



# National Education Policy-2020:

Issues, Challenges and Remedies

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## **2. National Education Policy 2020 and Higher Education: Some Observations**

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### **Abstract:**

Well defined and futuristic education policy is essential for a country at school and college levels, due to the reason that education leads to economic and social progress. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) has come after thirty-four long awaited years and there is much hope that this policy will propel the Indian education sector into the 21st century of modern learning. NEP 2020 provides for quality higher education through multidisciplinary universities and autonomous colleges. This paper highlights on various policies announced in the higher education system. Various innovations and predicted implications of NEP 2020 on the Indian higher education system along with its merits are discussed. Finally, some suggestions are proposed for its effective implementation towards achieving its objectives.

**KEYWORDS:** NEP 2020, Higher Education, Quality Education.

### **Introduction:**

Quality Education is one of the most important aspects of long-term economic growth of a country. Higher Educational institutions (HEI) play an important role in instilling knowledge, skills, social values and humaneness in the country's youth. National Education policy places a strong focus on the growth of each person's creative potential. By providing high-quality education to all, National Education Policy 2020 envisions an education system that directly contributes to transforming our nation into a sustainable and vibrant information society. NEP has broadened its scope of interest to include science, careers, innovation, and sustainability, among other things.

National Education Policy 2020 aims to make way for large scale, transformational reforms in education sectors. The Policy built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, Accountability, Employment,

Entrepreneurship and Indian character is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student. Some Important Features of National Education Policy–2020:

- The policy aims to universalize the pre-primary education by 2025 and provide foundational literacy/numeracy for all by 2025.
- It proposes new Curricular and Pedagogical Structure, with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group of 3-18 years. However, it does not affect any physical restructuring of schools.
- It aims to protect and promote our culture through the study of classical languages, mother tongues, and regional languages.
- It aims to consolidate 800 universities and 40,000 colleges into around 15,000 large, multidisciplinary institutions.
- The policy proposes three types of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs): Research Universities, Teaching Universities and Autonomous degree-granting colleges.
- It aims to provide autonomy to all higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are to be governed by Independent Boards with complete academic and administrative autonomy.
- An autonomous body called the National Research Foundation (NRF) is to be set up through an Act of Parliament. It would create a strong research culture as the proposed NRF seeks to build research capacity across higher education. It encourages globalisation of higher education, technology integration at all levels of education.
- Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog or the National Education commission apex body is to be constituted. It will be chaired by the Prime Minister and will comprise eminent educationists, researchers, Union Ministers, representation of Chief Ministers of States, eminent professionals from various fields.

The Policy also recommends the creation of a National Higher Education Regulatory Authority (NIHERA) as the sole regulator for higher education, including professional education.

*NEP-*

Some of the major issues in the field of higher education identified by the NEP include: lack of emphasis on skill development including life skills, employability and entrepreneurial skills; rigid separation of disciplines and therefore leading to want of holistic learning in students, with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study; limited teacher and institutional autonomy; low quality of research and publication; lack of competitive peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines; severe fragmentation in higher educational ecosystem; ignorance of learning outcomes; ineffective regulatory system; affiliation system; want of sufficient funding; vast deviation from the proven traditional knowledge system and lack of pride for the system. In view of this, the policy attempts a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system to overcome to deliver high-quality futuristic higher education. The Policy therefore has dedicated almost 11 chapters to core higher education; 5 chapters to other key areas relevant to higher education like Professional Education, Adult Education and Life Long Learning, Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture, Online and Digital Education: Ensuring Equitable Use of Technology; and three chapters for making it happen which include strengthening Central Advisory Board of Education; bringing the focus back on education and learning by rechristening Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as the Ministry of Education (MoE).

#### **Advantages of NEP –2020**

- The Policy gives maximum flexibility, to the learners to choose their learning trajectories.
- Equal importance to arts, sciences, physical education and other extra-curricular activities so that learners can choose according to their interests.
- Multi-disciplinary approach (across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities and sports).
- Emphasis on conceptual learning; creativity and critical thinking.
- Cultivates life skills like cooperation, teamwork, empathy, resilience.

