

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: A GAME CHANGER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is a comprehensive and ambitious reform document that aims to transform the Indian education system. The policy has several opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for implementation. This paper analyzes the impact of NEP 2020 on higher education in India. The paper discusses the opportunities provided by the NEP 2020, including the establishment of multidisciplinary institutions, integration of vocational education, emphasis on research and innovation, and flexibility in the education system. The policy provides a framework for the development of higher education that aligns with the needs of the 21st century. However, the policy also faces several challenges such as the lack of adequate funding, infrastructure, and faculty. The implementation of the policy requires significant investment in infrastructure, technology, and faculty development. The implementation of the policy also requires significant coordination among different stakeholders. To overcome these challenges and fully realize the opportunities provided by the NEP 2020, the paper provides several recommendations. The recommendations include increasing investment in higher education, promoting interdisciplinary research, strengthening the accreditation system, and promoting collaborations between academia and industry. The recommendations also emphasize the need for effective implementation and monitoring mechanisms. In conclusion, the NEP 2020 provides an opportunity to transform the Indian higher education system. The policy provides a framework for the development of higher education that aligns with the needs of the 21st century. The implementation of the policy requires significant investment and effective coordination among different stakeholders. By addressing the challenges and implementing the recommendations, India can create a world-class higher education system that is equitable and accessible to all.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education, Opportunities, Challenges.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, approved by the Indian government in July 2020, is a landmark policy that aims to transform the education system in India at all levels. The NEP 2020 is considered to be a game changer for higher education in India, as it proposes significant changes in the way higher education is delivered and regulated in the country. The NEP 2020 envisions a holistic, multidisciplinary, and flexible education system that will equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. This research paper will examine the key provisions of the NEP 2020 related to higher education and their potential impact on the sector. It will also analyze the challenges and opportunities presented by the implementation of the NEP 2020 and suggest ways to overcome them. The paper aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on the future of higher education in India and the role of the NEP 2020 in shaping it.

The NEP 2020 recognizes the need to enhance the quality of higher education in India, which has been a longstanding challenge. It proposes several measures to achieve this, including the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund and promote research in various disciplines, the setting up of multidisciplinary institutions called Higher Education Clusters (HECs) to encourage collaboration and innovation, and the introduction of a new accreditation system that emphasizes learning outcomes and quality assurance. Additionally, the NEP 2020 aims to promote internationalization of higher education by encouraging foreign universities to set up campuses in India and facilitating the mobility of students and faculty across borders. Overall, the NEP 2020 is a comprehensive policy that seeks to address the major challenges facing higher education in India and transform it into a world-class system that can meet the needs of a rapidly changing global economy.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Mishra & Mohapatra (2020) carried out a study on "National Education Policy 2020: An Analysis of the Higher Education Reforms." "This literature review analyzes the higher education reforms proposed in the National Education Policy 2020. It examines the policy's objectives of promoting holistic education, interdisciplinary studies, and experiential learning. The review also discusses the challenges and opportunities associated with the implementation of these reforms.. This policy given many opportunities to get higher education to all and it will be easily accessible for all. But the higher educational institution will face many hurdles to the effective implementation of the policy.

Sengupta & Ghosh (2020) made a study on "A Critical Appraisal of the National Education Policy 2020: Implications for Higher Education in India." This article critically appraises the National Education Policy 2020 and its implications for higher education in India. It examines the policy's emphasis on skill development, research, and internationalization of education. The review also discusses the need for infrastructure development, faculty training, and effective governance mechanisms to support the implementation of the policy. To successfully implement this policy, more practical and every stakeholder must be aware as much as possible.

Menon & Rakesh (2020) carried out a study on "Higher Education Policy Reforms in India: A Critical Analysis of the National Education Policy 2020" This study critically analyzes the National Education Policy 2020 and its potential impact on higher education in India. It discusses the policy's focus on multidisciplinary education, flexibility in curriculum design, and the role of technology in enhancing learning outcomes. The review also examines the challenges and opportunities presented by the policy reforms. Here it is found that many challenges will be faced to implement the policy fully.

