

# A STUDY ON NEW EDUCATION POLICY – REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

**Ms. Rachita Aggarwal\* & Ms. Preeti Goel\*\***

*The impact of a nation's educational system on its economic health is now widely acknowledged. Education is a country's greatest asset. Unavoidably, a developed nation also has a high level of education. India has advanced greatly in the area of education since attaining its freedom. This study examines the significance of New Educational Policy and the necessity of reforming higher education. The data from the All-India Survey on Higher Education Institutions (AISHE) was used to calculate and analyse indicators of education development in the nation, such as the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), Students-Teacher Ratio, Gender Parity Index (GPI), and Expenditure on Education and Research, which are useful in improving education quality and research development. In accordance with the New Education Policy, higher education will be transformed by allocating roughly 6% of GDP to it, creating National Higher Education Commission (NHEC), National Research Foundation, and reorganising educational institutions into massive multidisciplinary universities, higher education clusters, and independent degree-awarding colleges.*

**Keywords- Student-Teacher Ratio, Higher Education Institution, New Educational Policy, Gross Enrolment Ratio, Gender Parity Index.**

## **Introduction**

India is a vibrant nation with a young population that has contributed professionals and talented workers to all the major established sectors in other nations, including the software, medical, mechanical, and engineering industries. In terms of the number of students enrolled, the Indian educational system is the third largest in the world.<sup>1</sup> Despite statistics showing a staggering increase in enrollment in schools over the past four years due to the Right to Education Act,<sup>2</sup> government initiatives,

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\* Ms. Rachita Aggarwal, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Commerce, Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Management Studies, GGSIPU, Delhi

\*\* Ms. Preeti Goel, Assistant Professor, Dept. of Law, Maharaja Agrasen Institute of Management Studies, GGSIPU, Delhi

1 India Country Summary of Higher Education, World Bank, 2018, available at: [http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1193249163062/India\\_CountrySummary.pdf](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1193249163062/India_CountrySummary.pdf)

2 Younis Ahmad Sheikh, Higher Education in India: Challenges and Opportunities, *Journal of Education and Practice*, 2017, Vol. 8

and private sector involvement, the country's school and higher education systems continue to struggle with insufficient funding, shortage of infrastructural facilities, low standards, insufficient study amenities, and subpar scholastic ratings for schools. Insufficient employment prospects, skill development, and value-added training at all stages are further indicators. A study on the New Education Policy (NEP) and its potential to reform higher education in India would be a comprehensive endeavor.

### **New Education Policy (NEP) and Higher Education in India**

The NEP was introduced in 2020 with the aim of overhauling the entire education system, including higher education, to address many of the challenges and problems that have been prevalent for years. Some key aspects and potential impacts of the NEP on higher education in India:

1. **Multidisciplinary Approach:** The NEP promotes a multidisciplinary approach, allowing students to choose courses across disciplines, fostering holistic learning.
2. **Flexibility and Choice:** The policy encourages flexibility in course selection, multiple entry and exit points, and credit transfer, enabling students to design their educational path.
3. **Quality Enhancement:** The NEP places a strong emphasis on raising educational standards via methods for training teachers, advancing research as well as accrediting.
4. **Research and Innovation:** India's international academic outputs is intended to be enhanced through greater resources for research and development as well as an emphasis on college-level study promotion.
5. **Autonomy for Institutions:** Greater institutional autonomy is encouraged to reduce bureaucratic interference and promote innovation and excellence.
6. **Technology Integration:** The NEP advocates for the integration of technology in education, addressing issues of digital access and promoting online and blended learning.
7. **Global Engagement:** The policy aims to internationalize higher education by promoting collaborations with foreign universities, allowing credit transfer, and attracting foreign students.
8. **Vocational Education and Skill Development:** NEP integrates vocational education and skill development into higher education, addressing the need for skilled workers in various sectors.
9. **Languages and Cultural Diversity:** The policy recognizes the importance of regional languages and cultural diversity, allowing for the preservation of local culture and knowledge.

10. **Financial Support:** The NEP seeks to provide financial support to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, reducing financial barriers to higher education.
11. **Assessment and Evaluation:** A shift towards continuous assessment, project-based learning, and reduced emphasis on high-stakes exams is a part of the NEP's reforms.
12. **Equity and Inclusivity:** The policy aims to address disparities in access by promoting higher education in underserved areas and providing support for marginalized communities.
13. **Governance and Regulation:** A new regulatory framework is envisioned to create a more transparent, accountable, and efficient system of higher education governance.

### Major Challenges and Problems in Higher Education System

The higher education system in India faces a range of challenges and problems that have been persistent over the years. These issues impact the quality, accessibility, and overall effectiveness of higher education in the country. Some of the key challenges and problems include lack of access and inclusivity, quality of education, overemphasizing on rote learning, lack of innovation and research, outdated curriculum, brain drain, lack of vocational education, etc. There are disparities in access to higher education based on socio-economic status, gender, and geographical location. There is proliferation of private educational institutions that often prioritize profit over quality education. The political influence on the administration and functioning of educational institutions has increased. The student unions and political ideologies are affecting the academic environment. There is limited emphasis on continuous assessment and project-based learning. The government funding for higher education institutions is limited. There is difficulty in attracting private investment for research and infrastructure development. Overall, the approach for higher education in India is very fragmented.