- Regular formative assessment for learning rather than the existing summative assessment.

The policy seeks to introduce certain structural reforms at the higher educational level. It promotes a flexible three- or four-year degree programme structure at the undergraduate level, allowing multiple exit and entry points. It also recommends promoting contemporary subjects such as Artificial Intelligence, Design Thinking, Data Analytics, Machine Learning, and Holistic Health which promise careers in future.

### **Challenges in Implementation**

Following are the impediments that could come in way while implementing the Policy:

- The idea of setting up the Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog is crucial in order to integrate the approaches and programs of multiple departments. However, bringing medical or agricultural or legal education under one umbrella is likely to be very difficult.
- Language issues have to be handled sensitively in view of their emotional disparities which we have been witnessing.
- The NEP initiates training the students not only in cognitive skills like critical thinking, but also in soft skills like empathy, perseverance, leadership and teamwork. It may be difficult to monitor these pedagogical changes.
- Teachers should make learning enjoyable and engage the learners continuously. Qualitative faculty should be appointed. This may be very demanding.
- The Policy proposes bottom-up approach to transform the learners from grass-root level. This is a very challenging decision.
- A thorough orientation towards multi-disciplinary education should be given to both the teachers and students. The Curriculum should be completely revamped.
- Funding and financial resources have to be raised in case the proposals of NEP 2020 for higher education are to be implemented. Private institutions should offer more scholarships to make admissions possible for students from low-income strata. Surely, this is a big task to all the educational institutions.
- Various academics believe that admission to foreign universities is likely to be expensive for Indian educational system. As a result, it can be challenging for lower class students to pursue higher education.

- The major challenge is to furnish digital connectivity, digital classrooms, expertise-driven online teaching models, VR/AR (virtual reality and augmented reality) technologies to overcome gaps in physical teaching.

Equity in education can be achieved if students across the country gets equal access to education delivery systems and the educational needs of the student community are fulfilled at a uniform level. Often, we witness that students from rural areas face language barriers when they are suddenly exposed to the cities or urban areas. A solution to the same can be achieved if education is imparted in 2 languages from the initial level of primary education to all the students across the country. The migration of students from one state to another will also be easy if from the very beginning the students are well versed in 2 languages out of which one is common in all state/region and the other can be a local language of education. This facilitates free flow of communication between students anywhere in the country at any level. However, at any point, regional language should be given more emphasis till a certain level post which Hindi/English or any other commonly understood language should be instilled.

The rural and semi-urban India is facing various challenges of accessibility due to all the factors mentioned above. However, the collective efforts of government and non-government organisations including the private sector are gradually changing the landscape of education, especially at school level in most of the states of the country. The allocation of resource is also increasing every year for education. Further, the National Education Policy aims for universalisation of education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 per cent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030. Along with this, the Centre and the states aims to work together to increase the public investment in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest. Under these circumstances, it is likely that the future of education system and the question of equity and access will be solved in due course of time.

### **SUGGESTIONS**

- To improve education, universities must be made autonomous.
- 200 top ranked universities should be given full academic, administrative financial autonomy to diversify the updated curriculum to promote global innovation.



- Less money is spent on research in India. Research spent 0.7 percent of GDP in 2017-18. The United States spent 2.8 percent in China and 2.1 percent in Israel. To promote research in the new policy, the National Research Foundation needs to be set up on fasttrack messages.
- To increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio, the Central and State Governments should equally provide special packages to institutions.
- The new policy is emphasizing on the environment, sports, culture, research and development. There is a lack of basic infrastructure required to meet all these needs. For this, the government should arrange to give a large amount to the universities in the form of a loan.

