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## NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: A SHORT REVIEW

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**Abstract:** Education plays a powerful role in building a nation. This leads to economic and social progress and decides the future of the country and the destiny of its people as well. The impacts of education are long-lasting in terms of growth and development of the nation and its citizens. The role of education and its importance cannot be ignored in today's scenario. The growth and development can be seen if we compare the pre independence and post-independence era. After 34 years, Indian Govt. planned to change the way we study, this is the third amendment in the education policy. There are many changes proposed in new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that would certainly affect all the stakeholders. The NEP 2020 aims at making India a global knowledge superpower and to provide a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary liberal education to every aspirant. It also aims to raise the current gross enrolment ratio (GER) to 50% by 2035. The new Education policy is based on the recommendations by an expert committee headed by Dr. Kasturirangan, former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). In this article, the highlights of the NEP policy at school and higher education levels, merits of NEP and suggestions to be introduced in NEP to make it more effective are described.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Higher Education, Vocational Education, Multidisciplinary Universities.

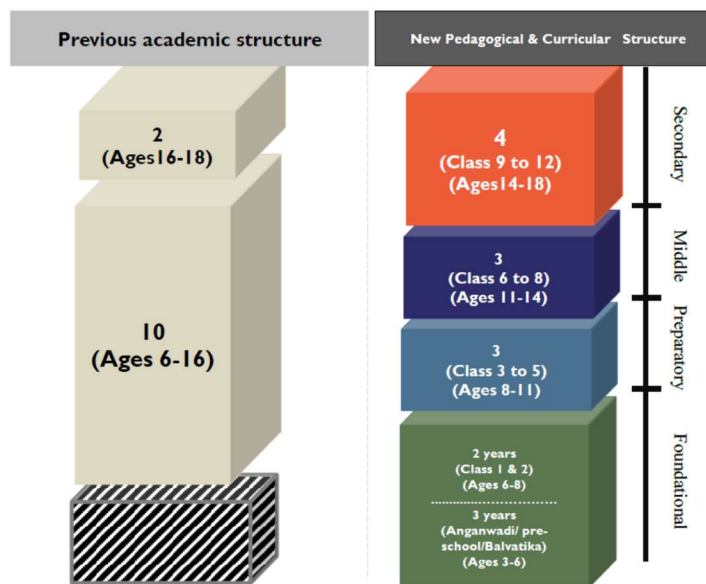
### 1. Introduction

Each and every country plans their education system to progress further. In India, the first education policy was introduced in 1968 by the former prime minister of India Mrs. Indira Gandhi. The second education policy was formulated by Shri Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1986, with some amendments by the Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao Government in 1992. The third major reformatory policy was introduced recently in 2020, by the incumbent Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi. It has been seen during the recent years that Indian education system fell behind in the list of better-quality universities around the world so the government and the entire system decided to take some concrete steps to improve the matter. Therefore, the Indian government decided to change India's education policy after 34 years. In 2017, the Central Government constituted a committee to formulate a new education policy in the chairmanship of Dr. Kasturirangan, the former chairman of ISRO. The committee drafted the National Education Policy and submitted in 2019 and after a rigorous consultation process Government of India approved the draft in July 2020 in the form of National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020). NEP 2020 aims to promote education at all economic classes and to include the common people in the mainstream. The main objective of NEP 2020 is to promote holistic experiential, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning. In addition, the NEP 2020 focuses on reducing the curriculum content to make space for critical thinking and in turn, develop individuals with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills instilled in them.

### 2. School level Education

According to NEP 2020, the major change in the school education is shifting of 10+2 system to a 5+3+3+4 system. The highlights of NEP-2020 at school level are given as

- The 10+2 structure has been replaced with 5+3+3+4, consisting of 12 years of school and 3 years of Anganwadi or pre-school. This will be split as follows: Foundational stage (ages 3 to 8), Preparatory stage (ages 8 to 11), Middle stage (ages 11 to 14) and a Secondary stage (ages 14 to 18) as shown in Fig.1.
- According to the policy, the mother tongue or local or regional language is to be the medium of instruction in all schools up to Class 5 (preferably till Class 8 and beyond). Under the NEP 2020, Sanskrit will be offered at all levels and foreign languages from the secondary school level.
- Instead of exams being held every year, school students will sit only for three-at Classes 3, 5, and 8. Assessment in other years will shift to a "regular and formative" style that is more "competency-based, promotes learning and development, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity".
- Board exams will continue to be held for Classes 10 and 12 but even these will be re-designed with holistic development as the aim. Standards for this will be established by a new national assessment center-PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development).
- The policy aims at reducing the curriculum load of students and allowing them to become more "multi-disciplinary" and "multi-lingual". There will be no rigid separation between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities and between vocational and academic stream.



