



New Education Policy 2020 and its key features, challenges and future prospects in context of higher education in India

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Abstract

Education Policy is the basis for all developments required in the education field in any country. Considering the rapidly changing scenario of the Indian Education System, Government of India announced its new education policy based on the recommendations of an expert committee headed by Dr. Kasturirangan, Former chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). The committee suggested both incremental and drastic changes in the existing Indian education policy and provided guidelines for effective implementation in the country by 2030. This is also in line with the objectives of the fourth Sustainable Development Goals to provide quality education for all citizens through the fourth Educational Industry Revolution (EIR 4.0) in the country. This paper reviews all the prominent features of NEP 2020 in the context of the Indian Higher Education System. This paper highlights various policies proposed in the draft, with special emphasis on higher education. The analysis also discusses the possible effects of NEP 2020 on private and public HEIs in terms of facilities, administrative changes, and restrictions. This paper concludes with a discussion on the challenges and future prospects of the new education policy, which are identified with respect to various stakeholders.

Keywords: New Education Policy (NEP), Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), higher education, holistic and multidisciplinary education

Introduction

Higher education must enable the development of an enlightened, socially conscious, knowledgeable, and skilled nation that can find and implement robust solutions to its own problems. Therefore, the purpose of higher education is more than creating greater opportunities for individual employment. It represents the key to more vibrant, socially engaged, and cooperative communities and a happier, cohesive, cultured, productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation. With this vision in mind, the Government of India introduced the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on July 29, 2020. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a pivotal milestone in the educational landscape, representing a bold and forward-looking vision for India's future. As enshrined in the United Nations agenda of the "Sustainable Development Goals" (SDGs) 2030, the objective of the NEP 2020 is to ensure that every Indian has a quality education and relevant opportunities for learning throughout their lifetime to gain "suitable jobs and productive employment". The policy represents the first major educational reform in more than three decades and provides a comprehensive vision for higher-education. The policy's main objectives are to enhance the quality of HEIs and transform India into an international education hub. The NEP 2020 envisions an overall transformation, thereby shifting from traditional classroom-based learning to a more technology-driven approach to teaching-learning. Another important aspect of the NEP 2020 is its focus on promoting research and innovation in higher education. The policy encourages the establishment of research clusters and encourages universities to collaborate with industries and other institutions to promote innovation and entrepreneurship. The NEP 2020 envisages the promotion of flexibility and choice in higher education by allowing students to choose their own courses and pursue multidisciplinary programs. It also

recommends establishing a multidisciplinary credit-based system that permits students to accumulate credits from different courses and transfer them to other programs or institutions as needed. These are some of the factors that shape the quality of education in India. These reforms aim to prepare students for a rapidly changing global economy while preserving India's cultural and intellectual heritage. This policy envisions a complete overhaul and reenergizing of the higher education system to overcome its drawbacks of current higher education system and deliver high-quality higher education with equity and inclusion. While the policy has received widespread appreciation from educators, policymakers, and international organizations, its successful implementation remains a significant concern.

Objectives of the Study

This paper seeks to thoroughly review the New Education Policy In context of Higher education in India and integrate qualitative research concerning the impact of it. The specific objectives include:

1. To highlight and overview the key features of New Education policy in context of higher education system of India.
2. To identify the challenges while implemented it in the present education system.
3. To discuss the future prospects by the implications of NEP 2020 on the Indian higher education system.

Research Methodology

This research is a descriptive study. This study is based on secondary sources of data. The data was collected from various websites including those of Government of India, magazines, journals, academic articles, and publications related to NEP 2020 and higher education etc. This data was then analyzed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions. The study adopts an analytical research

approach to evaluate policy provisions and their implications for higher education in India.

Key Features of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for Higher Education in India

▪ Transforming the Regulatory System of Higher Education

These four structures will be set up as four independent verticals within one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).

- a. The first vertical of HECI is the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). It will function as the common, single point regulator for the higher education sector including teacher education and excluding medical and legal education,
- b. The second vertical of HECI will be the National Accreditation Council (NAC). The accreditation of institutions will be based primarily on basic norms, public self-disclosure, good governance, and outcomes, and it will be carried out by an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions supervised and overseen by the NAC. The task of functioning as a recognized accreditor shall be awarded to an appropriate number of institutions by the NAC.
- c. The third vertical of HECI will be the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), which will carry out funding and financing of higher education based on transparent criteria, including the IDPs prepared by the institutions and the progress made on their implementation. The HEGC will be entrusted with the disbursement of scholarships and developmental funds for launching new focus areas and expanding quality program offerings at HEIs across disciplines and fields.
- d. The fourth vertical of HECI will be the General Education Council (GEC), which will frame expected learning outcomes for higher education program, also referred to as 'graduate attributes. The GEC will formulate a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) in sync with the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) to ease the integration of vocational education into higher education.

