

Role of National Education Policy-2020 in transforming Higher Education in India

Dr. Archana Atwal

Assistant Professor

Deptt. of Education

Mahaveer University, Meerut

Abstract

This paper examines the transformative impact of the National Education Policy -2020 on India's higher education system. In response to both global developments and local educational needs, the National Education Policy-2020 provides a comprehensive framework aimed at modernizing academic practices, promoting innovation, and expanding accessibility across higher education institutions. Through a critical analysis of its policy objectives, implementation challenges, and potential outcomes, the study explores how the National Education Policy-2020 addresses longstanding structural gaps while aligning Indian education with contemporary global standards. By evaluating its key features, opportunities, and associated challenges, this research highlights the National Education Policy-2020's potential to reshape the educational landscape, empower a diverse range of stakeholders, and advance India toward a knowledge-driven and inclusive future.

Key Words- National Education Policy-2020, Higher Education, Features and Challenges

Introduction-

The higher education system in India is presently witnessing a remarkable and far-reaching transformation, largely driven by the implementation of the National Education Policy-2020. In the backdrop of a world that is continuously being reshaped by rapid technological innovations, increasing global interconnectedness and dynamic socio-economic changes, the National Education Policy-2020 emerges as a timely and strategic intervention. It is not merely a reform but a visionary framework designed to rejuvenate and future-proof India's educational ecosystem. The policy signifies a clear departure

from the traditional, rigid, and examination-driven model of learning by advocating for a learner-centric approach that encourages creativity, flexibility, and critical thinking. It strongly emphasizes multidisciplinary and holistic education, enabling students to explore diverse fields of knowledge while developing essential skills to succeed in an increasingly complex, competitive, and interconnected global environment. At the same time, the National Education Policy-2020 addresses deep-rooted challenges such as inequality in access, quality gaps, and lack of inclusivity, seeking to bridge socio-economic divides by ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all sections of society. One of the central pillars of this policy is the restructuring of higher education institutions into dynamic and vibrant centers of knowledge creation, research, and innovation, capable of nurturing intellectual growth while fostering entrepreneurial and problem-solving abilities. In essence, National Education Policy-2020 envisions transforming Indian higher education into a globally relevant system that not only meets contemporary needs but also positions the country as a leading knowledge economy of the future.

The National Education Policy-2020 introduces a series of groundbreaking reforms that aim to redefine the future of higher education in India by aligning it with global standards and contemporary demands. Among its key initiatives are the strong promotion of research and development, the seamless integration of modern technology into teaching and learning processes, and the creation of robust governance structures that grant institutions greater autonomy and flexibility to pursue excellence. These reforms are not limited to academic enhancement alone but are strategically designed to cultivate a dynamic culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, and interdisciplinary collaboration, while also strengthening the role of higher education institutions as active contributors to societal development. By fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, the National Education Policy-2020 aspires to prepare students and educators alike to engage meaningfully with real-world challenges and opportunities. Against this backdrop, the present research paper seeks to conduct a critical and in-depth examination of the National Education Policy-2020's transformative agenda within the realm of Indian higher

education. It intends to provide a comprehensive analysis of the policy's objectives, its implementation strategies, and the potential impacts it may have on learners, educators, institutions, and society at large. The study further aims to highlight how these reforms are expected to reshape the educational landscape by enhancing institutional capacities, promoting inclusivity, and redefining the trajectory of higher education in India. By synthesizing empirical evidence, policy documents, and diverse stakeholder perspectives, this paper endeavors to contribute valuable insights into the ongoing evolution of the country's educational framework, while also exploring its broader implications for national progress and global engagement.

Review of Related Literature

Aashritha, Naari (2025) studied '**National Educational Policy-2020: An Analysis on Its Implementation and Administrative Challenges.**' This policy strives to make India a country with equitable access to higher quality education by 2040 on principles of affordability and accountability, is genuine depiction of Fundamental right to education as highlighted in *Mohini Jain v. State of Karnataka* 3. National Education policy-2020 marks its relevance by fostering multidisciplinary and holistic education mechanism. Secondly, aims at preserving linguistic diversity by encouraging institutions to use mother tongue till grade 5. Thirdly, its emphasis on pedagogical teaching methods through training catalyzed by framework called NPST. Thirdly, introducing a flexible choice in various subjects at various levels makes education more tailored and skill-focused. Fourthly, it revamps form exam-oriented structure to competency based depicting reediness for 21st century. Fifthly, inclusivity, global education and circular redemption. Sixthly, reorganizes government structure involving creation of NSSA and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan as a supervising body. Though there has been a significant improvement the policy is still plagued in implementation by various impediments in achieving its set objectives which this commentary aims to analyse the gap and restore the principles of this policy in providing equal, affordable and qualitative education.

