

Quality Universities and Colleges: A New and Forward Looking Vision for India's Higher Education System

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ABSTRACT

A Systematic education policy is needed for school and College education in the country as education leads the society toward progress. Different countries use different education systems during the life cycle of school and College education. Recently the Government of India has received an Education Policy suggested by an expert committee headed by Dr K Kasturirangan former Chairman of Indian Space Research Organization. The committee suggested both incremental and drastic changes in existing Indian education policy and gave guidelines to effective implementation in the country by 2030. It is also in line with the Objective of the continuous developmental goals to provide quality education for all citizens of the country. This Paper focuses on the Current issue of national Education policy 2019 Through Indian higher education policy and their result content analysis. Along with special emphasis on higher education section various policies proposed in the issue were highlight and compared to the previous policies. The analysis also compares the possible effects of NEP 2019 proposal on private and public HRIs in Term of facilities & restrictions. The strength and weakness of the new policy are identified with respect to various stakeholders and listed. Appropriate suggestions have been made for realizing the policy and making it defect free and effective for the prosperity of the country.

Keywords: *Higher education, National education policy, ABCD analysis, Predicted implications.*

Introduction

Higher education is a critical contributor to sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. Higher education also plays a large and equally important role in improving human well being, and developing India as envisioned in the Constitution - a democratic, just, socially conscious, self aware, cultured, and humane nation, with liberty, equality, fraternal spirit, and justice for all. Higher education aims to serve as a hub for developing ideas and innovations that enlighten individuals and help propel the country forward socially, culturally, artistically, scientifically, technologically, and economically. In view of the requirements of the 21st century, the aim of a

quality university or college education must be to develop good, well rounded, and creative individuals. In particular, education must empower workers of the future to become enterprising and creative innovators. By focusing on such broad based, flexible, individualized, innovative, and multidisciplinary learning, higher education must aim to prepare its students not just for their first jobs - but also for their second, third, and all future jobs over their lifetimes. In particular, the higher education system must aim to form the hub for the next industrial revolution. Happily and coincidentally, the aforementioned multidisciplinary education and 21st century capabilities necessary for the employment landscape of the future - such as critical thinking, communication, problem solving, creativity, cultural literacy, global outlook, teamwork, ethical reasoning, and social responsibility - will not only help to develop outstanding employees but also outstanding citizens and communities. Higher education must develop good, well-rounded and creative individuals, with intellectual curiosity, spirit of service and a strong ethical compass.

What are the challenges currently facing India's higher education systems?

India faces a number of challenges at the current time in the attainment of the above key goals of higher education.

Fragmentation of the higher education system: India has over 800 universities and approximately 40,000 colleges, reflecting the overall severe fragmentation and small size of HEIs currently in the country. Remarkably, over 40% of all colleges in the country run only a single programme, far from the multidisciplinary style of higher education that will be required in the 21st century. In fact, over 20% of colleges have enrolment below 100, while only 4% of colleges have enrolment over 3000 (AISHE 2016-17). To make matters worse, thousands of the smaller colleges hardly have any teaching faculty at all, and there is little or no education taking place - thus affecting severely the integrity of the higher education system in the country.

Lack of access, especially in socio-economically disadvantaged areas: Access in higher education has significantly improved in the past few decades, but is still not sufficient to reach all our young citizens; equity in and quality of education still remain a big challenge. While the GER of higher education has risen over the last several years, to around 25%, and notable progress has been made, this Policy aims for GER to reach 50% by 2035, in order to fulfil the aspirations of our youth and to form the basis for a vibrant society and economy. This implies more than doubling enrolment, from the present base of 35 million students, and including increased opportunities and access for students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and areas. **Lack of teacher and institutional autonomy:** The lack of teacher autonomy has led to a severe lack of faculty motivation and scope for innovation. In order for faculty members and institutional leaders to innovate and explore in their

teaching, research, and service, they must have the individual autonomy that allows them to do so. In particular, the system of affiliated colleges which are required to follow a central syllabus, curriculum, pedagogy, and textbook makes it very difficult to provide teachers with such autonomy.

A final challenge in recent years is that the very word 'autonomy' has come to mean 'reduction of public funding', when the true meaning of the word could not be further from this. 'Autonomy' must mean the freedom to innovate, to compete, to cooperate, to govern more locally, to optimize resources given one's direct local knowledge of circumstances and opportunities, to break silos, and to excel.

Overcoming these challenges in order to establish high-quality access to higher education for all.

This Policy envisions a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system in order to overcome the aforementioned eight challenges and thereby deliver high quality higher education, with equity and inclusion, to all young people who aspire to it. The Policy's vision includes the following key changes to the current system:

Moving towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges:

The main thrust of this policy regarding higher education is the ending of the fragmentation of higher education by moving higher education into large multidisciplinary universities and colleges, each of which will aim to have upwards of 5,000 or more students. If higher education is moved entirely into large multidisciplinary HEIs, it would address many of the problems that higher education faces today:

- It would give students vibrant communities of scholars and peers in which to learn;
- It would help break down harmful silos between disciplines;
- It would enable students to become well-rounded and develop optimally both sides of their brains (artistic/creative and analytic), and would help bring flexibility and individuality into their learning programmes;
- It would help develop active research communities across disciplines - particularly cross-disciplinary research, which will be key for the innovations of the 21st century;

- It would greatly improve (by an order of magnitude) the efficiency of use of resources and of resource sharing, both material and human, across higher education.

