

Implementation of New Education Policy 2020 in Higher Education System of Indian Universities - A State wise Review

NEP 2020 in Higher Education System of Indian Universities

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Abstract: The New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) by the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) Government after education policies of 1968 and 1986 from previous governments appears ambitious to change the higher education system in India. Some states have already started the processes of implementing the policy in higher education system of their universities like Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh and leading the race as role models. Some states are showing resistance like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerela, to name a few. The evaluation of policy is done by taking case examples of 3 states which have executed and 3 states which are reluctant to execute the NEP 2020. Majorly, the use of secondary sources is made for deriving conclusions in this paper. This paper critically examines the salient features of NEP 2020, thereby evaluating each feature in terms of its present status, scope for future execution and measures taken for the same. In the process, the debates of language, center-state relations and education funding come to the forefront for due consideration of academicians and policy-makers.

Keywords: British, Education, Gurukuls, Higher Education, Higher Education Institutions, Multi-disciplinary, New Education Policy (NEP 2020)

I. INTRODUCTION: FROM GURUKULS TO BRITISH MODELLED EDUCATION

Out of the 17 goals, education falls under Goal 4 of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and states, “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (GOI, 2020). Quality education specifically entails issues such as appropriate skills development, gender parity, provision of relevant school infrastructure, equipment, educational materials and resources, scholarships or teaching force (UNESCO, 2022). At this juncture, it is relevant to point out that inclusivity can be understood in two contexts: one in terms of equality in opportunity and other in making special provisions for the underprivileged (Himanshu Mishra, 2021). Despite enumeration of provision for educational opportunities in Indian Constitution and introduction of two National Educational Policies (NEPs): one in 1968 and another in 1986, why an exclusive policy on education after a gap of 34 years was provisioned in form of New NEP 2020 is a question that this paper seeks to answer. Was it need of the hour or political agenda to add another milestone by ruling party?

The 42nd amendment made omission in education as a state list subject and made it a concurrent list subject. This development is of the year 1976 when India was in a state of emergency. According to Dr. Shyam Menon, the first Vice-Chancellor of Ambedkar University, the then Indira Gandhi Government had been wanting it to be a responsibility of central government. The Sarkaria Commission in its report in 1983 stated that it was not advisable for education to be a state subject though centre-state should work in tandem for the quality enhancement of the education. One argument in favour of shifting educational policy to state is that each state has different language, culture and history so how would we justify centralized education policy in states for example, like Kerela, Nagaland or Jammu (Joseph, 2021)?

The NCERT textbook mentions an entire chapter on ancient education system in India and reflects how travelers from distant nations through sea and land routes visited India for fulfilling their pursuit of knowledge and gaining wisdom. The treatises of Chinese travelers are not a hidden mystery evidencing about Buddhist monasteries. Such was the credibility of our education system which was duly acknowledged world-wide when communication was an ardent task and today, we are struggling to model our higher education system on the lines of foreign or western education. What an irony? We consider everything western as better and in lieu of making our education system on western lines, we realize that we are going back to our traditional gurukul system and we discover that our education system was far better in the ancient times. The temples and Buddhist Viharas were centers of learning alike and the atmosphere of sacred learning prevailed in the very culture of society. The text book quotes (NCERT, 2022-2023):

“The Jataka tales, accounts given by Xuan Zang and I-Qing (Chinese scholars), as well as other sources tell us that kings and society took active interest in promoting education. As a result, many famous educational centers came into existence. Among the most notable universities that evolved during this period were situated at Takshashila, Nalanda, Valabhi,

Vikramshila, Odantapuri and Jagaddala. These universities developed in connection with the viharas. Those at Benaras, Navadeep and Kanchi developed in connection with temples and became centers of community life in the places where they were situated”.