### **Conclusion:**

Higher Education is an important aspect in deciding the economy, social status, technology adoption, and healthy human behaviour in every country. The collective efforts of government and non-government organisations including the private sector are gradually changing the landscape of higher education. National Education Policy of India 2020 is marching towards achieving such objective by making innovative policies to improve the quality, attractiveness, affordability, and increasing the supply by opening up the higher education for the private sector and at the same time with strict controls to maintain quality in every higher education institution. By encouraging merit-based admissions with free-ships & scholarships, merit & research based continuous performers as faculty members, and strict monitoring of quality through accreditation based on self-declaration of progress through technology-based monitoring, NEP-2020 is expected to fulfill its objectives by 2030. All higher education institutions with current nomenclature of affiliated colleges will expand as multi-disciplinary autonomous colleges with degree giving power in their name or becomes constituent colleges of their affiliated universities. Higher education system will transform itself as student centric with the freedom to choose core and allied subjects within a discipline and across disciplines. Faculty members also get autonomy to choose curriculum, methodology, pedagogy and evaluation models within the given policy framework. Hence, the Indian higher education system is moving from teacher centric to student centric, information centric to knowledge centric, marks centric to skills centric, examination centric to experimental centric, learning centric to research centric, and choice centric to competency centric.

However, the role of philanthropic teachers and educationist is of utmost importance to reduce the problems of education divide by making education equitable and accessible to all.

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# **Good Governance**

**(Principles & Practice)**

**Editor**

**Dr. Nitin D. Gaurkhede**

**Dr. Mukta G. Somvanshi**



**Aadhar Publications, Amaravati**



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■ **Dr. Nitin D. Gaurkhede**

**Dr. Mukta G. Somvanshi**

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## Women's Rights In India : A Historical Perspective

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### ABSTRACT

Human rights are vital part of human being .both male and female exist in it but our social system makes differences between them. In India, women have had respect since the time of Indus Valley Civilization, but due to social changes, their status, role and reverence have got molded. The Indian woman is the victim of doubled prejudice: that of her gender. In one hand she is treated as a goddess and in other hand she has to face harassment in various stages of her life. It is in this context of social realities that the barriers facing Indian women need to be analyzed. The UN centre for human rights and Indian judiciary gives a concrete shape to women's rights and plays active role in enforcing these rights to all the people in India.

Keywords: Status of Women, Society, Human rights, women's rights.

### INTRODUCTION

"Patriarchy works to exclude us. We must push back, in solidarity and sisterhood with other women, and with all those affected by discrimination and oppression."

[ Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Women's Day, 8 March 2021]

Every woman is entitled to the realization of all human rights- civil, political, economic, social and cultural- on equal terms with men, without any discrimination. Women also enjoy certain human rights specifically linked to their status as women. The world has recognized that the human rights of women are "an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights."

Women are guaranteed equal treatment and freedom from discrimination in the most basic human rights treaties, and women's human rights are the subject of a specific treaty, the Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

In a civilized society, respect for human rights is a basic condition for the survival of human beings. The UN centre for human rights defines human rights as "those rights that are inherent in our

... Governance (Principles & Practice)  
nature and without which we cannot live as human beings." These rights relate to life, equality, liberty and security of person, equal protection under law, free from all forms of discrimination, etc.

Human rights, which were embedded formally at the United Nations as a great international priority fifty years ago through the December 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights have gained prominence as a universally recognised set of norms and standards that increasingly inform all aspects of our relations as individuals and as collective members of groups, within communities and among nations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) covers the wide range of human rights. The first two Articles lay the universal foundation of human rights; human beings are equal because of their shared essence of human dignity; human rights are universal, not because of any State or international organisation, but because they belong to all of humanity. The two articles assure that human rights are the birthright of everyone, not privileges of a select few, nor privileges to be granted or denied.

Women as a class, suffer acute deprivation in all respects of their lives. So, women need more consideration. Protection of their rights is prerequisite of their development. Women's rights are human rights, which need to be protected particularly in relation to violence, sexuality and reproductive health. Women should have equal rights in inheriting land and property. The Preamble of the United Nations Charter (1945) begins by referring a 'faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human persons, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.'

