Research Paper

Indian Higher Education System in the Purview of Nep-2020: Challenges and Realities.

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ABSTRACT
The National Education Policy -2020 is a paradigm transformation of the whole Education system of the country after thirty four years, which replace the National Policy on Education, 1986. This new policy is a comprehensive framework including the whole Indian Education system from elementary to higher education. The paper is an attempt to discuss the Indian higher education in the purview of National Education Policy -2020 (NEP- 2020). The policy has been viewed as a significant step towards transforming National Education system of the country. At the same time it has been criticized for various aspects related to the implementation level. The paper will mainly focus on the challenges and realities of implementation of NEP- 2020 in higher education sectors in terms of Enrolment, Equity, Quality, Insufficient Infrastructure, Inadequate Budgetary Provision, Privatization and Regulatory issues.
KEYWORDS:- NEP- 2020 , Indian Higher Education , Enrolment, Equity, Quality, Privatization

I. INTRODUCTION :-

Historically the India Education system is dated back to Vedic period which may be 2500 to 6000 B.C, according to Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan's observation. It is the oldest and probably the first of its kind in the world. The eminent American writer Mark Twain has rightly said, "India is the cradle of the human race". Even there were centres of higher learning in Vedic and Buddhist period long before the universities in Europe and other parts of the World came into existence. Nalanda,Vallabhi. Vikramsila, Jagaddala, Odantapuri , Mithila and Nadia were the great centres of higher learning in India which became known as the universities. Besides these there were temple colleges, which were administered by the temple sub committees of the village council. Many places of ancient India like Banaras, Ranchi, Nasik in North and Mithila, Nadia, Taxila, Kanauj , Patliputra in south were the hubs of higher learning at that time. Even Kashmir was an important centre of International learning when Buddhism was flourishing in Central Asia. After having a glorious history today India ranks 32 among the other countries of the World according to World Population Review, 2021.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 AND INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION:-

The National Education Policy -2020 (NEP- 2020) has been viewed as a significant step towards transforming National Education system of the country. In higher educational sector many new changes have been incorporated to achieve quality such as Internationalization, Holistic and Multidisciplinary education, Autonomy and Accountability, Multiple entries and exist, Curriculum flexibility and credit transfer etc. The basic objective of this new policy is to make the Indian education more inclusive, equitable and holistic. As the Indian Education system has been criticized as more theoretical, more information based rather than knowledge-based, this new policy has given stress on Holistic development through education at all level. The major issues of NEP-2020 in the perspective of Indian Higher Education can be short out as follows :-

- 50% GER in HEIs By 2035
- Academic Bank of Credit
- Use of technology with equity.
- Setting up of Gender Inclusion Fund and Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.
- Discontinuation of M.Phil Degree
- Multidisciplinary Education & Research University

▶   By 2024 all Higher Educational Institutes to be Multi Disciplinary
▶   Over a Period of 15 years all Higher Educational Institutes become Independent and Self Governing
▶   Mission Nalanda and Mission Takshashila

THE MAJOR CHALLENGES OF NEP-2020:-
The major challenges that the NEP-2020 is going to face in the implementation level can be categorized as follows:-

1)   **ENROLMENT**: - The major issue that has been highlighted in this new policy is the target of 50% gross enrolment ration by 2035. There are lots of criticisms here. If the present scenario of enrolment ration has been studied carefully then this issue of Enrolment itself could be marked as one of the major challenge of NEP-2020.The student enrolment in Higher Education has increased to nearly 4.14 crore in 2020-21 from 3,85 crore in 2019-20. Since 2014-15 there has been increased of around 72 lakh in enrolment (21%) according to All India Survey on Higher Education 2020-21 released by Union Ministry of Education. India's GER of 27.15 in 2019-20 is significantly low as compare to China's 51% and much less as compare to Western countries. Now the thing is that what will be the strategy of motivating students towards higher education. Many issues are related to the low enrolment ration such as economic condition of the families, number of Higher Educational Institutes, the type of courses offered, early marriage of girl child, insecurity of getting proper placement etc. Many things have to be done correct to fulfill the target of 50% gross enrolment ration.

2)   **INADEQUATE BUDGETARY PROVISION :-**
The Kothari Commission (1964-65) has recommended the increase in the expenditure on education form 2.9% of the GDP to 6% by 1985. But unfortunately according to India's latest Economic Survey 2022-23 total education outlay including both National and State added up to only 2.9% of Country's 2022 GDP. In 2023-23, the Department of School Education and Literacy was allocated 61% of the Ministry's total budget and 39% in the Department of Higher Education. It has been observed that all the Five Year Plans has given special emphasis on the Higher Education sector of the country and has given emphasis on build up of a new system which may fulfill the needs of the country. In the Tenth Plan has given remarkable emphasis on the development of institutional infrastructure for the promotion of higher education and research in the country. This Five Year Plan has also given special attention on the increase of enrolment in higher education giving focus on increasing access, quality, and adoption of State- specific strategies and liberalization of higher education system has given emphasis on 3Es- Expansion, Equity, and Excellence. Later Prime Minister Sri Manmoham Singh added one more E- Employability.