The Gurus or Sages imparted education in Gurukuls of India which were residential institutions and were one of its kind as even the princes had to stay amongst the masses to attain education in these gurukuls. Our epics Ramayna, Mahabharata, etc. gave vivid descriptions about the sanctity of these Gurukuls. Both the Vedic and Buddhist Gurukuls were different and even the subject matter was different (What Did the Ancient Indian Education System Look Like?, 2018). The Vedic Gurukuls taught Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas while the Buddhist schools taught Vinaya, Abhidhamma and Sutta. However, there were certain common subjects to be studied. The aim was not just to impart education on the basis of various domains but also impart moral education. The language of communication was Sanskrit and Pali, the native languages spoken and understood in the extended Far Southeast.

India's education system crumbled first with the devastation caused by invasion of Mughals and the remaining legacy was shattered by vested interests of British government who needed the line of administrators based on western education to assist them in local governance and colonize the whole nation. The stories of mass lootings and burning of temples and monasteries are not hidden. This led them to open up British schools which imparted English education to Indian masses. All this was an effort under “Downward infiltration Theory”. Now, with the introduction of English education, the Sanskrit education took a backseat and English today is the highest spoken language on earth and the most common medium of communication. But the call for Sanskrit education is again ringing loud as all the treasure of indigenous traditional knowledge in India is written in sanskrit and to unveil the treasure of knowledge, the researchers need to know and understand the language in depth. The German universities (Ghosh, 2015) have opened avenues for Sansrit language teaching and learning, as per the latest information. A total of 14 of the top universities of Germany teach Sanskrit, the rationale being the ancient treasure of India is in Sanskrit language.

The Charter Act of 1813 was the first step towards making education, an objective of the government. It must be seen as an important landmark in the history of modern education in India. Section 43 of the Charter stated (Tracing the Roots of ‘Right to Education’ in British India, 2022):

“a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees in each year shall be set apart and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India.”

This resulted in a debate between the two groups: the Orientalists and the Anglicists. The Orientalists believed that English education in India should focus upon through the medium of native languages. The Anglicists on the other hand, believed that the English education should be in English medium only. The debate continued till 1834 when Lord Macaulay, an Anglicist came to India (Tracing the Roots of ‘Right to Education’ in British India, 2022). Finally, the debate came to an end and the policy of Anglicists prevailed. The British government ordered for surveys in India territories of Bengal, Madras and Bombay for evaluating the education system and found that Indian education system was one-of-its-kind. William Adam mentions in his report that there were 1,00,000 schools in villages of Bihar and Bengal in 1830's (Gautam, 2019). Similar observations were found about Madras Presidency and Punjab villages. The Charles Wood Dispatch of 1854, famously termed as “Magna Carta of English education” was the first step of centralization of education in India. Lord Dalhousie initiated 3 universities in India – Madras, Calcutta and Bombay on the line of London universities.

India became independent in 1947 and did not adopt much change in the policy of education and colonial system of education continued uninterrupted. Education remained mainly the responsibility of state governments, till the time it was converted into concurrent list subject. The Planning Commission was set up in 1950 including education as one of the main agendas. The following three important Commissions were set up to bring reforms in education:

1. The University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. Radhakrishnan (1949)
2. The Secondary Education Commission under the chairmanship of Dr. A. Laxman Swami Mudaliar (1952-53)
3. The Education Commision (Training, 1970) under the chairmanship of Shree Daulat Singh Kothari (1964-1966)

By the year 1968, a national pattern on education was devised and formal policy on National Education was introduced further in 1986. The important bodies like All-India Council of Technical Education AICTE (1945), the University Grants Commission UGC (1953), and the National Council of Educational Research and Training NCERT (1961) were established to overhaul the educational system. After independence, the NEP has evolved as below:

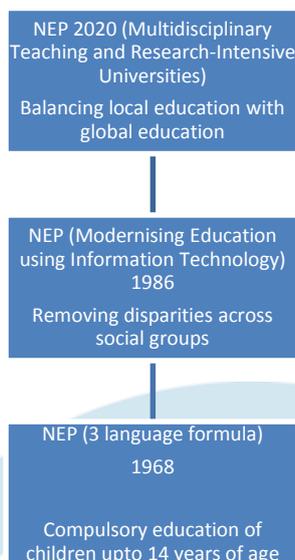


Figure-1: Evolution of National Education Policy (Chopra, 2020), (Sharma, 2014)

