



# National Education Policy: Implications of its Implementation in Higher Education Institutions and the Responsibility of Teachers

**Dr. Sriparna Chatterjee**

**Assistant Professor**

**Matiaburj College, Kolkata**

## **Abstract:**

We are living in the era of globalization and are impressively influenced by the thoughts, activities and events of the world. Confinement within the comfort zone may lead a State to incompetency. Persistent advancement is essential in every sphere to fight the forthcoming challenges. The field of Education is no exception, as it is the foundation of a State, and the Teacher is a sculptor who engraves the potentialities of a student in the best possible manner to create a wonderful citizen of tomorrow. The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, is an endeavour of the Government of India which focuses on creating a comprehensive knowledge system to foster the growth of the student community as per Global principles. Teachers need to play a dynamic role in implementing NEP fruitfully. A Teacher needs to be transformative, innovative and inquisitive to meet the aspirations of students and ignite their minds.

This paper will try to explore the objectives of NEP 2020, its focus areas, the role of teachers in implementing NEP and the challenges ahead. What are the prime issues in NEP, who plays the key roles in the execution, and what role the State is expected to play to keep an ideal balance between aspiration and ability are the fascinating areas to explore. What will be the teaching-learning method to make students job-ready while inculcating traditional values of ethics and compassion in them, how the teachers will become further skilled and reach the peak of professional development, how our national education will be at par with International standards, why the Teacher's role should become more intense in shaping a student's life, what should be the probable constraints in the way of implementing this policy and how realistically that can be combated- are all the queries this paper will raise. Through informal interviews with the teachers, employers, and students attempts have been made to find answers to the pertinent questions.

**Keywords:** NEP, Education, Teacher, Digital Learning, Skill, Knowledge, Student, Global, Value

## **Introduction:**

Education is one of the prime pillars for the progress and development of a country. A right educational policy can lead the nation towards betterment depending on its proper formulation and implementation by the right people. Leaders and policymakers play a vital role in designing the policy but its successful execution depends on the main architects of the education system- the teachers. A teacher with vast knowledge, dedication, and

commitment can provide quality teaching to the students, motivate them to pursue the proper path and create a reliable and effective system of teaching-learning. In the era of globalization, every country is facing the challenge of doing better in vital areas of development. Keeping pace with time education segment is also undergoing multiple changes and challenges and continuously trying to ensure a brighter tomorrow for its stakeholders. In this respect, the role of Higher Education Institutions is becoming pivotal as these are the gateways to the professional world. The major responsibility of a higher education institution is to employ and create such an educator who can shape the future of a student effectively. In a competitive world, the teacher's role is even more challenging than before therefore the teaching education programme needs to be more innovative and informative. The Govt. of India has always treated the education segment with special care to ensure quality and excellence. The National Education Policy of 2020 is such an effort to impart quality education among the people through a well-planned and designed curriculum from the elementary to the higher education level and its operative enactment by wise, trained and devoted teachers.

### **NEP in India:**

In the Year 1968, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi propagated the First NEP followed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986. The latest NEP was announced by India's current Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the year 2020 and was approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020. The NEP 2020 designs a new education policy for the entire nation emphasizing all the stages of education, including vocational education in both rural and urban areas. The NEP 2020 endorses plentiful variations in India's education strategy. It targets to escalate state expenditure on education from around 4% to 6% of the GDP at the earliest. The vision of the National Education Policy is: "National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India-centric education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by providing high-quality education to all."

The focus of the NEP 2020 is to introduce drastic change in the education system from the grassroots to the higher education level. To impart an inclusive education, the content should have clarity, clear ideas, proper applications and problem-solving approaches. To make the country at par on a global level in a competitive world the NEP emphasizes higher education. NEP, 2020 offers significant insights and recommendations on numerous parts of education. It focuses on embracing multidisciplinary and holistic education, moving towards institutional autonomy, advancement of quality research through the formation of the National Research Foundation, uninterrupted professional development of teachers, incorporation of technology, internationalization of higher education, reorganization of governance and supervisory style, multidisciplinary curriculum, innovative pedagogy, effective, consistent and unified assessment and obtainability of content in Indian languages. The policy aims to ensure a persistent and constructive effect on the education system and build India as a global centre of skilled manpower during the 'Amrit Kaal', the subsequent 25 years leading up to Developed India in 2047. Its enactment requires cooperation from all levels including centres, states, union territories, regulatory bodies and all stakeholders.