Table No 1:- Budget Allocation in Education in India in Five Year Plan

Plan	Elementary	Secondary	Adult	University	Technical	others
1st Plan	57.6	5.5	0	7.8	14.2	15
2nd Plan	34.8	18.7	0	17.6	17.9	11
3rd Plan	34.1	17.5	0	14.8	21.2	12.4
4th Plan	50.1	0	1.7	25.2	10.5	12.5
5th Plan	51.7	0	2.1	27.9	9.4	8.9
6th Plan	32.1	20.4	5.9	21.4	10.4	9.8
7th Plan	37.3	24	6.2	15.7	14.2	2.6
8th Plan	47.7	24	5.2	9.6	10.1	3.4
9th Plan	57.1	21.3	1.7	8.7	8.1	3
10th Plan	65.6	9.9	2.8	9.5	10.7	1.5
11th Plan	46.5	19.8	2.2	15.5	11.1	4.9

Source: Different Plan Documents

The above table has highlighted that budget allocation in higher education is not very satisfactory. The budgetary allocation witnessed the jump of 13% (over revised estimates) which is 13,018.34 core from financial year 2022-23. The Department of School Education has been allocated Rs 68,804 core and Department of Higher Education gets Rs 44,094 crore.01-Feb-2023. The amount allocated is not at all

satisfactory to implement NEP- 2020 in true sense. The recent guideline of PM-USHA has stated the following table as components of PM-USHA

Table No2:- Components of PM-USHA

Sl No	Component	No Of Units	Unit Cost (Rs Cr)	Total Amt (Rs Cr)
1	Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU)	35 Universities	100	3500
2	Grants to Strengthen Universities	73 Universities	20	1460

	(Accredited & Unaccredited Universities)			
3	Grants to Strengthen Colleges (Accredited & Unaccredited Colleges)	401 Colleges	5	2005
4	New Model Degree colleges	40 New Model Degree colleges	15	600
5	Gender Inclusion and Equity Initiative	50 Districts	10	500
6	MMER Grants		1% for States and 1% for Central MMER	161.3

Source :- PM-USHA Guideline , Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education

The RUSA 1.0 and RUSA 2.0 has funded approximately 2500 institutions for improving access, equity and quality under 16 components. The decreasing number of components from 16 to 6 and the number of Universities and Colleges included as units in PM-USHA for the financial assistant under RUSA 3.0 has highlighted the pathetic condition of Indian Higher Education in the days to come.

3)   INSUFFICIENT INFRASTRUCTURE :-
According to the report of "The Economic Times" there is Gap in Higher Education Infrastructure. The report says nearly 40% of colleges under UGC do not receive any assistance as they do not fulfill the minimum quality requirement specified under section 12 (b) for physical infrastructure and human resource. Economic Survey 2023 has stated that GER of Education and Infrastructure on a rise but data suggests scope for improvement. The implementation of NEP- 2020 needs a significant development of infrastructure in higher educational institutions in the college.

4)   INSUFFICIENT NUMBER OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION:-
National Family Health Report-5 (2019-21) has stated that 52% of India's total population is below 30 year of age. Now the question arise is there sufficient number of higher educational institutes to give accessibility of higher education in the country. As per the AISHE report 2020-21 there are 43,796 colleges and 11296 Stand Alone Institutions in the country. The report also states there are 422 State Public Universities that have 41836 affiliated colleges and only 17 women- centric universities in the country.

Table No. 3 :- Total No of Universities in India as on 25.01.2023

SL NO.	UNIVERSITIES	TOTAL NO
1	STATE UNIVERSITIES	460
2.	DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITIES	128
3.	CENTRAL UNIVERSITY	56
4	PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES	430
	TOTAL	1074

Source: http://www.ugc.gov.in

SL NO.	UNIVERSITIES UNDER 12 (B)	TOTAL NO
1	STATE UNIVERSITIES	267
2.	DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITIES	150
3.	CENTRAL UNIVERSITY	56
4	PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES	25
	TOTAL	398

Source: http://www.ugc.gov.in
The data shows that the number of higher educational institutes are not sufficient to fulfill the target of 50% Gross Enrolment Ration as stated in the NEP-2020.

5)   QUALITY & EQUITY :-
Indian Higher Education system is one of the largest in the World along with China and United States. But Indian education system has been criticized for its quality many times when it comes in comparison with the education system of the European Countries. Many time it has been criticized for too much gap between demand and supply, inadequate faculty, outdated teaching methods, inadequate opportunity for research, too much bureaucratization, politicization etc etc. The Times Higher Education World University Rankings includes 1906 universities across 108 countries and regions. Surprisingly not a single university from Indian could able to include their name in top 100 ranks. Again the "Equity" is a big issue in Indian education system. There is a vast gap in the private and public sector institution in terms of infrastructure, facilities, teaching learning materials etc. All the previous educational policies have also given importance in quality as well as equity in Indian Education system. But still the country has to go long way in terms of quality and equity.

6)   **REGULARY ISSUES**:-

NEP-2020 has stated that over a period of 15 years all higher educational institutes become independent and self governing. When the issues of become independent and self governing has come, there the issue of lack of accountability, transparency and professionalism have also arise. The issues of autonomy and accountability are some very critical issues for a country like India. The education is not just a sector of Government system rather it the key element of the Human Development of a country. Now the question arise is it justifiable that Government will have no role in the institutional governance at all or have no role in if a particular institution will not boarder about its accountability to its stakeholder with respect to its performance and outcome. The issue of autonomy also put question marks on transparency and professionalism too.

7)   **PRIVATISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION & ENTRY OF FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES:-**

The NEP-2020 has opened the door for the entry of foreign universities in the country. The policy has stated that 100 top World's universities will be facilitated to operate in the country through a new law. The entry of foreign university will become stand as a major challenge for the Indian Higher Educational Institutions.

II.   CONCLUSION :-

There are many challenges of Indian Higher Education system as stated above. The NEP-2020 like the previous policies of the country has to face many challenges at the implementation level. There is no doubt that this new policy is a paradigm transformation of the whole education system of the country after thirty four years. The policy as a document is excellent to a great extent as compare to the previous ones. But the implementation of NEP -2020 becomes a big challenge for the country as a whole. It is true that this policy has long time bound visions and mission, still may vision and missions are not ground base. Many time the policy has been looked a big jump from reality to vision.

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