professors, as owned intellectual will create an atmosphere of innovative and lateral thinking.

2. Development of Indian Education System

Knowledge sharing and education is a long and strong tradition in India. Ancient India had at least 15 universities or colleges, including Mithila, Takshashila, and Nalanda to name a few. They disintegrated and were utterly destroyed as a result of frequent incursions by barbarian invaders and attackers. However, the "Gurukul" institution preserved the rich ethos of teachings and customs. The British Empire ushered in a new era of university foundations dominated by the English language. It was built and maintained a system of mediocrity and slavery. Scientific

work, critical analytical thinking, and new thinking were mercilessly despised and repressed. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Commission attempted to revise the old policy and align it with the present and the future in the year 1948. Kothari Commission, Tandon Committee, Yashpal committee worked on the development of education reforms.

3. National Education Policy- Vision

It provides an educational system that is entrenched in Indian culture and from which India benefits directly. In a constantly changing world the policy emphasizes on the curriculum and pedagogy which develop a deep respect for fundamental duties and constitutional values, an attachment to their own country, and a clear understanding of their own roles and responsibilities in students. The policy also accentuates in implanting pride of being Indian citizen, in thoughts, soul, brainpower, and conducts. The policy of NEP is to improve knowledge, skills in the students, values of the country, and positive attitudes within the learning community that will lead to a supporting the good governance, non-violating human rights, sustainable lifestyle and sustainable development of the nation leading to a true global citizen.

4. Higher Education

Higher education is essential to improve human and social well-being and transform India into the democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured and compassionate society envisioned in its constitution that upholds freedom, equality, brotherhood and justice for all. Higher education makes a substantial contribution to the nation's long-term economic development and sustainable livelihoods. As India evolves into a knowledge economy and society, an increasing number of young Indians are likely to pursue higher education.

The following are some of the major problems facing the Indian higher education sector today: a highly fragmented higher education ecosystem; a rigid separation of disciplines; limited access, especially in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas; limited autonomy of teachers and institutions; less focus on research; and the lack of funding for competitive and peer-reviewed research in all disciplines; Undergraduate education is of poor quality due to large, affiliated universities. The policy vision for the current system includes the following key changes:

(1) The primary goal is to develop good, intellectual, versatile, and creative people. (2) Establishment of new universities and colleges (HEIs) that offer multidisciplinary undergraduate and post graduate programs. (3) Redesigning the curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (4) Establishment of National Research Foundation. (5) Regulation of Higher education by a single regulator in a lighter but firm manner.

4.1 Institutional Restructuring and Consolidation

The fundamental objective of this New Education Policy is to eliminate the fragmentation of higher education by transforming universities, colleges and university groups into giant interdisciplinary universities, colleges and university groups / knowledge centres, each targeting 3,000 or more students. To make the most of facilities and resources and build thriving interdisciplinary communities, all colleges (universities) are anticipated to become multidisciplinary institutions by 2040 and enrol more students. Since this process will take time, all universities intend to become multidisciplinary by 2030 and then progressively raise their student population to the appropriate level. At least one major multidisciplinary university to be established in or near each district by 2030. By 2035, the target is to raise the gross

enrolment rate in higher education, including vocational training, to 50 percent from present 26.3 percent in 2018. Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes will be available to institutions. The higher education sector as a whole will strive to create an integrated system that includes professional and vocational education.

4.2 Towards a More Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

In Banabhatta's *Kadambari*, an ancient Indian literary work, knowledge of the 64 Kaala's or arts, was described as a good education. The concept of a 'knowledge of many arts,' or liberal understanding of arts, must be reintroduced into Indian teaching as it a need of an hour in Twenty first century education system. All the courses technical, professional and vocational must be holistic. Humanities, arts, sciences should transit technical profession courses such as basics in electrical engineering, mechanics and vice versa. Creative and adaptable studies allow for productive groupings of subjects thus offering a variety of entry and exit points, removing previous fixed limits and creating new prospects for lifelong learning. Communication, debate, research, discussion, and interdisciplinary thinking will be prioritized in education. Providing multiple exit options for undergraduate courses with an appropriate certification in any field or area, including career, professional, and technical directions is a positive step towards productive and innovative development of the country. For instance, After One year student receives certificate, after two years a diploma, after three years, a bachelor's degree and after four years and multidisciplinary degree. Variety of master's degree programmes can be offered by HEIs. Universities will focus on research and innovation by creating incubators, technology development centres, centres in frontier study areas, stronger links between industries, and establishing universities and multidisciplinary research, including research in the humanities and social sciences.