### **The objective of NEP in Higher Education:**

The NEP 2020 ensures a revolutionary change in the higher education system of India by making it age-appropriate, student-friendly, effective and productive. Utmost importance has been given to the blending of education and technology to make a digitally empowered society, ready to combat any challenges. The NEP 2020 tries to bridge the gap between knowledge and thinking capability. Greater importance has been given to the employability of knowledge, critical thinking, and innovative teaching and learning than mere dissemination and reception of information. The salient features of NEP 2020 in Higher Education are as follows-

NEP emphasizes recognizing, and nurturing the distinctive competencies of each student, by sensitizing both teachers and guardians to encourage each student's all-inclusive development in both academic and non-academic areas. This policy wants to make education flexible and interdisciplinary so that students can be able to choose the subjects of their preference according to their talent and can pursue a better career in future. For this purpose, critical thinking, and analytical skills have received utmost importance over information-gathering education as in the long run conceptual clarity of a student, and his/ her ability to combat a critical situation will make sense. NEP wants to inculcate the values of ethics, and empathy among the stakeholders by promoting

quality issues like respect for elders, scientific temper, responsibility, liberty, pluralism and justice. Multilingualism, the use of technology-based learning, continuous assessment systems, and life skills like communication, cooperation, resilience, and teamwork are the areas NEP highlights. NEP aims to create an effective and competent higher education system with a multi-level entry and exit policy for students who want to leave their studies in the middle. Their credits will be transferred through the Academic Bank of Credit. The commencement of a single common entrance test is another encouraging step to reduce the pressure of several competitive exams and lessen the burden of preparation.

On the regulatory aspect NEP aims to establish a single regulatory body, the Higher Education Commission of India except for legal and medical education. For Accreditation and Regulatory structure, the NEP prescribed setting up NHERA (National Higher Education Regulatory Authority), Untying NAAC from UGC into a self-sufficient and autonomous body. NEP seeks to establish a 'light but tight' regulatory structure to guarantee integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system. It can be done by doing regular audits and disclosure of the report and implementing innovative ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment. NEP makes education truly a public service by providing access to all and ensuring global expertise by inviting private Universities to open campuses in our country.

For enhancing the quality of research in India NEP recommended the establishment of a National Research Foundation which will administer the mentoring, funding and capacity building for quality research. The NEP further suggested founding an apex body for education headed by the Prime Minister under the name Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog or National Education Commission.

The vision of NEP is to introduce an education system rooted deeply in Indian philosophy and ethics of values, at the same time transforming the Nation into a global superpower in the field of education by creating an equitable and dynamic knowledge hub with quality education. NEP wants to create responsible law-abiding citizens which are why in the curriculum importance has been given to constitutional values, respect towards human rights, commitment towards the nation and ensuring sustainable development.

### **Role of Teachers in the NEP 2020 implementation process:**

Teachers are the chief support of the NEP. Through their knowledge, skill, competence and dedication they can make the goals of the NEP in higher education achievable. NEP has proposed 50 hours of continuous professional development and setting up of the National Professional Standard for Teachers (NPST) which can help the teachers to explore their qualities to the supreme level.

Educators need to be active in understanding intensely the philosophy, the intentions, purposes and the motto of the NEP. Continuous professional development, training, and participation in conferences, and workshops will enhance their experience and expertise. To be good teacher, educators need to follow certain strategies in higher education-

Teachers should continuously be engaged in the process of lifelong learning by enrolling in different academic programs. They are supposed to make and follow an effective annual plan to maximize the academic results of the subjects they teach. Continuous updating of knowledge is a must for the teachers of higher education to cope with the emerging challenges of the everyday academic world.

The use of technology and modern equipment is the need of the day that can make teaching and learning more attractive and fruitful. A drastic change in the teaching style is required to confirm participation in the classroom and endorse 'inquiry-based, discussion-based methods' envisioned by NEP. Especially in the post-pandemic situation the use of a hybrid mode of learning has been acknowledged and accepted worldwide and emerging as an alternate mode of learning. With 'flipped classrooms', Teachers can prerecord the lectures and share them as a video and utilize the classroom teaching time for participatory discussion. The use of AI-based learning tools will help the teachers to give and modify instructions and personalize assessments for every single student which in turn will bring out the best in them. Teachers will be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the students in a better way and direct them towards the right way. By tactically using

technology, teachers have the opening to grow their influence and successfully assist every student. MOOC and SWAYAM portals are increasingly becoming popular among students and teachers to transform education from chalk and talk to teaching with technology.

National Education Technology Forum (NETF) should be established to develop digital infrastructure for higher education as hybrid modes will be in operation. Higher educational Institutions should set up Computer Laboratories with essential amenities together with cameras for online admissions, examinations or evaluations.

