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INDEX

Sr. No.	Paper No.	Paper Title	Authors Name	Page No.
1	W01	AI in Teaching, Learning and Research	Dr. Alpesh R. Prajapati	01-05
2	W02 & W03	From Policy to Practice: A Multidimensional Analysis of Implementation Challenges in India's National Education Policy 2020	Dr. Deepa C. Chandwani Dr. Pragnesh B. Dalwadi	06-11
3	W04	Role of NEP-2020 in Transforming Higher Education in India	Dr. Hardik Mehta	12-16
4	W06	NEP 2020: A Transformative Stage Toward Equity and Inclusion in Education	Dr. Manish M. Chudasama	17-22
5	W07 & W16	NEP 2020 and Its Implementation: Examining Challenges in the Indian Education Sector	Dr. Gargi P Patel Dr. Nirali Ketan Shah	23-28
6	W09	National Education Policy to Transform the Education System of 21st Century: Prospects and its Implementation	Dr. Shilpa Jayantilal Patel	29-34
7	W11	Assessing NEP-2020 Implementation in Higher Education: A Comparative Study of Faculty and Student Perspectives	Dr. Vrundani K. Patel	35-43
8	W14	Reimagining Education: A Sociological Analysis of NEP 2020's Challenges and Future Outcomes	Mr. Jitendra Dhebariya	44-50
9	W20	Bridging The Digital Divide in Higher Education: Opportunities and Challenges of Technology Integration under National Education Policy 2020	Dr. Avani Lalitkumar Saraiya	51-58
10	W24	Digital Education under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: Challenges and Opportunities for Indian Higher Education	Dr. Jigarkumar Joshi	59-64
11	W25& W26	Digital Education and Technology Integration under NEP 2020	Dr. Ketan J Mehta Dr. Ravjibhai Kotval	65-69
12	W27	Teacher Capacity Building: Evaluating the Effectiveness of AI-Powered NotebookLM in Classroom Pedagogy	Dr. Krishna M. Lakhani	70-74
13	W28	Digital Education and Technology Integration in Higher Education: Students' Perspectives in the Context of NEP 2020	Dr. Rohan Shah	75-81
14	W29	Digital India and Educational Transformation: A Comprehensive Statistical Analysis using Multiple Regression Approach	Dr. Sanjay G Raval	82-87
15	W30& W31	Transforming India's Workforce: A Critical Study of Skill Development Initiatives under the NEP 2020	Dr. Vishal Gupta Dr. Ghanshyambhai M. Anjara	88-94

16	W32	Implementation of National Education Policy 2020 in Higher Education: Opportunities and Constraints	Mr. Bhaveshkumar R. Rathod	95-100
17	W35& P72	Digital Accounting Practices in MSMEs: An Empirical Study of Awareness and Usage Behaviour	Ms. Shivangi N. Patel Dr. Amina Nakhuda	101-104
18	W37	Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in Higher Education: Revitalizing Cultural Roots and Enhancing Learning Outcomes	Dr. Ajitha Shambhu Nair	105-111
19	W40	Indian Knowledge System in New Education Policy	Dr. Rupalben Ashokkumar	112-115
20	W41& W42	Towards Holistic Learning: The Vision of NEP 2020 (An Empirical Analytical Study Based on Primary Data)	Dr. Shital Rathod Dr. Kandarp Chavda	116-120
21	W43	Integrating Ayurveda into Leadership: A Dosha-Centred Approach	Dr. Megha Bhatt	121-128
22	W44	Educating the Inner Self for a Young Nation: Leveraging the Bhagavad Gita and Indian Philosophy to Realize India's Demographic Dividend	Dr. Shweta Zala	129-135
23	W45 & P26	Physical Activity and Sports as Pedagogical Tools in School Education: A Critical Analysis of NEP 2020	Dr. Mukeshkumar B. Baraiya Dr. Yogendra J. Chauhan	136-141
24	W48	Comparative Evaluation of Traditional and Modern Teaching Approaches in Secondary Schools of Ahmedabad City	Dr. Navita Sharma	142-147
25	W49	Portuguese Colonial Legacy and Its Impact on Tourism Development in Diu	Mr. Hardik R. Rathod	148-152
26	W52	English as a Bridge to Higher Education: Women's Academic Inclusion in Post-NEP 2020 India — A Qualitative Secondary-Data Review	Dr. Payal Trivedi	153-156
27	W56& W57	Inclusivity under NEP 2020: A Critical Study of Adivasi (Bhil) Representation in Higher Education	Ms. Saba Syed Dr. Sagar Vyas	157-160
28	W58& W59 P71	Comparative Risk–Return Evaluation of Selected Investment Instruments in the Indian Financial Market	Dr. Khagesh Joshi Ms. Lekshmi Ezhava Dr. Vaibhav Gallani	161-169
29	W60 & 61	Performance Evaluation of Selected Public Sector Banks in India.	Ms. Heenaben Parmar Dr. Ronak Rana	170-177
30	W23	Technology-Driven Higher Education: Insights from Students and Educators	Dr. Janki Mahesh Kotecha	178-181
31	W33	Need And Issues of Digital Education	Mr. Hasmukh Ramanlal Panchal	182-188