4.3 Optimal Learning Environments and Support for Students

Universities and their faculties will be free to experiment with a variety curricula, pedagogy, and evaluation methods. CBCS is updated to encourage creativity and flexibility. Students' progress will be assessed based on a criteria-based grading system, resulting in a fairer and more balanced system of results. Professional education and career counsellors and counselling are offered to all students in order to safeguard their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. online learning provides a logical means to expand access to high-quality higher education.

4.4 Motivated, Energized, and Capable Faculty

Faculties are free to construct their own curriculum and pedagogical approaches, including the selection of textbooks and reading materials, assignments, and assessments, within the approved framework. In order to motivate and enable them for a more creative and progressive work offering innovative teaching, research and services for the teaching staff. Appropriate rewards, promotions, recognition, and the move to institutional leadership all help to encourage excellence. In the meanwhile, faculties that do not adhere to the minimum standards will be held accountable. The services and promotions of the faculty are carried out in accordance with a transparent and clearly defined procedure.

4.5 Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

The approach to equity and inclusion in schools and higher education must be consistent. The following actions are to be adopted by the Government and HEI's.

4.5.1. Steps to be taken by Government

Provide appropriate government funding for SEDG training, clear goals for a higher GER for SEDGs, improve gender balance in college admissions, improve access by establishing higher quality universities in emerging towns and SEZ with a greater number of SEDG, development and support.

4.5.2. Steps to be taken by HEI's

Reduce the cost of higher education, conduct information campaigns on opportunities and scholarships, Make the curriculum more wide-ranging, developing additional courses in Indian and bilingual languages and increase the employability prospects of higher education.

4.6 Catalysing Quality Academic Research in All Fields through a new National Research Foundation

With the rapid change in climate, population explosion, growing digital marketplace, and the advent of artificial intelligence, machine learning, dynamic research ecosystem is necessary more than ever. Despite the critical need for research, India currently spends only 0.69 percent of GDP on research and innovation, compared to 2.8 percent in the US, 4.3 percent in Israel. and 4.2 percent in South Korea. National Research Foundation (NRF) is established to improve research.

The main tasks of the NRF will be to: (a) fund competitive and peer-reviewed grant applications of all types and in all disciplines; b) establish, expand and facilitate research in academic institutions, particularly in universities and colleges where research is still in its infancy, supervising said institutions; and (c) act as a liaison between researchers and the relevant branches of government and industry, so that research scientists receive constant support.

4.7 Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education

Four autonomous verticals are established within the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) to control the four key components, namely regulation as the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). With the exception of medical and legal education, it will be the "only" regulator of all education, including teacher training. The National Accreditation Council (NAC) evaluates institutions on the basis of infrastructure, transparency, governance and results. Funding is provided by the Higher Education Scholarship Council (HEGC). Learning outcomes are determined by the General Education Council (GEC) based on a recently created National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQR).

4.8 Effective Governance and Leadership for Higher Education Institutions

At all HEIs, steps will be taken to assure high-quality leadership and develop an institutional culture of excellence. For the next 15 years, all Indian universities will strive to become autonomous and autonomous institutions with the aim of excellence and innovation under the supervision of a carefully appointed BOG with tiered accreditation and accompanying tiered autonomy. An institution's Board of Trustees has the authority to run the institution without outside intervention. BOG is responsible for complying with all regulatory guidelines from HECI to NHERC.

5. Analysis of Survey on NEP 2020

NEP 2020 is the most recent topic that many people were following, but clear facts and figures required for further investigation. NEP 2020 will have an impact on students' lives, teachers' working styles, and changes in infrastructure or facilities in educational institutions. Parents must adjust their mindset to the new educational system, as they may have been accustomed to the old system for the past 34 years. Overall, this is a significant change in the education system that will occur in the near future. To gain a deeper understanding, the author created a survey and used a Google form to collect responses. Few questions of the survey are as follows:

- What is the impact of replacing 34-year-old education policy of 1986
- Multiple entry and exit system are proposed in NEP 2020 in graduation degree. Is it good or bad
- Is constitution of single regulatory body being sufficient to handle higher education across the country
- How good it is proposed, establishment of National Research Foundation using information technology to the maximum extent.
- Is Emphasis on multi-disciplinary education and flexibility in higher education required
- Will Introduction of new age technologies helps in better employment opportunities.
- Will establishment of campus in India by top 100 universities of the world enhance the educational standards.
- Do you believe that NEP 2020 will have a positive or negative impact on students' academic and career choices?
- What is your opinion of the NEP 2020's course selection flexibility?