Utmost importance should be given to the research and publication issues of the teachers. The more a teacher learns the better the student will become. Enrollment of teachers in Doctoral programmes is highly encouraged and should be initiated to make the work of research more beneficial for the community. Teacher's efficacy will continuously be evaluated through career advancement schemes (CAS) and they should involve themselves with the publication of book chapters, editing a book or writing quality articles which will in turn benefit them professionally. The engagement of students in different research and publication work at institutional and wider spheres will nurture the culture of teamwork in the institution. Teachers should constantly mentor and monitor the performance of the students, make them learn to be critical about different topics of their curriculum through project, dissertation, presentation and other modes of learning. Teaching is a skill and the teachers should utilize the skill in a way to maximize the students' benefit, they should prepare the content of the lecture/ subject attractively so that students feel the urge to listen, learn and interact. Creation of an enjoyable classroom environment is the major responsibility of the teacher where the student can explore their qualities and be certain about their capabilities.

For the proper implementation of NEP, a high-quality Teachers' training programme is extremely essential which will focus on the objective of the policy, target areas and the process of implementation. Workshops and seminars regularly can confirm the required clarity on the policy. Since multiple entry-exit options will be there along with interdisciplinary courses, the curriculum needs to be properly designed. Teachers should understand and make the students aware that education is not simply gathering information; it means the ability to think analytically, observe a situation with an inquisitive mind and make oneself ready for the job market.

### **Challenges in the way of implementing NEP in Higher Education Institutions:**

Firstly, NEP is a mind game; it implies the transformation of age-old teaching methods into an age-appropriate strategy which will focus on the cognitive and emotional skills of a learner equally through proper curriculum and effective teaching-learning methods. The sooner all the stakeholders can understand this drastic change and adapt themselves to the new situation the better it will be for the system to be executed properly. Unfortunately, doubts and confusion are prevailing over prospects and possibilities at different levels of society which is creating an impediment towards its implementation.

Secondly, for implementing such drastic changes, proper training is required for teachers, educators and official staff suitably together with making a pool of outstanding, inspiring guides. Often lack of proper training at all levels hampers the spirit of the policy. Unless coordination is made among all the layers of the institution, the implementation will be unable to yield proper results. Flexibility and diversity are the keywords of NEP that should be respected and practised by the stakeholders without any interruption or reluctance.

Thirdly, implementing the proposals of NEP will be difficult in the absence of adequate funds and resources in hand. Welcoming global institutions in our country to set up new campuses is undoubtedly a path-breaking decision but at the same time, it is the responsibility of the authorities to ensure an equitable learning ambience for all aspiring students. Huge fees for foreign universities may create a division in the student community in terms of access. This problem needs to be resolved with more government-sponsored free scholarships for needy yet brilliant students.

Fourthly, while embracing technology-based learning, infrastructural issues should get the utmost importance. Many small colleges in the rural sector already run short of funds, for them it is difficult to arrange ICT-based

classrooms, conference teaching, making computer laboratories and many other necessary arrangements. Funding from different levels of govt, private donors, and NGOs can resolve the problem.

Fifthly, the main architects of NEP are the teachers/educators. Therefore the authorities have to take extreme care of their well-being. Ensuring regular recruitment, proper training, providing scope of professional development, arranging regular workshops and seminars and rewarding the teachers are some of the major responsibilities of the authorities. Regrettably, many of the above conditions are yet to come into effect and in the absence of proper work ambience the teachers also feel apprehensive about the utility of the policy.

Finally, India is still on the path of achieving many basic facilities to make NEP successful. One of the focal points of NEP is to popularize digital learning for which access to high-speed internet connection is required but in many parts of India, there is a lack of internet connectivity. Thus a division is noticeable in the urban and rural segments which are highly undesirable. The digital division is the biggest enemy in the path of digital learning that needs to be removed through operative strategies.

In conclusion, it is observable that NEP 2020 is a huge and long-term project which needs the construction of proper infrastructure, employing the correct educators, creating a unique work ambience, the presence of ever-enthusiastic staff members, a bunch of aspiring students and principally willingness of all stakeholders to embrace the system. Though a team effort, but success of NEP largely depends on the expertise of the teacher, as a teacher is the architect of the future generation. To end with Peter Kugel's observation in his famous article "How Professors develop as Teachers"- there are 5 stages in the career of a teacher. In the first stage of career, the teacher focuses more on his role in the classroom. In the second stage, the emphasis is on their understanding of the subject matter they teach and the ability of the students to absorb what they have been taught. In the third stage, the teacher helps their students to become more observant. In the fourth stage, the teacher helps the students to implement what they have learned. In the final stage teacher lets the students become independent, to learn on their own. In NEP the fourth and final stage of teaching plays the crucial role which allows the student to spread their imagination, and implement what they have learned. This is the absolute bliss for a teacher to see his/her students explore the world of knowledge. A teacher needs extreme dedication and constant improvisation to reach this stage of mentoring. What is needed is to keep doing as Aristotle in his book Politics said "We learn to do things by doing them".

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