▪ Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

A holistic and multidisciplinary education aims to develop all capacities of human beings—intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral—in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion, and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all educational program, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines. Imaginative and flexible curricular structures will enable creative combinations of disciplines for study and would offer multiple entry and exit points, thus removing currently prevalent rigid boundaries and creating new possibilities for lifelong learning. Large multidisciplinary universities and colleges will facilitate the move towards high-quality holistic and multidisciplinary education. Flexibility in the

curriculum and novel and engaging course options will be offered to students, in addition to rigorous specialization in one or more subjects. Pedagogy will increasingly emphasize communication, discussion, debate, research, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking.

▪ Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

Entry into quality higher education can open a vast array of possibilities that can lift both individuals and communities out of cycles of disadvantage. For this reason, the New Education Policy 2020 ensures that higher education opportunities available to all individuals must be among the highest priorities. This Policy envisions ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students, with a special emphasis on SEDGs. Therefore, the approach to equity and inclusion must be common across schools and higher education. Furthermore, there must be continuity across the stages to ensure sustainable reform. Financial assistance to students shall be made available through various measures. Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs. There are certain facets of exclusion that are particular to or substantially more intense in higher education. These must be addressed specifically, and include lack of knowledge of higher education opportunities, economic opportunity cost of pursuing higher education, financial constraints, admission processes, geographical and language barriers, poor employability potential of many higher education program, and lack of appropriate student support mechanisms.

Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education. Conduct outreach on higher-education opportunities and scholarships. Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to socio-economically disadvantaged students and develop bridge courses for them. Provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring for all such students through suitable counselling and mentoring programs. Make the admissions process and curriculum more inclusive. Increase the employability potential of higher education program. More degree courses should be taught in Indian languages and bilingually. Ensure sensitization of faculty, counsellors, and students on gender identity issues and its inclusion in all aspects of the HEI, including curriculum. Strictly enforce all non-discrimination and anti-harassment rules. Ensure that all buildings and facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly. Develop Institutional Development Plans that contain specific plans for action to increase participation from SEDGs.

▪ Focus on Teacher Education

Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of school and college teachers that will shape the next generation. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, the formation of dispositions and values, and the development of practice under the best mentors. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions, including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy. The 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers by 2030. It will be a dual-major holistic Bachelor's degree in

Education as well as a specialized subject such as a language, history, music, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, economics, art, physical education, etc. Beyond the teaching of cutting-edge pedagogy, teacher education will include grounding in sociology, history, science, psychology, early childhood care and education, foundational literacy and numeracy, knowledge of India and its values/ethos/art/traditions, and more. As teacher education requires multidisciplinary inputs and education in high-quality content as well as pedagogy, all teacher education program must be conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions. To this end, all multidisciplinary universities and colleges will aim to establish education departments that, besides carrying out cutting-edge research in various aspects of education, will also run B.Ed. program, in collaboration with other departments such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, Indian languages, arts, music, history, literature, physical education, science, and mathematics.

▪ **Quality Academic Research**

Knowledge creation and research are critical for growing and sustaining a large and vibrant economy, uplifting society, and continuously inspiring a nation to achieve even greater heights. To thereby truly grow and catalyze quality research in the nation, this policy envisions the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF). The overarching goal of the NRF is to enable a culture of research to permeate our universities. In particular, the NRF will provide a reliable base of merit-based but equitable peer-reviewed research funding, helping to develop a culture of research in the country through suitable incentives for and recognition of outstanding research, and by undertaking major initiatives to seed and grow research at State Universities and other public institutions where research capability is currently limited. The NRF will fund research in all disciplines. Successful research will be recognized and rewarded.