A snapshot of the google form is presented in Figure 1.

Questionnaire on NEP 2020

Form description

1. E-mail Address
Short answer text

2. Name of the participant
Short answer text

3. Age Group of the participant *
Short answer text

4. Gender of the participant *
Short answer text

5. Do you know that NEP 2020 will replace 34 year old Education Policy of 1986. *

Change in education policy is necessary

Old system is fine

Creates confusion

6. Multiple entry and exit system is proposed in NEP 2020 in graduation degree. Is it good or bad *

It dissolves the seriousness of the course

It will bring back the dropout students

Figure 1: Survey Questionnaire

A total of 141 responses were obtained from the "Questionnaire on NEP 2020" survey that was distributed among Telangana's college-bound students and teachers. The main goal of the survey was to find out what the educators and students who are currently working in the field of education thought about the NEP 2020. Based on the analysis of the responses received, the interpretation on some of the questions is as follows:

1) Responses came from the age group of 18 to 65 years. 61% of the responses received from the age group 18-45, and remaining in the age group of 46-65. Based on the responses, it seems to be a mix of old and new system consideration. Out of the 141 respondents, 69% are teachers and 31% are students. 56% of the respondents are male and 44% of the respondents are female.

2) Change in policy is required was supported by 65% of the people, whereas old system is good is supported by 30% , and only 5 % people have expressed there is a need for more clarity to avoid confusion.

3) The proposal for multiple entry and exit points in graduation is a novel concept that was not previously present in the educational system. The majority of respondents favored the proposal. The new system will save students' time, effort, and year if they discontinue their studies for any reason, unlike the previous system. This step will motivate students to continue studying in future. The only drawback of this step is that it reduces the seriousness of the course, as students accept the proposed gaps of entry and exit. More than 50% of the respondents favored this concept.

4) Another significant change proposed in NEP 2020 is that UGC, AICTE, and other organizations have long served as regulatory bodies, granting permission to open colleges and universities across the country. According to the new proposal, these various bodies will be replaced by a single regulatory body that will work to regulate. The respondents have different perspectives on this question. According to respondents, 76% felt that the burden and chances of corruption may increase as powers are decentralized. Following that, there will be a delay in decision making because there will be a single body with the regulatory and permission workload from the entire nation.

5) As per the responses received for the introduction of information technology in teaching, 81% of the respondents felt that NEP will prepare stakeholders to be future ready for situations such as COVID-19. Digitalizing content requires a one-time effort but allows for long-term use and convenient viewing. Whereas 19% of the respondents felt that there will be lack of the flavor of old-fashioned interactive classroom teaching, which cannot be replaced; many of us have gone through the old-fashioned route in the educational system. However, the change is necessary for advancement and collaboration with the technology.

6) As per the responses received for the advantage of establishing foreign university campuses in India, 75% of the respondents felt , there will be knowledge transfer on latest technologies, whereas, 25% of the respondents felt, there will be dilution in traditional based education.

7) As per the responses received for positive or negative impact on Academic and Career choices of NEP, 74.2% respondents felt it is positive and remaining 25.8% felt it will have a negative impact.

8) As per the responses received for opting courses in NEP 2020, choosing a subject was simple for 42%, difficult for 30%, and complex for 28% of respondents. The survey results are presented in graphical form in Figure 2.

The results from the survey reflect a generally positive outlook on NEP 2020, with strong support for its innovative aspects. However, the implementation will require careful consideration of the concerns raised, particularly regarding regulatory changes and the

integration of technology. Addressing these concerns proactively and ensuring a balanced approach to flexibility and traditional methods will be crucial for the successful adoption and effectiveness of NEP 2020.