W09 : National Education Policy to Transform the Education System of 21st Century: Prospects and its Implementation

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Abstract: Higher education plays a very important part in the development of an academic development of a student in order to substitute for career improvement and enhancement. For the persistence of creation and transmission of knowledge and data among students and researcher, higher education plays a very key role. NEP-2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and it restores the thirty-four-year-old National Policy on Education - NPE, 1986. NEP is moulded on the fundamental principles of access, equity, quality, affordability and accountability, this policy is designed on 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals. It aims is to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge player by creation higher education more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary. NEP-2020 emphases on quality higher education for all by imparting of skills and values that is mandatory for holistic development of a student at each stage of learning. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 objective is to transform education system by keeping the learner at the centre. This paper dashes out the impact of new education policy 2020 on higher education system and to regulate the factors that effect on higher education system and to find out the solutions to overcome the challenges of national education policy system.

Keywords: National Education Policy, Skill Development, Higher Education

Introduction:

The NEP-2020 has outlined an ambitious task of nearly doubling the GER in higher education from 26.3 per cent (2018) to 50 per cent by 2035 while improving quality of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and positioning India as a global education hub. The focus is on providing a flexible curriculum through an interdisciplinary approach, creating multiple exit points in what would be a four-year undergraduate programme, catalyzing research, improving faculty support and encouraging internationalization. One of the paradigmatic shifts will be the setting up of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for the entire higher education segment. The HECI will act as a single regulator and several functions, including accreditation, funding and academic standard setting, will be carried out by independent verticals.

Research Methodology

The data and information have been collected from the various publications of Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, National Council of Educational Research and Training, National University of Educational Planning and Administration, University Grants Commission and other valuable publication. National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 National Education Policy 2020 has been announced on 29.07.2020 after detailed discussion with stakeholders. National Education Policy 2020 envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to

all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The National Education Policy 2020 proposes various reforms in school education as well as higher education including technical education.

Outline of National Education Policy 2020: Higher Education

Recognizing, Identifying, and Fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres. The highest priority is to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by all students flexibility, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests. Multidisciplinary and a Holistic Education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge; Emphasis on Conceptual Understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams.; Creativity and Critical Thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation; Ethics and Human & Constitutional Values and the power of language in teaching and learning; life skills Focus on Regular Formative Assessment for Learning rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's 'coaching culture'; extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students, and educational planning and management; respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject; full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system; synergy in curriculum across all levels of education from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education; teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions; a 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment; outstanding research as a corequisite for outstanding education and development; continuous review of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts; a rootedness and pride in India, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions. Education is a public service; access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child; substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation.

The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986 and forms a comprehensive framework to transform both elementary and higher education in India by 2040. NEP-2020 has introduced 5+3+3+4 education structure where the first five years of education are foundational, promoting multilingualism, emphasizing vocational education and skills training, introducing common entrance exams for university admissions, and leveraging technology to enhance learning outcomes. The NEP-2020 calls for key reforms in both school and higher education that prepare the next generation to thrive and compete in the new digital age.

Effect of NEP-2020 on the Higher Education System Institutional reform and consolidation:

This move will have a significant impact on the volume of HEIs in the country, by reducing them to nearly one-third. This will create a less fragmented higher education system in the country. The NEP-2020 mentions “Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups” (SEDGs), which includes SC, ST, OBCs and Minorities. In the context of higher education, the Policy states “higher education can raise individuals and communities out of cycles of disadvantage. Improving access and equity through Open Distance Learning and online programmes: around 40 lakh learners or 11 per cent of the total higher education enrolments in India are through ODL. This is likely to see a significant increase in the coming few years to help double India’s GER.

Transforming the 21st Century Education System through NEP-2020 Regulatory system of higher education will ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting will be performed by distinct, independent, and empowered bodies. The functioning of all the independent verticals for Regulation (NHERC), Accreditation (NAC), Funding (HEGC), and Academic Standard Setting (GEC) and the overarching autonomous umbrella body (HECI) itself will be based on transparent public disclosure, and use technology extensively to reduce human interface to ensure efficiency and transparency in their work. The NEP policy is based on the pillars of “access, equity, quality, affordability, accountability” and will transform India into a “vibrant knowledge society”.

Critical Study of NEP-2020

The National Education Policy 2020 has been subject to critical analysis and evaluation. One aspect that has been examined is the impact of the policy on the higher education sector. Another aspect that has been scrutinized is the emphasis on digital education. The post-National Education Policy 2020 regime places a significant emphasis on digital education in the higher education sector. Focus on holistic development and knowledge based learning aims to create a value-based society. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 has been subject to a critical analysis that highlights both opportunities and challenges associated with its implementation.

The formation of a common regulating authority, the Higher Education Commission of India, to govern both public and private higher education institutions is seen as a potential opportunity to streamline the functioning of the higher education sector and ensure uniformity in quality standards. However, challenges such as the promotion of English medium education and the dependency on digital education also have their drawbacks. The promotion of English medium education may perpetuate inequality and marginalize those who are not proficient in English. Additionally, the heavy reliance on digital education may exclude students who do not have access to reliable internet or technological resources. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 has both positive and negative implications. On one hand, it seeks to address important issues such as value-based education and the need for a holistic approach to student development.

