National Education Policy-2020: Strengths, Weakness and Threats on Higher Education.

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Abstract

The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), which was started by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of the new education system of India. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. Though the education policy has impacted school and college education equally, this article mainly focuses on NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education because the NEP 2020 aims to address various gaps existing in the education system of India and through this policy, India is expected to achieve sustainable development goal of 2030 by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education with this policy. This paper also outlines the salient features of NEP and SWOT with literature based analysis how they affect the existing education system. Secondary data collected from various websites, journals, research papers and articles.
Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education & SWOT Analysis.

Introduction:

The world is undergoing rapid changes in the knowledge landscape. Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development. The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), which was started by the Union Cabinet of India on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of the new education system of India. The new policy replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. Though the education policy has impacted school and college education equally, this article mainly focuses on NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education because the NEP 2020 aims to address various gaps existing in the education system of India and through this policy, The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 - seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030.

A significant change in NEP 2020 is the proposal to set up the Higher Education Commission of India, as an umbrella body for higher education, excluding medical and legal education. This will usually bring out a question: what will happen to the present UGC and AICTE? HECI is aiming at reforming the higher education sector; the Bill will separate the Academic and Funding aspects of the sector. According to the new Bill, HECI will not have any financial powers. The

funding processes which were handled by the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be taken care of by the Ministry of Education or MHRD. This change however is expected to clear the regulatory mess in India's Higher Education system. HECI is expected to have four independent verticals - National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard-setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation. To have uniformity in education standards, a single umbrella body was always a requirement and this has been a vision of numerous educationists. This is considered as the right step in streamlining education policy. However, to ensure quality of higher education, institutes must be measured based on relevant parameters like research, industry linkages, placements and academic excellence, etc. If the HECI can manage this, the benefits to its biggest stakeholder, the youth of India, might be significant.

Objectives of the study

To understand the NEP 2020 and its impact on Higher Education because the NEP 2020 aims to address various gaps existing in the education system of India and through this policy.

To study the sustainable development goal of 2030 by ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education with this policy.

This paper also outlines the salient features of NEP and SWOT with literature based analysis how they affect the existing education system. Secondary data collected from various websites, journals, research papers and articles.

Literature Based Review

The NEP 2020 has aimed at almost doubling the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50 per cent by the year 2035, as compared to the current GER of 26.3%. It also has provision for greater autonomy to the academic institutions offering quality higher education. Also the major impact on higher education including Undergraduate education can be of 3 or 4 years with multiple exit options and appropriate certification at different stages, Academic Bank of Credits to be established to facilitate Transfer of Credits for lateral admission to other institutes, Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), at par with IITs and IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country, Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), at par with IITs and IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country, **Higher Education Commission of India** (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for the entire higher education system, excluding medical and legal education. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards and Affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism is to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; The Agenda is "a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity". It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals are indivisible and encompass economic, social and environmental dimensions.Sustainable

Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is the education goal It aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." (Global Education Mechanism-2020) specified Target SDG 4.1 with free Primary and Secondary Education, Target SDG 4.2 Equal access to quality pre-primary education, Target SDG 4.3 Equal access to affordable Technical, Vocational and Higher Education, Target SDG 4.4 increase the number of people with relevant skills for financial success, Target 4.5 Eliminate all discrimination in education Target 4.6 which will be Sustainable and Inclusive goal Universal Literacy and Numeracy Target 4.7 focus Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship, Target 4-A Build and Inclusive and Safe Schools, Target 4-B expand higher education scholarships for developing countries and Target 4-C Increase the supply of qualified teachers in developing countries.

The above discussion enlightens on policy strengthened furthermore, here researcher analyzed only on challenges and threats elements. The biggest challenge ahead of the government is the nationwide implementation and achieving the learning outcomes. The key challenges in the education sector are Accessibility, Affordability, and Quality. The policy's failures to address as per the successive reports of ASER (Annual Survey of Education Report) picture a sorry state of affairs in the education system. The poor learning outcomes, gaps between textbook teaching and real-life vocations, huge imbalance in rural-urban, private-public education sectors. As per ASER 2019, only 16% of children in Class 1 in 26 surveyed rural districts can read the text at the prescribed level, while almost 40% cannot even recognize letters. The current global pandemic has shown huge challenges for the education system in various ways. However, the NEP does not talk about it or rather shows concern in terms of upcoming pandemic related challenges. The cost of training the in-service teachers will also require time, energy, and resources for which the government has to allocate proper resources and infrastructure. According to the India Internet 2019 Report, 99% of users in the country access the internet through mobiles, not laptops or computers. Laptops and desktops usage is only 2% and 1% respectively in rural areas and 6% and 4% respectively in urban areas of the country. Further, internet penetration is still very poor and stands at a mere 27% in rural India. Under the Bharat Net program, more than 40% of the villages are yet to be connected to the internet grid that creates a disadvantageous situation for rural students. The NEP 2020 itself is an exercise of imposing uniformity and standardization along a single axis of control and power, which is paradoxical given India's size, population, diversity, and constitutional federalism. It might be resisted by many States as education is in the concurrent list.

Conclusion

Though changing the name to the 'Ministry of Education' from the Ministry of Human Resource Development is a welcome symbolic step, the focus of the government at the Centre and State level is to seize this moment and bring about a transformational change in India's education sector. Hence the implementation should match aspirations of the policy. many changes have been made and one of those is the discontinuation of the M. Phil course. Even though there are many drawbacks in the new education policy, the merits are more in number. It is believed by

many that by implementing these changes, the Indian academic system will be taken a step higher.

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