Bhutia, Yodida and Chhetri, Punam (2025) studied ‘**Revitalizing Higher Education in India: Through NEP- 2020.**’ Education plays a pivotal role in the progress and development of a nation. In order to achieve this fundamental goal, the focus has shifted towards imparting quality education as a key priority. While the concept of quality used to revolve around such issues as equality, access, and bridging the gender gap, the contemporary education system is now mandated to meet additional demands. These include investing learners’ with 21st -century skills, fostering well-rounded individuals who excel in all areas of learning, and preserving indigenous learning. The National Education Policy- 2020 is a comprehensive response to the pressing challenges faced by the Indian education system. It aims to promote holistic growth among learners, introduce a multidisciplinary approach to education, and establish student-centric models of teaching and learning. Unveiled on July 29, 2020, National Education Policy-2020 represents a promising and transformative policy initiative, addressing the existing shortcomings in the Indian education system.

Kumar, Ashok (2025) studied ‘**Analyzing the impact of the new educational policy 2020: A comprehensive review of India’s educational reforms.**’ The National Education Policy-2020 marks a significant milestone in India's education system, aiming to transform the country’s educational landscape. This review provides a comprehensive analysis of New Education Policy-2020, exploring its alignment with global educational trends, emphasis on competency-based progression, and potential impact on student learning outcomes, teacher training, and educational infrastructure. The policy’s scientific significance lies in its potential to promote equity, quality, and innovation in Indian education, addressing longstanding challenges and preparing students for the demands of the 21st century. This research paper examines India's New Education Policy-2020, a comprehensive framework aimed at transforming the country's educational landscape. The study analyzes the policy’s key features, implementation challenges, and its potential impact on India's education system. Through comparative analysis with traditional educational models and examination of contemporary educational needs, this

paper evaluates the National Education Policy-2020 capacity to create an inclusive, innovative, and globally competitive education system.

Mohamed, Swalih M. (2025) studied ‘**Role of Education Policy in Creating Knowledge Society: A Critical Analysis of India’s National Education Policy 2020.**’

National Education Policy-2020 introduced on 29 July, 2020, is third important policy before independent India. New education policy aimed restructuring of Indian education system. It is very significant outlined and innovative education policy at the all the level of higher education and secondary level. New education policy-2020 is the significant impact on the school and college education level. National Education Policy released by government of India under the chairmanship of Dr. K. Kasthurirangan. He was former chairman of Indian Space Research Organization. This committee submitted report on 31, May, 2019. This paper mainly focused on stages, features, principles of education policy and also suggestion, implication, challenges of National Education Policy-2020. This policy aim to promote the use of technology in education, but digital divide in the country may limit its effectiveness. Overall National Education Policy-2020 is a step in the right direction of the Indian education system. This policy successfully implemented through address the constraints of the implementation including funding, infrastructure and digital divide. This study is an attempt to explore how education policy nurtures knowledge in society in the light of new education policy of India.

Patidar, Savitri (2025) studied ‘**Obstacles in Executing the National Education Policy (2020) in India: A Critical Examination.**’ The National Education Policy-2020 was recently introduced in India to reform the education system and bring about an inclusive, multidisciplinary, and holistic approach to learning. A comprehensive policy document, the National Education Policy-2020 addresses all facets of education, covering early childhood education and care schooling, and higher education. Despite its promising goals, the implementation of the National Education Policy-2020 in school education is

facing various challenges, such as a shortage of trained teachers, inadequate infrastructure, lack of funds, and resistance to change. While the National Education Policy-2020 outlines a comprehensive vision for the future of education, its successful implementation in remote and marginalized areas poses several challenges. This research paper initially depicts an overview of National Education Policy-2020 and critically examines the challenges associated with the implementation of the National Education Policy-2020 in remote areas of India, identifies key barriers, and suggests potential strategies to overcome these obstacles. The literature review of the paper highlights the importance of effective stakeholder engagement, adequate funding, and capacity building for teachers, among others. The study concludes that the successful implementation of the National Education Policy-2020 in India will require sustained effort and collaboration from all stakeholders, including the government, educators, and the community.