Varshney & Shrivastava (2020) made a study on "National Education Policy 2020: A Paradigm Shift in Higher Education" This review paper explores the key provisions of the National Education Policy 2020 related to higher education. It discusses the policy's objectives of promoting critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills among students. The paper also analyzes the potential impact of the policy on curriculum development, assessment practices, and research and innovation in higher education. It is found that NEP 2020 will give many opportunities to the learner to learn out of their course content i.e., it will make higher education very flexible and easy to access.

3. OBJECTIVES:

- i) To examine the key provisions of the NEP 2020 related to higher education in Assam.
- ii) To analyze the challenges and opportunities presented by the implementation of the NEP 2020 in higher education in Assam.

4. METHODOLOGY:

The research methodology for a research paper based on secondary sources should involve a comprehensive literature review to gather relevant data related to the National Education Policy 2020 and its impact on higher education in India. The data collected from the literature review should then be analyzed using qualitative content analysis to identify themes, patterns, and trends. The findings should be synthesized to draw conclusions and identify gaps in the literature for future research. It is important to ensure the validity and reliability of the research by using reputable sources and acknowledging potential biases or limitations in the data. Adhering to ethical guidelines is also essential.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION:

5.1 National Education Policy 2020 in India:

The National Education Policy 2020 is a landmark policy document in India that aims to transform the education system at all levels. The policy was announced after a gap of 34 years, with the last policy announced in 1986. The new policy aims to create an education system that is inclusive, holistic, and multidisciplinary. The policy has several key provisions related to higher education in India. One of the most important provisions is the creation of a new regulatory body called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The HECI will replace the existing regulatory bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The HECI will be responsible for regulating all aspects of higher education, including accreditation, funding, and quality assurance. Another important provision of the National Education Policy 2020 is the creation of a new system of multidisciplinary education. Under this system, students will be able to choose from a wide range of subjects and courses, regardless of their chosen discipline. The policy also emphasizes the need for increased use of technology and online learning in higher education.

The National Education Policy 2020 also includes provisions related to research and innovation in higher education. The policy proposes the creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to promote and fund research in all disciplines. The policy also proposes the creation of Higher Education Clusters to foster collaboration and innovation among universities and research institutions. The policy also recognizes the importance of internationalization in higher education and proposes several measures to enhance global mobility of students and faculty. The policy proposes the creation of Internationalization of Education Centers (IOECs) to promote academic and cultural exchanges and collaborations with foreign universities. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 represents a significant shift in the Indian education system, with a focus on creating an education system that is flexible, multidisciplinary, and inclusive. However, the successful implementation of the policy will require significant investment and collaboration between various stakeholders, including the government, universities, and industry.

5.2 National Education Policy 2020 in Assam:

The National Education Policy 2020 is a policy document that aims to transform the education system in India. In Assam, the policy has been received positively, with the state government showing enthusiasm for its implementation. One of the key provisions of the National Education Policy 2020 that is particularly relevant to Assam is the emphasis

on regional languages. The policy recognizes the importance of mother tongue-based education and encourages the use of local languages as a medium of instruction. This is particularly significant for Assam, which has a rich linguistic and cultural heritage, with Assamese being the official language of the state.

Another important provision of the policy that is relevant to Assam is the focus on skill development and vocational education. The policy proposes the creation of a National Skills Mission to provide training and skill development to students at all levels of education. This is particularly relevant to Assam, which has a large population of youth who require job-ready skills for employment opportunities. The policy also emphasizes the importance of teacher education and professional development. The policy proposes the creation of a National Teacher Education Program to provide high-quality training to teachers at all levels. This is particularly relevant to Assam, which has faced challenges in attracting and retaining qualified teachers in remote and rural areas.

In addition, the policy recognizes the importance of technology and digital learning in education. The policy proposes the creation of a National Education Technology Forum to promote the use of technology in education. This is particularly relevant to Assam, which has faced challenges in providing quality education in remote and inaccessible areas. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 has the potential to significantly transform the education system in Assam, with a focus on regional languages, skill development, teacher education, and technology. However, successful implementation will require the collaboration and support of various stakeholders, including the government, universities, and industry.