Thus, regarding the structure of higher education, this Policy places the highest emphasis on moving to large multidisciplinary universities. The ancient Indian universities of Takshashila and Nalanda which had thousands of students from India and the world studying in such vibrant multidisciplinary environments, and modern universities today, amply demonstrate the great success that such large multidisciplinary research universities can bring. It is time that India brings back this great Indian tradition, that is needed more today than ever to create well-rounded and innovative individuals, and which is already transforming other countries educationally and economically.

All higher education will happen in multidisciplinary institutions with teaching programmes across disciplines and fields to ensure optimized resources, integration across disciplines and vibrant, large education communities.

Moving towards a more liberal undergraduate education: This goes hand-in-hand with the first policy initiative. The needs of the 21st century require that liberal broad-based multidisciplinary education become the basis for all higher education. This will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational crafts, an ethic of social engagement, and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. Such a liberal education would be, in the long run, the approach across all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.

Imaginative and flexible curricular structures will enable creative combinations of disciplines for students to study, and would offer multiple useful entries and exit points, thus demolishing currently prevalent rigid boundaries and creating new possibilities for lifelong learning.

Moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy: Through faculty autonomy, faculty will be enabled and motivated to innovate in their teaching and pedagogical approaches, student assessment, community service initiatives, and research, and share best practices and ideas with each other in university wide and larger forums in order to continually improve. Through institutional academic and administrative autonomy, institutions will be enabled to start and run novel and cutting-edge programmes, develop innovative curricula, govern more locally given local knowledge of circumstances and requirements, and set up optimal people and career management systems.

Such gradual granting of autonomy to all institutions that are making serious attempts towards attaining excellence will indeed be key to actually attaining true excellence at all higher educational institutions.

Curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support will be revamped: Curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment will move away from solely rote learning of facts and mechanical procedures. The examination system in higher education will be recast; evaluation will be guided by curricular objectives and overarching educational goals. Faculty will be supported to achieve these transformations. Quality higher education in Indian languages will be offered across fields.

Reaffirming the integrity of faculty positions and institutional leadership through merit based appointments and career management: All faculty positions will be filled, based on rigorous recruitment evaluations, and the practice of contract employment will be stopped. Appointment of faculty, their tenures and promotions, and compensation increases will be on the basis of merit taking into account teaching, research, and service - the assessment of which will be carried out through a rigorous process of evaluation by students, institutional leaders, and committees consisting of peers, as defined clearly by the HEI governing boards and institutional leadership.

Establishment of a National Research Foundation: A National Research Foundation (NRF) will be established to grant competitive funding for outstanding research proposals across all disciplines, as determined by peer review and success of proposals. Most importantly, it will aim to seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions where research is currently in a nascent stage, through systems of mentoring by active research scholars, who may have retired or be near retirement at top research institutions.

Higher education institutions will be governed by Independent Boards, with complete academic and administrative autonomy: Clear merit based procedures for appointments of the Board of Governors (BoG), the Chancellor, and the Vice Chancellor/Director/Chief Executive of HEI will ensure elimination of external interference, including from the government, and will aim to engage high capacity individuals who are invested in and have strong commitment towards the institution. Accountability for educational outcomes will flow concomitantly to the Board of the institution. Mechanisms will be established to align all stakeholders, including the government (and its bodies), for the long term development of the institution.

“Light but tight” regulation: The regulatory system will be transformed to have only one regulator for all higher education, including professional education. Accreditation on basic parameters (such as financial probity) will form the basis for all regulation –

The various distinct functions of funding, standard setting, accreditation, and regulation will be separated and will be conducted by independent bodies, eliminating concentration of power and conflicts of interest. Private and public institutions will be treated on par by the regulatory regime. Commercialization of education will be stopped and philanthropic efforts will be highly encouraged. The above represents a summary of the vision of this Policy for ensuring high quality higher education in the 21st century. In the ensuing chapters of Part II, more details are given on each of the above initiatives.

Terminology. A programme consists of a set of courses or other modes of learning, the successful Completion of which results in a degree or diploma. A course is a properly designed unit of study/instruction in a particular subject, generally transacted as a series of lectures or lessons, for which credit is awarded (e.g., towards a programme or programmes). A course would generally run for a semester, trimester, or 123 quarter, while programmes generally run for 3–5 years. A curriculum is an organizational framework for various educational activities, structured as courses and other modes of learning, that make up a programme of study.

CONCLUSION:

A periodic improvement in the education system is essential for human development and sustainable progress in society. Reforms in the education system by considering various success models in developed countries and customizing such things with local needs is the present requirement for a country to prosper. India, being a fast developing country with 130 crores human capital can prosper and overtake other developing countries by planning and adopting an appropriate education model. In this aspect, the present National Education Policy proposal 2019 is an inclusive model with many innovations to provide liberal but specialized and customized both school and college education by incorporating research components both at school and college levels [66]. Apart from highlighting the features of the proposal, in this paper, we have analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and offered some suggestion to further improve the model as an optimum model by considering the local conditions of the country.

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