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

After independence, the setting of up UGC was a landmark step towards this direction and Kothari Commission was set up in 1966, to recommend on the matter of academic enhancement (Biswas, 2021). Post-independence Indian government had introduced two educational policies: one in 1968 and another in 1986, then why there was a need to re-introduce a NEP 2020 as a rationale for this introduction would determine the significance of the policy. The salient features of the policy in terms of higher education look promising yet ambitious but how do they appear different from earlier educational policies is a question that this paper addresses. The clear-cut execution plan is not shared with universities and few states show resentment need to be aligned with others. Under such circumstances, how the present government would manage the implementation hassles of policy is another question that this paper seeks to address. In nutshell, this paper addresses the following major concerns:

1. What are the salient features as provisioned in NEP 2020?
2. How salient features of NEP 2020 are different from NEP 1968 and 1986?
3. What are the debates on higher education of India with introduction of NEP 2020?
4. Which states of India are reluctant to execute NEP 2020?
5. Which states of India have begun to execute NEP 2020?
6. What are the reasons of reluctance by states in executing NEP 2020?

III. METHODOLOGY

This is a review paper based on review of literature whereby data is collected through secondary sources of information published during the period majorly from online media portals like timesofindia.com, hindu.com, indianexpress.com, economicstimes.com and so on. The education system in India have been reviewed from traditional Gurukul system to British model of education to begin with. The following procedure was adopted for deriving at conclusions in this paper:

- First, it was researched as to how many policies on education have been implemented and adhered to after independence and what were the policies before independence during the rule of British administration? Then, a comparative analysis was made on how these policies were different from each other.
- Second, the draft NEP 2020 policy on government website was kept as a reference point and all the published salient features of NEP 2020 were listed down and summarised. Once, all the salient features were put in place, each provision was critically evaluated based on opinions and perspectives of experts, as published in online and print media.
- Last but not the least, the three majorly emerging debates and issues during this critical evaluation are summarised and deliberated with in the paper, namely: language, centre-state relations and education funding.
- The 3 states chosen as implementing states in this paper are Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. The resenting states chosen for study are West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Meghalaya. The reason for implementation and resentment were carefully analyzed for deriving at conclusions.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This research paper is based on secondary sources of information including, governmental policy documents and reports on recommendations of educational committees and commissions and draft NEP 2020. The information is also collected from the recent online media articles and reports on the subject. All the secondary sources belong to the period majorly between 2015-2022. A lot of information is further based on discussion and expert talks during Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) attended by the author on the subject. In addition, the reports and notifications were reviewed of various universities like Bengaluru City University and University of Hyderabad for recommendations on processes adopted for implementation of NEP, 2020 and these two have been cited as case examples. These reports were very helpful in finding out the possibility of the manner in which provisions of NEP 2020 may be implemented. Further, the following UGC notifications have been consulted for the purpose of analysis in this paper:

- UGC (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) Regulations, 2021
- UGC (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2021
- UGC Guidelines for Multiple Entry and Exit in Academic Programs offered in Higher Education Institutions, July 2021
- University Grants Commission (Open and Distance Learning programs and Online programs) Regulations, 2020
- UGC Guidelines for Internationalization of Higher Education, July 2021
- UGC Educational Framework for Global Citizenship in Higher Education, December 2021
- UGC Draft Institution Development Plan for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), 2022
- UGC Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement in Higher Educational Institutions in India, January, 2020

V. SALIENT FEATURES OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY, 2020

The NEP 2020 to be implemented by 2040 though covers both elementary and higher education has been formulated after a consultative process on the basis of 2 lakh suggestions from 2.5 lakhs Gram Panchayats, 6600 Blocks, 6000 ULBs, 676 Districts. In June 2017, a 'Committee for the Draft National Education Policy' was constituted under the Chairmanship of eminent scientist Padma Vibhushan awardee, Dr. K. Kasturirangan, which submitted the Draft NEP, 2019 to the Hon'ble Human Resource Development Minister on 31st May, 2019. The Draft NEP 2019 was uploaded on Ministry of Education formerly Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD's) website and at 'MyGov Innovate' portal specifying views/suggestions/comments of stakeholders, including public and comprise the following salient features (Aithal, 2020):