National Education Policy-2020 and Higher Education

The National Education Policy-2020 envisions a comprehensive transformation of India's higher education system by shifting towards a more flexible, inclusive, and learner-centric model. It emphasizes the promotion of interdisciplinary studies, the introduction of contemporary and diverse subjects, and the provision of greater freedom in course selection, thereby enabling students to design academic pathways that align with their individual interests, aptitudes, and career aspirations. A significant focus of the policy is on increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education and ensuring wider access through multiple entry and exit options, which allow learners to pause and resume their education without losing progress. To strengthen the foundation of research and innovation, the policy proposes the establishment of a National Research Foundation, while the creation of a National Education Technology Forum is aimed at promoting digital learning and the effective use of technology in academics. Furthermore, the policy outlines the expansion and strengthening of Higher Education Institutions across the country, ensuring that quality education is accessible to students from all regions and socio-economic backgrounds. Taken together, these reforms represent a holistic and

forward-looking approach designed to create an adaptive higher education ecosystem capable of meeting the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

The key highlights of National Education Policy-2020 for Higher Education are as follows

1. The policy targets an increase in the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education to 50% by 2035.
2. To achieve this, it plans to add nearly 5 crore seats in higher education institutions across the country.
3. The establishment of a National Research Foundation is proposed to fund and promote high-quality research across all disciplines.
4. A single regulatory body, the Higher Education Commission of India is recommended to replace multiple existing regulatory authorities and streamline governance.
5. The introduction of a four-year multidisciplinary undergraduate program is proposed, offering multiple entry and exit points along with enhanced opportunities for skill development.
6. A National Educational Technology Forum is to be created to encourage and support the integration of technology into higher education.
7. The policy recommends creating a credit-based system for degree programs, allowing students to pursue multiple degrees or programs simultaneously.
8. It proposes the establishment of a National Academic Credit Bank to enable the transfer, storage, and accumulation of academic credits across different institutions.

Features of National Education Policy-2020 for higher Education

The National Education Policy-2020 for Higher Education introduces several key features aimed at transforming India's educational landscape:

1. Interdisciplinary education

The National Education Policy-2020 emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary education by encouraging the removal of rigid boundaries that traditionally separate

academic disciplines. It envisions universities and higher education institutions as spaces where students are not confined to narrow subject choices but are instead given the freedom to engage with multiple fields of study. By promoting multidisciplinary courses, the policy aims to provide learners with opportunities to explore diverse subjects, integrate knowledge from different domains, and develop a more holistic understanding of complex real-world issues. This approach not only nurtures creativity and critical thinking but also equips students with versatile skills that are essential for adapting to the rapidly changing demands of the 21st-century workforce.

2. Flexible curriculum and credit transfer

The policy strongly advocates for a flexible curriculum that empowers students to design their own learning pathways by choosing courses that best match their individual interests, abilities, and long-term career aspirations. This learner-centric approach moves away from rigid program structures and allows greater academic freedom. Complementing this flexibility is the introduction of a credit-transfer system, which ensures that students can move seamlessly between institutions without the risk of losing their previously earned academic credits. By enabling such mobility, the policy not only enhances academic achievement but also supports continuous learning, broadens exposure to diverse educational environments, and ultimately helps students maximize their potential in both academic and professional spheres.

3. Research and innovation

To establish India as a leading global hub for knowledge creation, the National Education Policy-2020 places strong emphasis on research and innovation as a cornerstone of higher education reform. The policy highlights the need to significantly increase investment in research, technology, and innovation-driven initiatives to strengthen the country's academic and industrial ecosystem. Central to this vision is the proposal to set up a National Research Foundation, which will provide robust funding, resources, and support for high-quality research across a wide range of disciplines. By fostering a culture of inquiry, collaboration, and creativity, the National Education Policy-2020 seeks to nurture

cutting-edge discoveries, promote interdisciplinary research, and build a sustainable framework that contributes to India's emergence as a global leader in innovation and knowledge production.

4. Vocational education and skill development

The National Education Policy-2020 gives significant importance to vocational education and skill development, recognizing their crucial role in enhancing employability and preparing students for real-world challenges. The policy seeks to integrate vocational training into mainstream education, ensuring that it is no longer seen as separate or secondary but as an essential part of the learning process. By promoting apprenticeships, internships, and work-integrated learning programs, it aims to provide students with hands-on experience and practical exposure to industry environments. This approach not only equips learners with job-relevant skills but also bridges the gap between academic knowledge and workplace requirements, thereby creating a workforce that is skilled, adaptable, and capable of contributing effectively to the evolving demands of the economy.