In light of the rapid global changes, such as climate change, population dynamics and management, biotechnology, the expanding digital marketplace, and the advancement of machine learning and artificial intelligence, a comprehensive research ecosystem is increasingly crucial. If India is to become a leader in these disparate areas and truly achieve the potential of its vast talent pool to again become a leading knowledge society in the coming years and decades, the nation will require a significant expansion of its research capabilities and output across disciplines. Today, the criticality of research is more than ever before for the economic, intellectual, societal, environmental, and technological health and progress of a nation. Throughout history, the best teaching and learning processes at the higher education level have occurred in environments with a strong culture of research and knowledge creation; conversely, much of the best research in the world has occurred in multidisciplinary university settings. India has a long historical tradition of research and knowledge creation in disciplines ranging from science and mathematics to art and literature, phonetics and languages, medicine, and agriculture. This needs to be further strengthened to make India a leader in research and innovation in the 21st century, as a strong and enlightened knowledge society and one of the three largest economies in the world. Thus, this Policy envisions a comprehensive approach to transforming the quality and quantity of research in India.

▪ **Adult Education**

An outstanding adult education curriculum framework will be developed by a new and well-supported constituent body of the NCERT that is dedicated to adult education, so as to develop synergy with and build upon NCERT's existing expertise in establishing outstanding curricula for literacy, numeracy, basic education, vocational skills, and beyond. The curriculum framework for adult education includes at least five types of programs, each with clearly defined outcomes:

- a. Foundational literacy and numeracy
- b. Critical life skills (including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and education, and family welfare)
- c. Vocational skills development (with a view towards obtaining local employment);
- d. Basic education (including preparatory, middle, and secondary stage equivalency); and
- e. Continuing education (including engaging in holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and recreation, as well as other topics of interest or use to local learners, such as more advanced material on critical life skills).

The framework would keep in mind that adults in many cases will require different teaching-learning methods and materials than those designed for children. Second, suitable infrastructure will be ensured so that all interested adults will have access to adult education and lifelong learning. A key initiative in this direction will be to use schools/school complexes after school hours and on weekends and public library spaces for adult education courses, which will be ICT-equipped when possible, and for other community engagement and enrichment activities. The sharing of infrastructure for school, higher, adult, and vocational education, and for other community and volunteer activities, will be critical for ensuring efficient use of both physical and human resources as well as for creating synergy among these five types of education and beyond. For these reasons, Adult Education Centers (AECs) could also be included within other public institutions such as HEIs and vocational training centers.

▪ **Promotion of Indian Languages**

Unfortunately, Indian languages have not received their due attention and care, with the country losing over 220 languages in the last 50 years. UNESCO has declared 197 Indian languages as 'endangered.' Moreover, even those languages of India that are not officially on such endangered lists, such as the 22 languages of the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, are facing serious difficulties on many fronts. The teaching and learning of Indian languages must be integrated into school and higher education at every level. For languages to remain relevant and vibrant, there must be a steady stream of high-quality learning and print materials in these languages, including textbooks, workbooks, videos, plays, poems, novels, and magazines. Enabling such learning materials, print materials, and 53 National Education Policy 2020 translations of important materials from world languages, and constantly updating vocabularies, are carried out by countries around the world for languages such as English, French, German, Hebrew, Korean, and Japanese. However, India has been slow in producing such learning and print materials and dictionaries

to help keep its languages optimally vibrant and current with integrity. More HEIs and more programs in higher education will use the mother tongue/local language as a medium of instruction and/or offer programs bilingually to increase access and GER and to promote the strength, usage, and vibrancy of all Indian languages. Private HEIs will also be encouraged and incentivized to use Indian languages as the medium of instruction and/or offer bilingual programs. Four-year B.Ed. Dual degree programs offered bilingually will also help, for example, in training cadres of science and mathematics teachers to teach science bilingually in schools and colleges across the country.

▪ **Online and Digital Education: Ensuring Equitable Use of Technology**

The use and integration of technology to improve multiple aspects of education will be supported and adopted, provided these interventions are rigorously and transparently evaluated in relevant contexts before they are scaled up. An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, and so on, for both school and higher education. The aim of the NETF is to facilitate decision-making on the induction, deployment, and use of technology by providing the leadership of educational institutions, State and Central governments, and other stakeholders with the latest knowledge and research as well as the opportunity to consult and share best practices. The NETF has the following functions:

- Provide independent evidence-based advice to Central and State Government agencies on technology-based interventions
- Build intellectual and institutional capacities in educational technology
- Envision strategic thrust areas in this domain; and
- Articulating new directions for research and innovation.