The UN Charter was the first instrument, which recognised 'the equal rights of man and woman', and the member states adopting the aims and principle of the UN were supposed to bring an end to any discrimination on the ground of gender. Reforms at all levels were implemented to maintain the equality of both men and women. In this context, women's rights are not therefore rights which are specific, but are rather universally recognised rights held by all people by virtue of their common humanity and regardless of their sex. The human rights of women are an inalienable part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels and

nature and without which we cannot live as human beings." These rights relate to life, equality, liberty and security of person, equal protection under law, free from all forms of discrimination, etc.

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the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community (The Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action).

### **Origin and Development of Women Rights**

Human rights discourse had traditionally been male dominated in the sense that, in what is essentially a man's world, men have struggled to assert their dignity and common humanity against an overbearing state apparatus. Attempts to define a body of civil and political rights were made from the eighteenth century onwards in societies that were organized by men and, predominantly for men. Plato was the first Greek political philosopher who tried to emancipate women from their house hold duties of child bearing and rearing, so that they can contribute equal in the state affairs. Therefore, he gave the theory of communism of wives for the guardian class. Since from ancient times; so many philosophers have been talked about the rights of women and natural rights worldwide. The original contributor to women's human rights were those who first taught women to read and thus to explore the world outside the home and immediate community. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) promoted political freedoms and rights, though he belittled the advocacy of women's rights by his contemporaries. Nevertheless, Olympia de Gouges ( 1748-1773) issued the declaration of the Rights of Women (1790) to the idea of women's human rights is often cited as beginning in 1792 with Mary Wellstone Craft's book Vindication of the rights of women, published in response to the promulgation of the natural rights of man theory.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) Introduced the question of women's suffrage to the House of Commons in 1867, and his *The subjection of women* first published in 1869, provided a full scale analysis of women's situation and the advantages to society of giving them full legal and political equality with men. He defined the essential components of liberty as the freedom , expression , association , and living according to one's taste. He advocates women's rights and political equality.

Marxist theory links the solution of the question of women's rights with the class struggle of the working class for revolutionary transformations and socialism. The Marxists consider that only a society in which there is no private ownership of the means of

production and no exploitation of one class by another and in which the "social equality of all people, both de jure and de facto, has been achieved. Women really become emancipated and are able to participate in all spheres of material and spiritual life on par with men. This thought can be traced throughout many works by Marx, Engels and Lenin.

In the Indian context, there is a widespread misconception regarding the true status of women in ancient Indian society. It is mainly due to deplorable ignorance of the original Sanskrit texts, both Sruti and Smriti, in which there are to be found the laws, customs and tradition which define the true status of women in early times.

The Rigveda shows abundant evidence pointing to the fact that women were fully the equals of men as regards access to and capacity for the highest knowledge, even the Knowledge of the Absolute or Brahma.<sup>31</sup> It is therefore, no wonder that the wife enjoyed with her husband all religious rights and regularly participated in religious ceremonies with him. In fact, the performance of such ceremonies should be invalid without the wife joining her husband as his full partner. Thus the Rigveda accorded the highest social status to the qualified women that days. So, in the vedic age, women enjoyed a higher status at home as well as outside.

During the period of Jainism and Buddhism, women occupied esteemed positions in religion and were permitted to become Sanyāsinis. In the Tripitaka, women "left the household life like their menfolk" to lead a Buddhist monastic-life during this period. Women who had superior intellect had enough confidence to run their own sangha (also known as bhikkhunisangha), as directed by a set of legislation, which was not gender-biased. Women were also observed to involve themselves in participation in socio-cultural services and activities, creating abundant prospects for public life.