5.3 National Education Policy 2020 a Game Changer for Higher Education:

The National Education Policy 2020 is a comprehensive policy document that aims to transform the education system in India. The policy is particularly significant for higher education, with several key provisions that have the potential to make a significant impact. One of the most significant provisions of the National Education Policy 2020 is the creation of a new regulatory body called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The HECI will replace the existing regulatory bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The HECI will be responsible for regulating all aspects of higher education, including accreditation, funding, and quality assurance. This will create a more streamlined and efficient system of regulation, which is expected to improve the quality of higher education in India. Another important provision of the National Education Policy 2020 is the emphasis on multidisciplinary education. Under the new policy, students will be able to choose from a wide range of subjects and courses, regardless of their chosen discipline. This is expected to create a more flexible and adaptable education system that can meet the changing needs of the economy and society.

The National Education Policy 2020 also emphasizes the importance of research and innovation in higher education. The policy proposes the creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to promote and fund research in all disciplines. The policy also proposes the creation of Higher Education Clusters to foster collaboration and innovation among universities and research institutions. This is expected to create a more vibrant and dynamic research ecosystem in India, which can contribute to the country's economic growth and development. The policy also recognizes the importance of internationalization in higher education and proposes several measures to enhance global mobility of students and faculty. The policy proposes the creation of Internationalization of Education Centers (IOECs) to promote academic and cultural exchanges and collaborations with foreign universities. This is expected to create more opportunities for Indian students and faculty to engage with the global academic community and to bring in international expertise to Indian universities.

However, the successful implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 will require significant investment and collaboration between various stakeholders, including the government, universities, and industry. The policy proposes several measures to increase funding for higher education, including the creation of a National Higher Education Fund. The policy also proposes several measures to improve the quality of higher education, including the creation of a new system of accreditation and the establishment of a National Assessment and Accreditation Council. There are also several challenges that need to be addressed to successfully implement the National Education Policy 2020. One of the key challenges is the need to address the existing inequalities in the education system. The policy recognizes the importance of inclusion and equity in education and proposes several measures to address these issues. However, implementing these measures will require significant resources and political will.

Another challenge is the need to address the shortage of qualified faculty in higher education. The policy proposes several measures to address this issue, including the creation of a National Mission for Mentoring and Coaching. However, addressing this issue will require significant investment in training and professional development for faculty. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 has the potential to be a game-changer for higher education in India, with a focus on multidisciplinary education, research and innovation, internationalization, and quality assurance. However, successful implementation will require significant investment and collaboration between various stakeholders, as well as addressing the existing challenges in the education system.

5.4 Opportunities of National Education Policy 2020 in Higher Education:

The National Education Policy 2020 presents several opportunities for higher education in India. The policy aims to transform the education system in the country, with a focus on multidisciplinary education, research and innovation,

internationalization, and quality assurance. The policy also proposes several measures to increase funding for higher education and improve the quality of education. Here are some of the key opportunities presented by the National Education Policy 2020 for higher education:

- i. **Multidisciplinary Education:** The policy encourages multidisciplinary education, which allows students to choose courses from a wide range of subjects and disciplines. This approach will enable students to develop a broader perspective and acquire a diverse set of skills, which can help them to adapt to the changing needs of the economy and society.
- ii. **Research and Innovation:** The policy proposes the creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to promote and fund research in all disciplines. The policy also proposes the creation of Higher Education Clusters to foster collaboration and innovation among universities and research institutions. This is expected to create a more vibrant and dynamic research ecosystem in India, which can contribute to the country's economic growth and development.
- iii. **Internationalization:** The policy recognizes the importance of internationalization in higher education and proposes several measures to enhance global mobility of students and faculty. The policy proposes the creation of Internationalization of Education Centers (IOECs) to promote academic and cultural exchanges and collaborations with foreign universities. This is expected to create more opportunities for Indian students and faculty to engage with the global academic community and to bring in international expertise to Indian universities.
- iv. **Quality Assurance:** The policy proposes the creation of a new system of accreditation and the establishment of a National Assessment and Accreditation Council. This is expected to improve the quality of higher education in India and make it more competitive globally.
- v. **Vocational Education:** The policy recognizes the importance of vocational education and proposes the creation of a new system of education called Vocational Education and Training (VET). This will provide students with skills and knowledge that are relevant to the job market, making them more employable and contributing to the country's economic growth.
- vi. **Digital Education:** The policy emphasizes the use of technology in education and proposes the creation of a National Education Technology Forum to promote the use of digital technology in education. This will enable students to access education from anywhere and at any time, making education more accessible and inclusive.
- vii. **Teacher Education:** The policy recognizes the importance of quality teachers in education and proposes several measures to improve teacher education. This includes the creation of a National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education and the establishment of a National Professional Standards for Teachers. These measures are expected to improve the quality of teachers in India and make them more effective in the classroom.
- viii. **Inclusivity:** The policy emphasizes the need for inclusive education and proposes several measures to promote equity and diversity in higher education. This includes the creation of a Gender Inclusion Fund and the establishment of Special Education Zones to provide education to disadvantaged and marginalized communities. This is expected to create a more inclusive and diverse higher education system in India.
- ix. **Industry-Academia Collaboration:** The policy proposes the creation of a new system of education called Academic Credit Bank to allow students to earn credits for courses taken from multiple institutions. This will promote collaboration among universities and industry and create more opportunities for students to engage with the industry.

The National Education Policy 2020 presents several opportunities for higher education in India, including multidisciplinary education, research and innovation, internationalization, quality assurance, increased funding, vocational education, digital education, teacher education, inclusivity, and industry-academia collaboration. These opportunities can help to transform the higher education system in India and make it more competitive globally. However, successful implementation will require collaboration and investment from various stakeholders, including the government, universities, and industry.

5.5 Challenges of National Education Policy 2020 in Higher Education:

The National Education Policy 2020 presents several challenges in its implementation, particularly in the higher education sector. While the policy proposes several measures to transform the higher education system in India, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to achieve its objectives. These challenges include funding constraints, implementation challenges, and resistance to change. Here are some of the key challenges presented by the National Education Policy 2020 in higher education:

- i. **Funding Constraints:** While the policy proposes several measures to increase funding for higher education, the current funding levels are insufficient to meet the objectives of the policy. The policy proposes the creation of a National Higher Education Fund, but its size and sources of funding are yet to be determined. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in budget cuts, which can further constrain the funding available for higher education.
- ii. **Implementation Challenges:** The implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 presents several challenges, particularly in the higher education sector. The policy proposes the creation of several new institutions, such as Higher Education Clusters, National Research Foundation, and National Accreditation Council. The creation and

implementation of these institutions require significant resources, planning, and coordination, which can be challenging.

- iii. **Resistance to Change:** The National Education Policy 2020 proposes significant changes to the higher education system in India, including multidisciplinary education, internationalization, and quality assurance. However, these changes require a cultural shift in the higher education system and may face resistance from traditionalists and stakeholders who are resistant to change.
- iv. **Infrastructure and Technology:** The policy emphasizes the use of technology in education and proposes several measures to promote digital education. However, the current infrastructure and technology available in many institutions are insufficient to support the implementation of the policy. The lack of access to technology and internet connectivity can limit the reach and effectiveness of digital education.
- v. **Faculty Development:** The policy proposes several measures to improve the quality of faculty in higher education, including the establishment of a National Research Foundation and the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education. However, the implementation of these measures requires significant investment in faculty development, training, and capacity building, which can be challenging.
- vi. **Quality Assurance:** The policy proposes the establishment of a National Higher Education Regulatory Authority to regulate higher education institutions and ensure quality assurance. However, the effectiveness of such an authority is dependent on its governance structure, capacity, and resources. The establishment of such an authority also requires coordination with existing regulatory bodies, which can be challenging.
- vii. **Multidisciplinary Education:** The policy proposes the introduction of multidisciplinary education to promote holistic learning and interdisciplinary research. However, the implementation of this measure requires the integration of various disciplines and coordination among faculties, which can be challenging. The lack of qualified faculty to teach multidisciplinary courses can also be a challenge.
- viii. **Skill Development:** The policy emphasizes the importance of skill development and proposes the creation of a new system of education called Vocational Education and Training (VET). However, the implementation of this measure requires coordination with the industry to ensure that the skills taught are relevant to the job market. The lack of infrastructure and resources for skill development can also be a challenge.