**Fig. 1.** Fig shows the basic difference between the older 10+2 academic system and new pedagogical and curricular structure (5+3+3+4) [1].

### 3. Higher Education

Higher education (HE) plays a crucial role for the overall development of any nation, and quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individual. NEP 2020 has been designed to overcome all the flaws, gaps and limitations of old education policy. Highlights of NEP 2020 are given below [2]

- HE monitoring and controlling institutions like UGC, AICTE, MCI, DCI, INC, etc will be merged with the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a single regulator for higher education institutes.
- The current Accreditation Institutions like NAAC and NAB will be replaced by a robust National Accreditation Council (NAC).
- There will be establishment of an apex body National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund research in Universities and colleges and to promote strong research culture and research potential in higher education.
- Consolidation of existing fragmented HE institutions into two types of Multidisciplinary Universities (MU) and Multidisciplinary Autonomous Colleges (AC) with the campus having more than 3,000 students. The timeline for all HE Institutions to become multi-disciplinary is by 2040.
- Multidisciplinary Universities will be of two types as (1) Research-intensive Universities, and (2) Teaching-intensive Universities.
- Every existing College will develop into either degree granting autonomous College or migrated into a Constituent College of University and becomes fully a part of the University.
- The Gross Enrolment Ratio in HE including vocational education will increase from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
- HE institutions which deliver the highest quality will get more incentives from the Government.
- All existing affiliated Colleges will eventually grow autonomous degree-granting colleges with the mentoring support of affiliated University by improving and securing the prescribed accreditation level.
- The various nomenclatures used currently such as deemed to be university, affiliating university, central university, affiliating technical university, unitary university, etc. will be replaced by 'University' after fulfilling the required criteria as per norms.
- Research will be included in UG, PG level and have a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach.
- Pedagogy in HE institutions will focus on communication, presentation, discussion, debate, research, analysis, and interdisciplinary thinking.



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- An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) will be established which would digitally store the academic credits of all registered candidates earned from various recognized HE institutions (SWAYAM & ODL mode) that can be taken into account while awarding degrees by the college or University.
- The National Testing Agency (NTA) will be established to conduct similar entrance examinations for undergraduate and graduate admissions in all Universities. This will drastically reduce the burden on students, Universities, colleges and the entire education system.
- Four years Bachelor degree with multiple exit options, one to two years Master's degree based on the number of years spent in Bachelor degree as four or three respectively, and option to do Ph.D. for four years Bachelor degree with research are possible.
- Two years Master degree with full research in the second year, one year Master degree for four years Bachelor degree holders, and five years integrated Bachelor and Master degree will be there.
- M. Phil. Programmes shall be discontinued.
- All HE institutions will focus on research and innovation by setting up (1) Start-up incubation centers, (2) Technology development centers, (3) Centers in frontier areas of research, (4) Center for Industry academic linkage and (5) Interdisciplinary Research Centers including humanities and social sciences research.
- Student Centered teaching & learning process instead of Teacher centered teaching model.
- Choice Based Credit System is revised by an innovative and flexible Competency Based Credit System.
- Examination system will change from high-stakes examinations (Semester End system) towards a more continuous and comprehensive evaluation examination system.
- All HE institutions will have professional academic and career counselling centers with counsellors available to all students to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being.
- All HE institutions will develop, support, and fund for topic-centred clubs and activities organized by students with the help of faculty and other experts as needed, in the area of science, mathematics, poetry, language, literature, debate, music, sports, etc.
- Encouragement for Online Distance Learning (ODL) courses as a part of degree programmes to include the credit system.
- The Degree programmes may contain in-class teaching, Online teaching components, and ODL components with 40:30:30 ratio model to achieve a global standard of quality.
- Top 100 Indian Universities will be encouraged to operate in foreign countries and top 100 Foreign Universities will be allowed and facilitated to operate in India. The credits acquired in foreign universities will be counted for the award of a degree. In this way, the HE quality will be improved to global quality level.
- National Scholarship Portal will be strengthened and expanded to help the financial needs of merit-based students. Private HE institutions will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

#### 4. Merits of NEP 2020

The merits of NEP 2020 are listed below.