- All universities to become multi-disciplinary by 2030.
- All universities to have 3,000 and more students by 2040.
- Replacing the UGC and AICTE with Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).
- Education system to move from 10 + 2 system to a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 system.
- Opening of higher education to foreign players and institutions.
- Re-introduction of 4 years Bachelor's program with multiple entry and exit options.
- Flexibility to institutions to offer different designs in Master's program.
- Discontinuation of M.Phil. Program.
- Setting up of National Research Foundation (NRF).
- Common entrance exam for admissions.
- Online Distance Education System permitted to offer Online Distance Learning (ODL) education.
- Consolidation of existing fragmented HEIs into two types: Multidisciplinary and Autonomous Universities.
- There shall, by 2030, be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district.
- All HEIs have autonomy in deciding their fee structure and surplus.

The first objective of NEP 2020 was to cater to the current fragmentation in higher education by transforming them into multidisciplinary universities having more than 3,000 students. This will break the barriers of compartmentalised education system and offer variety of stream and disciplines to the scholars and not limit their cognitive faculties. This development actually re-emphasises the significance of our world class universities like Nalanda, Takshashila, Vikramshila and Vallabhi which had scholars from round the world to get access to multidisciplinary education. In such a scenario, the HEC will be single regulating body for education in India. The HECI would have the right to penalize institutions who do not adhere to quality education. The HECI would function on the following 4 verticals (Chandramana, 2020):

- **National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC)**, to regulate higher education, including teacher education, while excluding medical and legal education.
- **National Accreditation Council (NAC)**, a "meta-accrediting body".

- **Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC)**, for funding and financing of universities and colleges. This will replace the existing National Council for Teacher Education, All India Council for Technical Education and the University Grants Commission.
- **General Education Council (GEC)**, to frame "graduate attributes", namely the learning outcomes expected. It will also be responsible in framing a National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF). The National Council for Teacher Education will come under the GEC, as a professional standard setting body (PSSB).

In nutshell, there would be two types of universities: Multidisciplinary Universities (MU) and Multidisciplinary Autonomous Colleges (AC) with the campus having more than 3,000 students. The timeline to become multidisciplinary is by 2030 and to have 3,000 and more students by 2040. Multidisciplinary Universities will be of two types as (1) Research-intensive Universities, and (2) Teaching-intensive Universities. The AC would be a bit smaller than a university. All HEIs including colleges are autonomous and there will be no affiliated colleges to state universities and autonomy in deciding curriculum and evaluation. The various nomenclatures used currently such as deemed to be university, affiliating university, central university, affiliating technical university, unitary university, etc would be replaced by 'University' after fulfilling the required criteria as per norms. Accreditation at all levels would be a benchmark for quality education in these HEIs.

Increasing students to 3,000 or more is the target and that is increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). Another target would be initiating of the Online Distance Learning (ODLs) programmes which would further increase the number of students. All the three types of HEIs which are accredited to offer ODL are permitted to offer ODL. All the ODL programmes and their components leading to any diploma or degree will be of standards and quality equivalent to the highest quality programmes run by the HEIs on their campuses. Top institutions accredited for ODL would be encouraged and supported to develop high-quality online courses. Such quality online courses will be suitably integrated into curricula of HEIs and blended mode will be preferred.