Gender inequity had started to creep into society during the Dharmaśāstras, Mānsmṛiti period, and gradually women's positions were degraded to such an extent that they were deprived of all sorts of freedoms. Women were restricted in exercising their human rights as well as being barred from enjoying fundamental freedoms. The neglect of education and the lowering of the marriage age produced disastrous consequences upon the position and status of

women. Their position in society further deteriorated with the prohibition of widow remarriage, the spread of sati custom, the practice of purdah, increasing demand for dowry and the greater prevalence of polygamous marriages. Thus, in the eighteenth century the position of women was quite miserable. Besides, some ancient writings added degradation of women in society. Despite these thinkers' views which degraded the status of women, Hindu religion gives a proper respect to women, it assigned a position to women which were equal to that of man. It was said that a house was a cursed place where women was not respected and that a family which accorded respect and reverence of women was a place of happiness and prosperity. Hinduism has always recognised both the genders as complementary with each other.

In India, there is a long list of reformers who undertook major efforts on women's belief. Raja Ram Mohan Roy's (1722-1832) name is usually listed first among those of nineteenth century reformers concerned with improving women's status. Historians have called him 'Father of Modern India', a 'Champion of Women's Rights', and 'a feminist'. In Bengal, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar championed female education and led the campaign to legalise widow remarriage, and Keshub Chandra Sen, a famous leader of the Brahma Samaj, sought to bring women into new roles through schools, prayer meetings, and experiments in living. Swami Vivekanand had also supported the cause of women right and said that women could become a powerful regenerative force in the society. Swami Dayanand Saraswati encouraged female education and condemned customs. He regarded marriage between partners of unequal ages, dowry, and polygyny against the betterment of women. Mahatma Gandhi believed that the way men influence the public life, the domestic life falls under the influence of women and therefore women should have as much autonomy in her own circle of influence as man has in his own. As Gandhi said, "Woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him."

As Former Secretary General of UN, Kofi Annan has stated, "Women's rights are the responsibility of all humankind; combating all forms of violence against women is duty of all human kind and

achieving the empowerment of women is the advancement of all humankind."44

Some major conventions and conferences have been held at the international and national levels. Many acts and laws are being made by government to make women legally strong and give them protection against any type of discrimination.

### **Constitutional Provisions**

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio - economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them. Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of special importance in this regard.

### **Constitutional Privileges**

1. Equality before law for women (Article 14)
2. The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (Article 15 (i))
3. The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children (Article 15 (3))
4. Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State (Article 16).
5. The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39(a)); and equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d))
6. The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42)
7. The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46).

8. The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people (Article 47)
9. To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e))
10. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat (Article 243 D(3))
11. Not less than one- third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level to be reserved for women (Article 243 D (4))
12. Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality (Article 243 T (3))
13. Reservation of offices of Chairpersons in Municipalities for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the legislature of a State may by law provide (Article 243 T (4)).

Some acts which have special provisions to safeguard women and their interests are:

- (i) The Employees State Insurance Act, 1948
- (ii) The Plantation Labour Act, 1951
- (iii) The Family Courts Act, 1954
- (iv) The Special Marriage Act, 1954
- (v) The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955
- (vi) The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 with amendment in 2005
- (vii) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- (viii) The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 (Amended in 1995)
- (ix) Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961
- (x) The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971
- (xi) The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1976
- (xii) The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976

- (xiii) The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006
- (xiv) The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 1983
- (xv) The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986
- (xvi) Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
- (xvii) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987
- (xviii) The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

### **Conclusion and Suggestions :**

In the 21st century, where the attainment of rights has been considered as the only important condition for a successful life, women are standing in the line of the most exploited section of the society in the name of rights. Despite the great progress made in the arena of women's rights in theory and policy formation, women are still facing violation of their social, political and economic rights in the family and community.

Women's Rights and equality must be looked with new vision. It should be an integral part of the development and welfare policies of states and international organizations. Awareness campaigns should be organized on women's rights by civil society. The active involvement and association of the civil society in women's issues can accelerate the whole process as it works at the grass-root level and, understands the ground reality of the situation. A massive campaign should be launched to create more public awareness for women rights. In developing countries like India, the issue of 'woman's human rights' is an issue that requires long-term policy and cooperation both at the governmental and non-governmental levels. In this, the media can play an effective and active role in bringing awareness to human rights.

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