- Inclusion of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) which is aimed at promoting better overall learning, development, and well-being. NCERT will plan and create a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for ECCE for children under the age of eight.
- There will be an establishment of special daytime boarding school called "Bal Bhavans" per state/district. This boarding school can be used for events including play, career, and painting.
- Students who are gifted or having special talents will be encouraged to pursue that realm beyond the general school curriculum. Teacher education and B.Ed. programmes will include methods for the recognition and fostering of such student talents and interests.
- With the installation of preschools and primary schools near Anganwadis and closer to habitats, the percentage of enrollment of students is expected to grow as it reduces the burden of commute.
- NEP 2020 attracts adults to join and begin or complete their incomplete education.
- The multidisciplinary approach to syllabi ensures the students excel in the subjects they have chosen.
- The introduction of vocational classes into the school curriculum will promote the growth of a skilled workforce.
- Inclusion of research study into the curriculum promotes the students to explore the depth of their chosen subjects.
- Approval of the establishment of foreign Universities in the country gives the students more chances for global exposure.



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- Arts and music are introduced at the early stages of education allowing the growth of the culture of the country.
- The differentiation in the types of HE Institutes helps the students to study better based on their choice of institution.
- The compulsory accreditation of HE Institutes, every five years, keeps in check the quality of education provided at HE Institutes.
- The introduction of Online and distance learning in every HE Institutes helps to promote education even in remote rural areas.

## 5. Suggestions to be introduced to NEP 2020

Every good thing seems to have flaws. Though NEP 2020 seems to be perfectly drafted without flaws, it needs some improvement. The suggested improvements are given below [3].

- Retired professors are to be allowed to educate and guide research students irrespective of their age.
- Research papers publication or patent must be made compulsory during post-graduation courses to encourage research.
- “Earn while learn” must be introduced with vocational training.
- Online-contents like books, journals, papers, patents, etc. must be made freely available to every student registered to HE Institutes.
- Multiple entries and exits in the undergraduate system may be misused hence for re-entry the students must be made to attend exams based on the curriculum of their previous class.
- Basic health care classes must be introduced in the Secondary stage of schooling.

## 6. Conclusion

Education is an important aspect in deciding the economy, social status, technology adoption, and healthy human behaviour in every country. NEP 2020 aims to ensure that quality education is imparted at both schools as well as University level. In primary schools, the focus of NEP is to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy among students by 2025 and to increase the gross enrolment ratio. In order to achieve that, the old 10+2 pedagogical structure has been changed to 5+3+3+4. According to NEP, all higher education institutions with current nomenclature of affiliated colleges will expand as multi-disciplinary autonomous colleges with degree giving power in their name or becomes constituent colleges of their affiliated Universities. An impartial agency National Research Foundation will fund for innovative projects in priority research areas of basic sciences, applied sciences, and social sciences & humanities. In place of UGC, AICTE, NCTE in higher education, there will now be a single regulator Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) that will direct all the institutions. The NEP says that the centre and states shall work together to increase public investment in education to 6 per cent of the gross domestic product, from the current 4.43 percent. It was estimated by the 12<sup>th</sup> five-year plan (2012-2017) that only a very small percentage of the Indian workforce in the age group of 19-24 years (less than 5%) received formal vocational education as compared with countries like USA (52%), Germany (75%), and South Korea (96%). NEP aims by 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education. The best thing about NEP 2020 is that there is extreme flexibility in the subject choices available to the student. Now, even a student taking a professional degree can learn some subjects of humanities, this freedom was not available in earlier policies. Information Communication and Computation Technology (ICCT) & Nontechnology (NT) will be introduced at undergraduate education to increase the employability of youths. Higher education system will transform itself as student centric with the freedom to choose core and allied subjects within a discipline and across disciplines. The NEP 2020 is going to lead the Indian higher education system from teacher centric to student centric, information centric to knowledge centric, marks centric to skills centric, examination centric to experimental centric, learning centric to research centric, and choice centric to competency centric. The main objective of NEP 2020 is to create a conducive environment and institutions which support research in the higher education institutes and strengthen the foundation of education in India by reinforcing holistic development by offering vocational training to students at the elementary and primary education level too [4].

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