The National Education Policy 2020 presents several challenges in its implementation in the higher education sector, including funding constraints, implementation challenges, resistance to change, infrastructure and technology, faculty development, quality assurance, multidisciplinary education, and skill development. Addressing these challenges will require collaboration and investment from various stakeholders, including the government, universities, and industry.

6. SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:

The National Education Policy 2020 presents a transformative vision for the future of education in India, particularly in the higher education sector. The successful implementation of this policy requires a coordinated effort from various stakeholders, including the government, universities, industry, and regulatory bodies. To ensure the effective implementation of the policy, the following suggestions can be considered:

- i. **Increase Funding:** The government should increase funding for higher education to meet the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020. The creation of the National Higher Education Fund is a step in the right direction, but its size and sources of funding need to be determined to ensure adequate funding for the policy's implementation.
- ii. **Strengthen Implementation:** The effective implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 requires a strong governance structure and effective coordination among various stakeholders. The government should establish a dedicated unit to oversee the implementation of the policy and ensure effective coordination among various institutions and regulatory bodies.
- iii. **Faculty Development:** The quality of faculty is a critical determinant of the quality of education provided in higher education institutions. The government should invest in faculty development, training, and capacity building to ensure that the faculty has the skills and knowledge required to implement the policy effectively.
- iv. **Quality Assurance:** The establishment of a National Higher Education Regulatory Authority is a step in the right direction to ensure quality assurance in higher education institutions. The government should ensure that the regulatory authority is independent, transparent, and adequately resourced to ensure its effectiveness.
- v. **Infrastructure and Technology:** The government should invest in infrastructure and technology to support the implementation of the policy, particularly in institutions that lack access to technology and internet connectivity. The government should also ensure that the infrastructure and technology are up-to-date and meet the requirements of the policy.
- vi. **Public Awareness:** The successful implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 requires public awareness and support. The government should launch an awareness campaign to inform the public about the policy's objectives and benefits.
- vii. **Collaboration with Industry:** The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the importance of collaboration between higher education institutions and industry to promote skill development and innovation. The government

should encourage and facilitate such collaborations by providing incentives to industry and higher education institutions.

- viii. Address Regional Disparities: The policy proposes the creation of Higher Education Clusters to promote regional development and address regional disparities in access to higher education. The government should ensure that such clusters are established in a manner that addresses the specific needs and challenges of each region and promotes inclusivity and diversity in higher education. Additionally, the government should ensure that there is adequate funding and infrastructure to support the establishment and functioning of these clusters.

The National Education Policy 2020 presents a transformative vision for the future of education in India, particularly in the higher education sector. The successful implementation of the policy requires a coordinated effort from various stakeholders, and the suggestions mentioned above can help ensure effective policy implementation. The government should also regularly review and evaluate the implementation of the policy to identify challenges and make necessary changes to achieve the policy's objectives.

7. CONCLUSION:

The National Education Policy 2020 is a significant reform initiative that aims to transform the higher education sector in India. The policy's emphasis on promoting creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, coupled with a multidisciplinary approach to learning, has the potential to enhance the quality of education and promote innovation and research in the country. While the policy presents several opportunities for higher education, it also faces several challenges that must be addressed to ensure its successful implementation. The government, in collaboration with various stakeholders, needs to work towards addressing these challenges and effectively implementing the policy. The suggestions mentioned above, including increased funding, faculty development, quality assurance, infrastructure and technology, public awareness, collaboration with industry, and addressing regional disparities, can help ensure effective policy implementation. The successful implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 can play a significant role in promoting inclusive and equitable education, addressing regional disparities, and enhancing the employability of students in the country. Therefore, it is essential to take a coordinated and sustained effort towards the policy's implementation to achieve the vision of a transformed higher education sector in India.

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