The thrust of technological interventions will be to improve teaching, learning, and evaluation processes; support teacher preparation and professional development; enhance educational access; and streamline educational planning, management, and administration, including processes related to admissions, attendance, assessments, etc. A rich variety of educational software for all the above purposes will be developed and made available to students and teachers at all levels. All such software will be available in all major Indian languages and will be accessible to a wide range of users, including students in remote areas and Divyang students. Teaching-learning e-content will continue to be developed by all states in all regional languages, as well as by the NCERT, CIET, CBSE, NIOS, and other bodies/institutions, and will be uploaded onto the DIKSHA platform. This platform may also be utilized for teachers' Professional Development through e-content. The CIET will be strengthened to promote and expand DIKSHA and other educational technology initiatives. Suitable equipment will be made available to teachers at schools so that they can suitably integrate e-contents into teaching-learning practices. Technology-based education platforms, such as DIKSHA/SWAYAM, will be better integrated across schools and higher education and will include ratings/reviews by users to enable content developers to create user-friendly and qualitative content.

▪ **Vocational Education**

This policy aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education and requires integration of vocational education programs into mainstream education in all education institutions in a phased manner. Beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary schools, quality vocational education will be integrated smoothly into higher education. This will ensure that every child learns at least one vocation and is exposed to several more. This would lead to emphasizing the dignity of labour and the importance of various vocations involving Indian arts and artisanship. This is in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goal and will help realize the full potential of India's demographic dividend. The number of students in vocational education will be considered while arriving at the GER targets. The development of vocational capacities will go hand-in-hand with the development of 'academic' or other capacities. Higher education institutions offer vocational education either independently or in partnership with industry and NGOs. The B.Voc. Degrees introduced in 2013 will continue to exist, but vocational courses will also be available to students enrolled in all other bachelor's degree programs, including the 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programs. HEIs will also be allowed to conduct short-term certificate courses in various skills, including soft skills. 'Lok Vidya', i.e., important vocational knowledge developed in India, will be made accessible to students through integration into vocational education courses. Technical education should be offered within multidisciplinary educational institutions and should focus on opportunities to engage deeply with other disciplines. The focus should be on offering Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3-D machining, big data analysis, and machine learning, in addition to genomic studies, biotechnology, nanotechnology, and neuroscience, with applications to health, environment, and sustainable living. Focus areas for vocational education will be chosen based on skills gap analysis and mapping local opportunities. The policy proposes that the MHRD will constitute a National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE), consisting of experts in vocational education and representatives from across ministries, in collaboration with the industry, to oversee this effort.

▪ **Internationalization of Education**

Courses and programs in subjects, such as Indology, Indian languages, AYUSH systems of medicine, yoga, arts, music, history, culture, and modern India, internationally relevant curricula in the sciences, social sciences, and beyond, meaningful opportunities for social engagement, quality residential facilities and on-campus support, etc. will be fostered to attain this goal of global quality standards, attract greater numbers of international students, and achieve the goal of 'internationalization at home.' India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs, thereby helping to restore its role as a Vishwa Guru. Research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated by this. High-performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities, for example, those from among the top 100 universities in the world, will be facilitated to operate in India. Furthermore,

research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts. Credits acquired in foreign universities will be permitted, where appropriate, as per the requirements of each HEI, to be counted for the award of a degree.

Challenges in Implementation of New Education Policy 2020 NEP

The National Education Policy (2020) is a reformatory step toward improving the education system in India. A lot of effort has been put into framing the policy, and it is the result of in-depth research, deliberations, and discussions that we have arrived at something as comprehensive as the NEP. But, there exist few challenges in the successful implementation of these reforms which are as follows:

Financial Constraints

There is a lack of infrastructure and funding to incorporate such massive changes into the system. The National Education Policy 2020 focuses on making India a global destination for education by stressing quality and dynamism. The policy focuses on raising expenditure in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP as soon as possible. However, the figures provide a very contrasting picture. It is not the first time that there have been talks about increasing investment in education. The economic survey 2019-20 says India spends only 3.1 % of its GDP on education, despite continuous discussions on spending patterns. Therefore, the first thing is to prioritize education as a top priority and channelize investment towards this goal. Many public universities and colleges already face fund shortages for infrastructure, laboratories, libraries, research facilities, faculty recruitment, and student support services. Without sufficient investment, several proposed reforms may be difficult to implement effectively.