5. Online education

Recognizing the transformative role of technology in modern education, the National Education Policy-2020 emphasizes the creation of a strong digital infrastructure to support teaching and learning. It encourages higher education institutions to expand their reach by offering online courses and adopting blended learning models that combine traditional classroom methods with digital platforms. This approach not only broadens access to quality education but also ensures inclusivity by catering to the diverse needs of learners from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds. By integrating technology into the core of education, the policy aims to make learning more flexible, engaging, and future-ready.

6. Inclusivity and equity

The National Education Policy-2020 places strong emphasis on inclusivity and equity as guiding principles for transforming higher education. It seeks to bridge existing social and

economic gaps by ensuring that learners from disadvantaged and underrepresented groups such as girls, students from economically weaker sections, and individuals with disabilities are provided with equal access to quality education and opportunities for growth. By adopting targeted measures, financial support systems, and inclusive learning environments, the policy aims to remove barriers that hinder participation and success. This approach reflects a commitment to creating an education system that is fair, accessible, and empowering for all, thereby fostering social justice and equal opportunity across society.

7. Internationalization-

The National Education Policy-2020 highlights the importance of internationalization in higher education, aiming to position India as a global destination for learning while also expanding opportunities for Indian students and institutions to engage internationally. It encourages collaborations with reputed foreign universities, the establishment of joint programs, and academic partnerships to bring global best practices into Indian education. At the same time, the policy envisions attracting students from abroad, thereby enhancing cultural diversity and strengthening India's role in the global knowledge network. To further promote exchange at the national level, the policy proposes the creation of a National Education Exchange Programme designed to facilitate educational exchanges across states, enabling students to experience diverse cultures, languages, and learning environments within the country itself. Through these initiatives, the National Education Policy-2020 seeks to create a more globally connected and culturally enriched education system that prepares students for both national and international opportunities.

8. Autonomy and accountability-

The National Education Policy-2020 emphasizes the need for autonomy and accountability as key drivers of quality improvement in higher education. It advocates granting greater institutional autonomy and promoting decentralized decision-making,

thereby empowering universities and colleges to innovate, design relevant curricula, and respond effectively to the needs of students and society. At the same time, the policy underlines the importance of ensuring accountability and transparency through well-defined regulatory frameworks and monitoring mechanisms. By balancing freedom with responsibility, the National Education Policy-2020 aims to create institutions that are not only more flexible and efficient but also committed to maintaining high academic standards, ethical practices and credibility in the education system.

Merits of National Education Policy-2020 for Higher Education

1. **Flexibility in Learning-** The policy introduces a flexible and student-centric framework that allows learners to choose courses, determine their pace of study, and select the mode of learning that best suits their goals and circumstances. This personalization makes education more adaptable and relevant.
2. **Multiple Entry and Exit Options-** By offering opportunities to enter or exit programs at different stages, the policy enables students to pursue diverse educational pathways. This ensures that learners can continue their studies or rejoin later without losing academic progress, thus accommodating varied personal and professional needs.
3. **Strengthening Research and Innovation-** National Education Policy-2020 places strong emphasis on creating a vibrant research ecosystem by significantly increasing investment in research and development. It also encourages collaborations between academia and industry, thereby fostering innovation and positioning India as a global hub for knowledge creation.
4. **Job-Oriented and Skill-Based Training-** The integration of vocational education into mainstream higher education ensures that students acquire practical, market-relevant skills. This approach helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and industry requirements, improving employability.
5. **Teacher Development and Capacity Building-** Recognizing the central role of educators, the policy prioritizes comprehensive teacher education and training programs.

It promotes continuous professional development, modern pedagogical practices, and enhanced teaching quality to strengthen the overall learning experience.

6. **Technological Advancement in Education-** The policy leverages digital tools to enrich teaching and learning processes. Initiatives such as online courses, e-learning platforms, and open educational resources aim to expand access, promote inclusivity, and prepare students for the technology-driven future.

Together, these measures are designed to transform and modernize India's higher education system, making it more flexible, inclusive, and responsive to the changing needs of both students and society. By aligning academic structures with contemporary demands, the reforms not only enhance learning outcomes but also strengthen employability, ensuring that graduates are better prepared to contribute meaningfully in a rapidly evolving global environment.