The term "liberal arts" has gained momentum after the NEP 2020 which means liberal notion of the arts. The NEP refers in its policy document the 64 arts as mentioned in the novel of Banabhatta Kadambari including singing, dancing laying emphasis on chemistry, mathematics, engineering and so on and also soft skills such as communication, negotiation, etc. The policy document states,

"The very idea that all branches of creative human endeavor, including mathematics, science, vocational subjects, professional subjects, and soft skills should be considered 'arts', has distinctly Indian origins. This notion of a 'knowledge of many arts' or what in modern times is often called the 'liberal arts' (i.e., a liberal notion of the arts) must be brought back to Indian education, as it is exactly the kind of education that will be required for the 21st century" (GOI, 2020)

The focus and emphasis in NEP 2020 is on credit-based courses of environmental education, value education and community engagement service. Research internships are being promoted to make the curricula industry-driven. There is re-introduction of 4 years Bachelor's program with exit options. Under the four-year program proposed in the new NEP, students can exit after one year with a certificate, after two years with a diploma, and after three years with a bachelor's degree. The four-year program may also lead to a degree 'with Research' if the student completes a rigorous research project in their major area(s) of study. Flexibility to institutions to offer different designs in Master's program as the students may opt subjects from multi-disciplinary streams of humanities, management or sciences is also provisioned in the NEP 2020.

Further, a one-year research degree leading to M.Phil. in any subject is discontinued due to the reason that students are exposed to preliminary research in their Bachelor course only. Undertaking a Ph.D. shall require either a Master's degree or a four-year Bachelor's degree with Research. M.Phil. course was always subject to scrutiny by many academicians at various points of time, the reason being this particular course at many universities is being run as a two-year course and at many universities as a one-year course. The one-year course has a six-months course work and two-year course has a one-year course work (Shreeniwas, 2020).

An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned. The portal for the same is already functional. The UGC (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) Regulations was introduced in the year 2021. Further, the regulation was amended and titled as UGC (Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2021. As per amendment, all the colleges, autonomous institutions may become part of ABC process irrespective of NAAC rankings. This will help students take up courses across the colleges. Earlier, only universities with NAAC Grading A were permitted to be part of ABC process. The ABC was particularly helpful in case of parents who get transferred on regular basis (Wadhawan, 2022).

The support of research funds through the NRF and any other agencies will be equally distributed to all three types of HEIs based on a fair evaluation of the research proposal. The NRF will treat all private HEIs in par with public HEIs for granting research funds which is only based on the merit of the proposals. Common entrance exam for admissions whereby all admissions in public HEIs are based on common entrance conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA) scores conducted at national level. All HEIs have

autonomy in deciding their fee's structure and surplus, if any should be reinvested in the expansion projects with a transparent accounting system. All private HEIs should offer 20% free-ship and 30% scholarship in the course fee for meritorious students in every course which they offer during a given academic year and this should be checked and confirmed by the accreditation process.

A total of 100 top Indian Universities will be encouraged to operate in foreign countries and 100 top Foreign Universities be allowed and facilitated to operate in India. Participation of foreign universities in India is currently limited to them entering into collaborative twinning programs, sharing faculty with partnering institutions and offering distance education. Over 650 foreign education providers have such arrangements in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India (<https://indianexpress.com/>, 2020).

VI. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Any policy brings with itself the positives and negatives and NEP 2020 is no different. The major objective of NEP is to create a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary education as is evident from the features of the policy. The five principles of NEP are: Quality, Affordability, Equity, Access and Accountability (PTI, 2020). The policy lays quite a comprehensive focus on higher education as a separate category and has come up with few remarkable agenda points to foster quality in higher education. Adopted on July 29, 2020, the NEP 2020 is expected to bring solutions to problems of higher education in India as the government has also allocated funds of 6% Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Ultimately, the 3 Is that will be focused upon are: Interdisciplinary research, Internationalization and Industry connect (Rao, 2021). The salient features of NEP 2020 as enumerated above have been critically examined in this paper in light of their present status, scope for future execution and measures taken for the same.

Bridging the gap between hard and soft sciences

The NEP 2020 seeks to restore the importance of the arts, humanities and social sciences in our education system. With NEP 2020, there is no clear distinction between hard sciences such as mathematics, science and soft sciences such as liberal arts, drama, creative arts, etc. Any student may study a mix of both the sciences. The focus and emphasis for NEP is "employability" and for becoming employable, one does not have to go through higher education on necessary basis. The NEP has proposed employability option from class 6th onwards only and one need not to be in rat race for becoming employable as per an expert. But putting students in vocational courses and taking them out of education early, we are actually throwing them into rat race of employability too soon because the needy and underprivileged would be in a mad rush to go in for jobs at the earliest (Baby, 2020). Therefore, the contradiction in creating employability needs our urgent attention.