Challenges and Opportunities in Executing NEP-2020 Forthcoming Prospects of NEP-2020

The National Education Policy 2020 is a progressive policy and its main purpose is to address significant issues of our prevailing education system. The NEP is expected to put India to attain Goal of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all in the next coming decade. It is essential to signify the initiatives and implement the NEP in a gradual manner. The policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of education structures, including regulation and governance. The success of NEP requires cooperation from both at the Central and the State level, with significant involvement of private sector stakeholders in close consultation with educational institutes, trainers, technology partners and industry.

Higher Education System in India: A mode frontward

Higher education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal wellbeing and in developing India as envisioned in its Constitution - a democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and humane nation upholding liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all. Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. Some of the major problems currently faced by the higher education system in India include:

- Less emphasis on the development of cognitive skills and learning outcomes;
- Suboptimal governance and leadership of HEIs;
- A rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study;
- Limited access particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, with few HEIs that teach in local languages;
- A severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem;
- Lesser emphasis on research at most universities and colleges, and lack of competitive peer reviewed research funding across disciplines;
- Limited teacher and institutional autonomy;
- Inadequate mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders;
- An ineffective regulatory system; and
- Large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education.

The national education policy 2020 envisions a complete overhaul and re-energizing of the higher education system to overcome these challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion. The policy vision includes the following key changes to the current system:

- Heading towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages;
- Increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures, including greater opportunities for outstanding public education; scholarships by private/ philanthropic

universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students; online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL); and all infrastructure and learning materials accessible and available to learners with disabilities.

- Reconstructing curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences;
- Reemphasize the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service;
- Setting up of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges;
- Shifting towards faculty and institutional autonomy;
- A single regulator for higher education
- Working towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education;
- Administration and governance of HEIs by high qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy;

Additional Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

The NEP-2020 claims that, a holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to grow 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 all disciplines; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. The NEP-2020 envisions one large multidisciplinary Higher Education Institution (HEI) in or near every district, by 2030. Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also lifeskills; lessons in service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of a holistic education. Effectiveness of any policy depends on its implementation. Such implementation will require multiple initiatives and actions, which will have to be taken by multiple bodies in a synchronized and systematic manner. The implementation of this policy will be led by various bodies including MHRD, education related ministries, state departments of education, boards, NTA, the regulatory bodies of school and higher education, NCERT, and HEIs along with timelines and a plan for review, in order to ensure that the policy is implemented in its spirit and intent, through coherence in planning and synergy across all these bodies involved in education.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 provides the course towards less regulation and more autonomy for higher education institutions through an effective self-regulatory mechanism. Foreign Universities will be allowed to set up campuses in India. It will promote research and innovations atmosphere by using flexible approach. The aim of internationalization of higher education is subject to based upon the mobility of students, faculty members, programmes, and institutions across countries. The NEP-2020 goal is to setting up multidisciplinary institutions offering programmes

with high-quality teaching, research, and community engagement. This will definitely benefit students with increased flexibility and choice of subjects across various streams of arts, humanities, sciences, sports, and other vocational and professional subjects. The national education policy focuses on online and e-learning. Online education will play an exclusive role to bridge the gap between the students and the institution of higher learning. National Education Policy is not just about the degree. It is all about focus on life skills and vocational courses. It will be student centric approach where affordability and accessibility will be there and where the students can leverage the most out of education. Increased access, equity, and inclusion through open schooling, online education and Open Distance Learning will be promoted. UGC has been taken several initiatives for the timely and effective implementation of NEP-2020. Some of the key initiatives undertaken by the UGC include Regulations on Academic Bank of Credits, Guidelines for Multiple Entry and Exit in Academic Programmes, Common Universities Entrance Test, Regulations on Credit Framework through SWAYAM, Guidelines for Internship/ Apprenticeship embedded Degree program, Guidelines for Internationalisation of Higher Education, Framework for Global Citizenship Education in Higher Education, Guidelines for the Establishment of Research and Development Cells in HEIs. These initiatives provides for the effective and efficient implementation of national education policy. The implementation of the NEP, 2020 requires combined efforts of the Centre, States, UTs, HEIs, Regulating Agencies and all other concerned stakeholders.

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About SLU College

Shree Lalshankar Umiyashankar Arts and Harivadan & Padmaben Thakore Commerce College for Women, which was established in 1920 as an endeavour of Gujarat Stree Kelvani Mandal, has the proud privilege of being the first women's college in Ahmedabad. The college is recognised under Section 2 (f) and 12 (b) of UGC Act 17th June, 1972. The college runs various programmes in affiliation with Gujarat University such as - B.A., B.Com., and M.Com. The BS-BBA programme was added from the academic year 2025-2026. The college also runs several add-on programmes like Fashion Design and Computer Courses at the ICTC centre located at the SLU Campus.

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