Regulatory and Administrative Challenges

The NEP 2020 proposes major reforms in higher education governance by streamlining regulatory mechanisms. However, implementing these reforms across thousands of institutions requires effective coordination among multiple regulatory authorities, universities, accreditation agencies and state governments. Differences in state policies, institutional autonomy, and administrative procedures may slow down the implementation process. Ensuring the accountability of each stakeholder is a huge task. The comprehensiveness of the policy requires many stakeholders to work together in a close-knit and well-coordinated relationship. The changes that the implementation of this policy will bring to the system are massive in terms of impact and outreach. Therefore, expecting cooperation and acceptability from each stakeholder is a tedious task in such a large setup.

Inclusion of Marginalized

Students belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, minorities, persons with disabilities, and economically weaker sections often face barriers in accessing quality higher education. Addressing these inequalities requires scholarships, financial assistance, and inclusive infrastructure, counselling services, and targeted support programs. The NEP 2020 does not mention how the benefits of education will reach the marginalized sections of society. Explicitness about the inclusion of every

section of society is missing in the policy document. However, a roadmap for such actions is lacking.

The Language and Curriculum Reforms

NEP 2020 encourage the greater use of Indian languages in education while promoting multilingualism. Although this approach supports inclusive education and cultural preservation, the implementation of multilingual curricula in higher education presents practical challenges. Universities require quality textbooks, technical terminology, digital resources, and trained faculty to teach specialized subjects in multiple languages. It will be difficult to standardize the reading material in the absence of any script, making this a tedious task. It will require large investments, and the positives coming out of this investment seem less likely, and there are chances that it might create a bigger gulf in the education system.

Shortage of Qualified Faculty

India's higher-education system continues to face a shortage of qualified and experienced teachers. NEP 2020 discusses experimentation in pedagogy since the foundational years of study have brought about a paradigm shift in the way of learning, which is a welcome change. The implementation of multidisciplinary education, research-oriented teaching, and innovative pedagogical methods requires well-trained faculty members who possess interdisciplinary knowledge and technological competence. However, this will require well-trained teachers to ensure that this experimentation, flexibly goes well with the students, only then the strategical advancements in the curriculum can be achieved for the betterment of students. Therefore, the training of teachers to adapt to such flexible ways is a must, which is lacking at the moment.

Resistance to Institutional Change

Educational reforms often encounter resistance from institutions accustomed to traditional systems. Transitioning to multidisciplinary education, flexible curricula, credit transfer systems, and new governance structures requires substantial organizational changes. Inter-disciplinarily in higher education demands a paradigm shift, and many have appreciated the step towards portioning interdisciplinary learning, as it will create a wide range of experiences and perspectives about all the different things that exist around. However, implementing such changes requires drastic measures. The Indian system of education has been compartmentalized for decades, and to adapt to this idea of multi-disciplinarity, there will be a need for cultural and behavioral shifts. Professors and learners should develop respect and curiosity to learn new things from multiple disciplines, not keeping themselves in an air bubble, which will require 20-30 good years to create a positive atmosphere for such change.

Future Prospects of Higher Education in India under NEP 2020

Despite the implementation challenges, the NEP 2020 presents significant opportunities for transforming India's higher education landscape. If implemented effectively, this policy can establish India as a global knowledge hub while contributing to sustainable economic and social development.

▪ **Global Competitiveness**

The initiatives outlined in NEP 2020 aim to increase the number of international students studying in India and enhance the mobility of Indian students who wish to visit, study, transfer credits, or conduct research at foreign institutions, and vice versa. To achieve global quality standards and attract more international students, courses and programs will be developed in areas such as Indology, Indian languages, AYUSH systems of medicine, yoga, arts, music, history, culture, and contemporary India. Additionally, internationally relevant curricula in the sciences and social sciences, along with meaningful opportunities for social engagement, quality residential facilities, and on-campus support will be promoted. An International Students Office will be established at each higher education institution hosting foreign students to manage all aspects of welcoming and supporting students from abroad. The emphasis on multidisciplinary education, research excellence, innovation, international collaboration, and quality assurance is expected to improve India's global academic standing. Indian universities may become more competitive in international rankings through enhanced research outputs, faculty development, and global partnerships.

▪ **Increased Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)**

More HEIs should be established and developed in underserved regions to ensure full access, equity, and inclusion. By 2030, there shall be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district. Steps shall be taken to develop high-quality higher education institutions, both public and private, that have a medium of instruction in local/Indian languages or bilingual. The aim is to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education, including vocational education, from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. This expansion will allow millions of additional students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to pursue higher education. Improved access can contribute to greater social mobility, economic growth, and human-resource development. While a number of new institutions may be developed to attain these goals, a large part of capacity creation will be achieved by consolidating, substantially expanding, and improving existing HEIs.