In our engagement with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), as these areas offer higher employment opportunities, we have accorded lesser value and importance to non-STEM disciplines. Institutions focusing only on Engineering, Medicine or Legal studies have inherent limitations, and this model often militates against the idea of a university. Introducing flexibility in course design, allowing much greater choice to students for selecting subjects as per their aptitude and preferences, offering different entry and exit options, and stressing on the crucial need for multi-disciplinarity in education are among the measures suggested.

Native versus English language

Further, the NEP 2020 offers us lot of challenges as well in terms of overcoming the language barriers. Learning in native language is allowed till class V but English is the world-wide functional language and people should be well versed with the language. Finding so many competent teachers in multiple languages would prove be a difficult task. Most states are even considering this policy as a futile attempt to impose Hindi in states. If there is a mismatch between skills offered and jobs available in the market, it would be rendered ineffective. India's higher education sector consists of 3.74 crore students in nearly 1,000 universities, 39,931 colleges and 10,725 stand-alone institutions. Thus, a countrywide implementation of this mega education policy is going to be an ardent exercise involving multiple stakeholders at the state, district, sub-district, and block levels. Creating a shared responsibility and ownership amongst key stakeholders, including the private sector, at the state and district levels that have extraordinary diversity is going to be a major challenge for the education leadership (Sahoo, 2021).

The two-degree option

One pro-active action that is being taken up for the speedy implementation of NEP 2020 is introduction of two-concurrent degree programmes as per recent UGC guidelines where students to opt for two-degrees simultaneously. This is to be allowed with a condition that one of the degrees had to be pursued online. The choice may be either both the degrees can be offline or one course online and the other offline. These two degrees can further be pursued from same or different universities. The challenges which will come up with such an arrangement is coping up with shortage of faculties, multiple time-tables, syllabuses, examinations, etc. The two-degree choices may enhance the employability options for students and at the same time would increase GER as well (Umarji, 2021).

M. Jagadesh Kumar, presently heading UGC responded to the following queries regarding two-degree courses to Times of India, reported Manash Gohain (Gohain, 2022):

- Need for students to pursue two-degree courses
- Can a single HEI offer two physical programmes simultaneously?
- Will two-degree courses deprive the others from getting admission in good institutions?
- Can a student pursue two sciences together in physical mode?
- Multi-disciplinary is already there in four-year programme, then why a separate provision for two-degree programme
- Two-degree programmes would require additional staff
- Whether employers see value in two-degrees obtained simultaneously
- Will not the quality of education be compromised?

Promotion of neo-colonialism in education

An allegation is put by the dissenting experts that NEP 2020 would encourage neo-colonization and favour the privileged as the private players purchase farmlands in the vicinity at cheap prices to put their educational infrastructure at place. The Indian Express online portal reports that the government of Haryana acquired 2,006 acres of fertile land in nine villages of Sonipat for establishing Rajiv Gandhi Education City (RGEC) for building private educational institutions in the year 2012 (Singh, 2020). The portal also reports that the World Bank and UNESCO (The Task Force 2000) has warned:

“There are prestigious universities from developed nations offering shabby courses in poor and developing countries using their renowned names, without assuring equivalent quality”.

Foreign universities in India are believed to be to offshore campuses of universities in North America and Europe. Many of these prestigious universities built their reputation through colonial plunder and of course, consistent intellectual engagement for 150-200 years. The concept of social justice is totally missing from the policy as there is no reservation or special provisions for the downtrodden and underprivileged on compulsory basis except for minor scholarships and that too left at the discretion of private players.