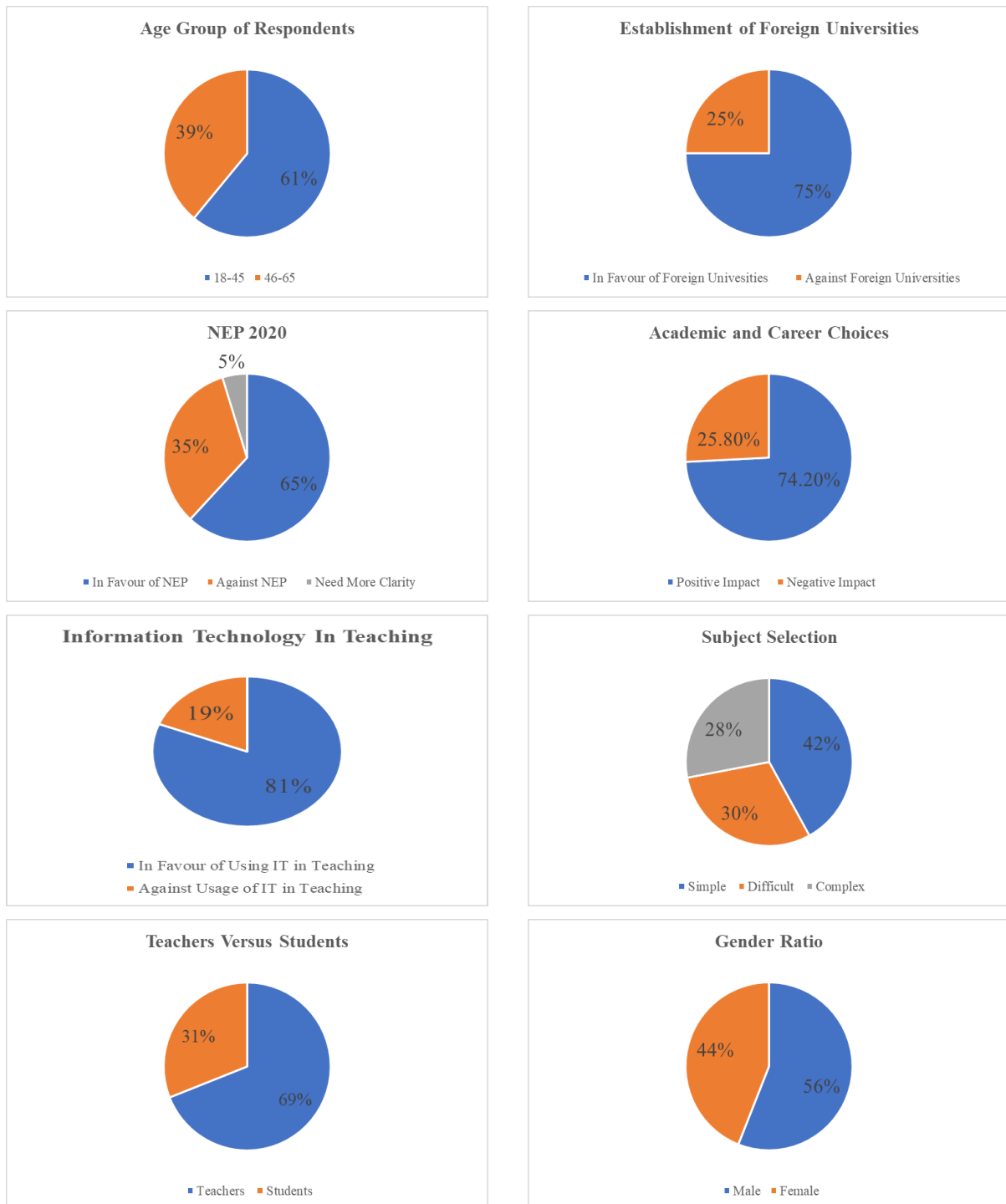


Figure 2: Pie Charts showing the responses of the survey

6. Conclusion

The Government of India presented NEP2020 with much thought, optimism and fanfare. The range of education proposed by is extremely wide, prudent and comprehensive. There are no

specific topics, boundaries, or subdivisions. The forecast period is significantly extended, lasting almost 20 years or more. The spotlight is on a multidisciplinary, holistic and broad-based training. Another approach is vocational training, beginning at the primary and upper primary school phase itself. At the university / college level, there can be no subject / college left, but instead become holistic and multidisciplinary performance systems. It is preceded by a unique nomenclature, "University". There should be MERU, research should be in the foreground. One body of National Research Foundation is inspection body. HECI is supposed to be in place to regulate higher education.

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