Challenges of National Education Policy-2020 for Higher Education

1. **Restructuring the Higher Education System-** The National Education Policy-2020 envisions a complete overhaul of India's higher education framework to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and global competitiveness. While the vision is progressive, stakeholders highlight concerns regarding the practical challenges of such large-scale restructuring. The transition process may cause disruptions, resistance to change, and implementation delays, particularly in institutions unprepared for rapid transformation.

2. **Financing the Reforms-** Implementing the ambitious reforms outlined in the policy including the creation of new universities, strengthening digital education, and restructuring academic frameworks requires substantial financial investment. Ensuring adequate funding without overburdening taxpayers presents a significant challenge. The government will need to explore sustainable financing mechanisms, including public-private partnerships, corporate social responsibility contributions, and international collaborations.

3. **Addressing the Digital Divide-** While the policy promotes online education and blended learning to increase accessibility, especially for students in remote areas, the

persistent issue of unequal digital infrastructure remains a major hurdle. Many rural and economically disadvantaged regions lack reliable internet connectivity, adequate devices, and digital literacy, which can prevent equitable participation in technology-driven education.

4. **Faculty Shortage and Professional Development-** National Education Policy-2020 underscores the importance of improving teaching quality through faculty development and training. However, a shortage of qualified educators across disciplines remains a pressing concern. Building adequate teaching capacity will require significant investment, long-term planning, and continuous professional development programs to ensure faculty are equipped to meet evolving academic demands.

5. **Ensuring Equity and Inclusion-** Although inclusivity is one of the central goals of National Education Policy-2020 certain initiatives such as the introduction of a four-year multidisciplinary undergraduate program may unintentionally disadvantage students from marginalized backgrounds, first-generation learners, or those with disabilities. The added academic and financial demands of extended programs may widen existing inequalities unless carefully addressed through targeted support measures, scholarships, and institutional safeguards.

These challenges highlight the vast scale and complexity of the reforms envisioned under National Education Policy-2020, emphasizing the need for well-structured planning, strong implementation mechanisms, and sustained engagement of all stakeholders. Only through such coordinated efforts can the policy's ambitious objectives be realized and its transformative vision for higher education effectively achieved.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy-2020 marks a pivotal moment in India's efforts to transform its higher education system. By emphasizing modernization, innovation, and greater accessibility, the policy seeks to address long-standing structural challenges while

aligning Indian education with evolving global trends. This study has highlighted the key objectives of the National Education Policy-2020 examined the challenges associated with its implementation, and analyzed the potential outcomes, demonstrating how the policy aims to reshape educational practices and empower diverse stakeholders. The National Education Policy-2020 offers significant opportunities, including the promotion of interdisciplinary education, a strengthened focus on research, and the integration of technology into learning. At the same time, it presents challenges such as securing adequate funding and establishing effective implementation mechanisms. By addressing these complexities thoughtfully and strategically, the National Education Policy-2020 has the potential to create a dynamic, inclusive, and innovation-driven higher education ecosystem in India, fostering knowledge creation, equitable access, and contributing substantially to the nation's socio-economic development in the 21st century.

References-

1. Aashritha, Naari (2025) 'National Educational Policy-2020: An Analysis on Its Implementation and Administrative Challenges.' SSRN journal
2. Aashritha, Naari (2025) 'National Educational Policy-2020: An Analysis on Its Implementation and Administrative Challenges.' SSRN journal
3. Bhutia, Yodida and Chhetri, Punam (2025) 'Revitalizing Higher Education in India: Through NEP- 2020.' National Journal of Education, ISSN 0972-9569, e-ISSN 2584-2595, Vol. XXIII No. (1)
4. Kumar, Ashok (2025) 'Analyzing the impact of the new educational policy-2020: A comprehensive review of India's educational reforms.' ELSEVIER, Volume 108
5. Mohamed, Swalih M. (2025) 'Role of Education Policy in Creating Knowledge Society: A Critical Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020.' International Journal for Research Trends and Innovation, ISSN- 2456-3315, Volume 10 Issue 5

6. Patidar, Savitri (2025) 'Obstacles in Executing the National Education Policy (2020) in India: A Critical Examination.' Shikshan Sanshodhan : Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences ISSN (o): 2581-6241, Volume-8, Issue-2
7. Ulker, N. A. (2019) 'An International Research of Accreditation on academic quality'. Studies in Higher Education, Vol. 44, Issue 9, Pp. 1507-1518.