First Runners-up in Implementing NEP 2020

The governments of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have taken the lead in implementing NEP. Yoga has been the favorite subject chosen by students of Madhya Pradesh. Dr Sanjeev Kumar Tiwari, a Professor and Principal, Maharaja Agrasen College, University of Delhi in The Hindustan Times stated (Tiwari, 2021),

“Over 80,000 students have chosen organic farming, 77,833 students have opted for personality development, 28,201 students have shown preference for information technology, 22,511 students have selected digital marketing and about 17,879 students have opted for tourism as a subject for vocational studies. Additionally, around 17,500 students have selected e-accounting and taxation with GST, while 14, 627 students have chosen to study medical diagnostics”.

The Bengaluru City University has issued notification dated 22.04.2022 titled, (University, 2022) in tandem with NEP 2020 for the academic year 2021-2022. Few salient features of this Regulation state that the program shall be structured in a semester mode with multiple exit options with Certification, Diploma and Basic Bachelor Degree at the completion of first, second and third years, respectively. The candidate who completes the four-year Undergraduate Program, either in one stretch or through multiple exits and re-entries would get a Bachelor's degree with honors. The four-years undergraduate honors degree holders with research component and a suitable grade are eligible to enter the 'Doctoral (Ph.D.) Program' in a relevant discipline or to enter 'Two Semester Master's Degree program with project work'.

Candidates who wish to enter the Master's/Doctoral program in a discipline other than the major discipline studied at the undergraduate program, have to take additional courses in the new discipline to meet the requirement or to make up the gap between the requirement and the courses already studied. There may be parallel five-year integrated master's degree programs with exit options at the completion of third and fourth years, with the undergraduate degree and undergraduate degree with honors in a discipline, respectively. There may also be an integrated doctoral program with exit option at the end of the first year with the Master's degree. The students who exit with Certification, Diploma and Basic Bachelor Degree shall be eligible to re-enter the program at the exit level to complete the program or to complete the next level.

The university has come up with first phase of recommendations for implementing NEP 2020 in form of report dated March 2022. A Committee with distinguished members had been set up to review and execute the implementation plan which studied the features of NEP 2020 and compared it with their existing academic structure. Towards this, a document called 'National Education Policy 2020: an Agenda for Academic Units' was drafted and circulated to all academic units of the University on October 29, 2021 with a request to use it as a guide for their own internal discussions. The University is already registered on the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) portal to facilitate credit mobility for students from Academic Year (AY) 2022-2023.

The report is further useful in helping us understand the credit system offered in NEP 2020 for the students. As per the report (NEP-2020 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, 2022), NEP Guidelines require a student to earn 36-40 credits per year. Moreover, there shall be 18-20 credits per semester and 36-40 credits per year in every program. A five-year Integrated program shall have 180-200 credits. The exact number of credits for different programs are determined by the respective Schools, but shall lie within the stated limits, as per the report.

States Acting as Barriers in Implementing NEP 2020

On the other hand, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and West Bengal have refused to implement NEP 2020 policy as per the latest report (Correspondent, 2021), the reason being lack of clear-cut guidelines. The NEP would impose the big challenge of center-state conflict on the adherence to the policy. While the NEP has been drafted by the Union government (with inputs from multiple stakeholders including the state governments), its implementation largely depends on the active cooperation from the states. In short, the Centre has to skillfully navigate the principles of cooperative federalism and decentralization while rolling out key initiatives. A number of opposition-ruled states have been raising strong objections to several key provisions of the NEP and the manner in which they are being rolled out. The more worrying development is that the Tamil Nadu government's recent decision to not implement the NEP can encourage other opposition-ruled states to follow a similar path. Thus, managing federal dynamics is critical to the realization of the NEP (Sahoo, 2021). West Bengal is another such example where Education Minister Mr. Partha Chatterjee questioned (PTI, 2020) the including of Bengali as one of the languages in list of native languages. The minister had set up a six-member committee to review the recommendations of NEP 2020 (PTI, 2020).

VII. CONCLUSION

The policy looks promising because it is churning out the intellectualism from academicians and giving the reigns of education sector in the hands of academicians. But at the same time, NEP 2020 is turning to be a political document more and less a savior for higher education. Mere formulating policy is not enough as the government needs to come up with effective implementation plan for the states. Once, the implementation is done, the NEP 2020 would be a saga of success in times to come.

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