▪ **Promotion of Research and Innovation**

The National Research Foundation has the potential to significantly strengthen India's research ecosystem. Greater investment in scientific research, social sciences, humanities, engineering, medicine, agriculture, and emerging technologies can improve innovation, entrepreneurship, and evidence-based policy-making. HEIs will focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centers, technology development centers, centers in frontier areas of research, greater industry-academic linkages, and interdisciplinary research, including humanities and social sciences research. Given the scenario of epidemics and pandemics, it is critical that HEIs take the lead to undertake research in the areas of infectious diseases, epidemiology, virology, diagnostics, instrumentation, vaccinology, and other relevant areas. The NRF will function to help enable and support such a vibrant research and innovation culture across HEIs, research labs, and other research organizations. Research collaborations among universities, industries, and international institutions will further enhance India's global research capabilities.

▪ **Enhanced Employability**

By integrating vocational education, internships, entrepreneurship, digital skills, and industry partnerships into higher education, the NEP 2020 seeks to reduce the gap between academic education and employment opportunities. Graduates equipped with practical skills, interdisciplinary knowledge, and technological competencies will be better prepared for rapidly changing labour markets.

Therefore, as part of a holistic education, students at all HEIs will be provided with opportunities for internships with local industries, businesses, artists, crafts persons, etc., as well as research internships with faculty and researchers at their own or other HEIs/research institutions, so that students may actively engage with the practical side of their learning and, as a by-product, further improve their employability.

▪ **International Collaboration**

NEP 2020 encourages international partnerships, student exchange programs, collaborative research, and foreign university participation. Such collaborations will expose Indian students and faculty to global best practices while enhancing the international reputation of Indian higher-education institutions. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.

▪ **Expansion of Digital Education**

Technological advancements will continue to reshape higher education. Online learning platforms, artificial intelligence, virtual laboratories, educational software, and digital assessment and systems can make education more accessible, flexible, and personalized for students. Blended learning models are likely to become a permanent feature of higher-education institutions. The integration of Information Communication and Computation Technologies (ICCT), encompassing educational technology, Internet technology, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality, is crucial for the effective implementation of education in the 21st century. These advanced technologies facilitate the planning design of effective online education, thereby realizing the characteristics of an ideal education system and enhancing the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER). It is anticipated that throughout the 21st century, technology-driven education will supplant traditional classroom-based education, with the policies outlined in the NEP-2020 establishing the groundwork for this transition.

Conclusion

A periodic improvement in the education system is essential for human development and sustainable progress in society. The overarching objective is to nurture learners into global citizens equipped for the future. The NEP seeks to strike a delicate balance between honoring traditions and embracing an interdisciplinary approach necessary to meet the demands of the 21st century. By revamping the skill sets of the youth and providing them with the tools needed for global competitiveness, the policy has the potential to propel India onto the global stage. The NEP has the potential to revamp the skills of the youth of our country and has all the right

tools that are needed to be competitive at the global level. In light of this research, it can be argued that with the focus on "holistic development, skill-based learning, multilingualism, flexibility in curriculum and vocational education, continuous assessment reforms, teacher training initiatives and technology integration," NEP 2020 can indeed build a more extensive and integrated education system. Its core strengths are the push toward multidisciplinary universities, flexible degree structures, multiple entry and exit pathways, credit transfer, and student-centered learning. The NEP 2020 is a transformative but conditional reform for Indian higher education. The NEP's reforms could expand access, improve quality, support holistic student development, strengthen teacher capacity, and make Indian higher education more globally connected and innovation-driven. Several also connect the NEP 2020 to larger national goals such as raising the GER, building a skilled workforce, reducing brain drain, and positioning India as a knowledge society or global education hub.

In conclusion, NEP 2020 is a high-potential blueprint for reshaping Indian higher education, but not a guaranteed transformation. The bottom line is that the NEP 2020 can make higher education more flexible, inclusive, research-oriented, and globally competitive only if its implementation is adequately funded, institutionally coordinated and socially equitable. If the NEP is implemented successfully, India will create a new generation of forward-thinking entrepreneurs and leaders, ushering in the age of tomorrow.

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