The fragmented higher education ecosystem in India today faces several significant issues, including:

- a. India's enrollment rate is disappointing when compared to other developing countries. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) climbed to 27.1%, up slightly from the growth of 26.3% reported in the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report 2021.<sup>3</sup> In comparison to both industrialised and developing nations, the GER is quite low. The

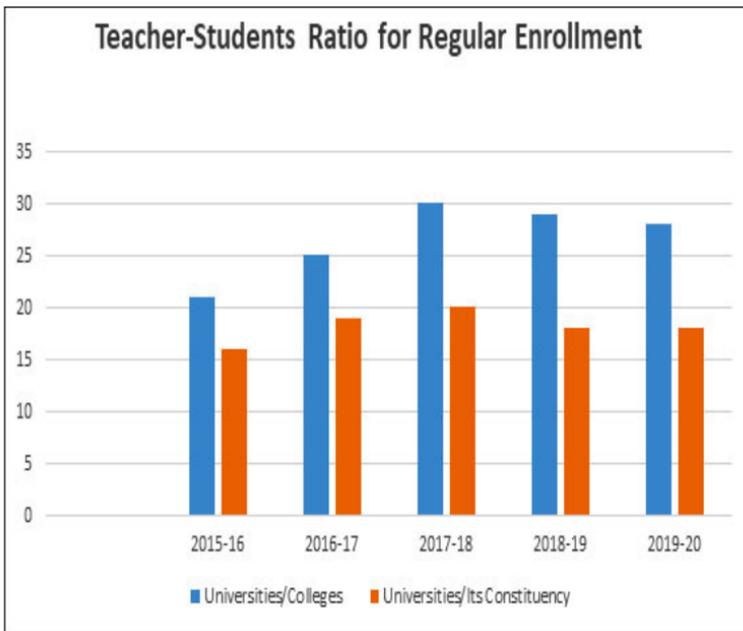
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3 *All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report, 2020-21, available at: <https://aishe.gov.in/aishe/BlankDCF/AISHE%20Final%20Report%202020-21.pdf>*

overall number of students enrolled in higher education was 3.42 million in 2014–15, 3.74 million in 2018–19, and 3.85 million by 2019–20.<sup>4</sup> The increase rate in enrollment between 2018–19 and 2019–20 was 3.04 percent.

- b. Less focus is placed on the improvement of cognitive abilities and learning outcomes, particularly in HEIs.<sup>5</sup> Also, there is less emphasis placed on teacher effectiveness and the student-teacher ratio (PTR), which has caused confusion in the system. If regular mode enrollment is taken into account, the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) for Universities and Colleges is 28, whereas the PTR for Universities and their Component Units is 18 for regular mode. The graph below shows the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) across time. State-by-state PTR over the last five years for all institutions, universities, colleges, and universities and its constituent colleges that accepted enrollment through the regular mode of instruction. It is important to note that PTR for the years 2016–17 and 2017–18 shows a trend towards decline.

**Figure No. 1**



4 Vibha Sharma, *Student enrolment in higher education grew by over 11 per cent in 5 years*, *Tribune News Service*, 2022, available at: <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/student-enrolment-in-higher-education-grew-by-over-11-per-cent-in-5-years-266370>

5 Sachiko Ozawa, *Educational and economic returns to cognitive ability in low- and middle-income countries: A systematic review*, *World Development*, Vol. 149, 2022, available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2021.105668>.

**Source:** All India Survey on Higher Education 2019-20<sup>6</sup>

- c. A strict policy that separated the disciplines, encouraged early specialisation, and streamed students into specialised fields of study was in place.
- d. Restricted access, especially for students from socially and economically underprivileged areas, and a dearth of HEIs that offer local language instruction.
- e. The majority of HEIs have constrained institutional and teacher autonomy and less academic flexibility.<sup>7</sup>
- f. Insufficient systems for formerly it-based faculty and student career management and advancement, as well as insufficient funding for it. Less than 3% of the country's GDP was spent on the education sector from 2015-16 to 2018-19.<sup>8</sup> As a result, government education plans' benchmark for public education spending was not met. Even after 70 years of independence, this resulted in inadequate accommodations, laboratory, and research facilities in higher education institutions.

**Table 1**  
**Government Expenditure on HEIs**

| Year    | Expenditure as % of GDP | Expenditure as % of Budget |
|---------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2013-14 | 3.1                     | 1.47                       |
| 2014-15 | 2.8                     | 1.29                       |
| 2015-16 | 2.8                     | 1.43                       |
| 2016-17 | 2.8                     | 1.47                       |
| 2017-18 | 2.9                     | 1.62                       |
| 2018-19 | 3.0                     | 1.43                       |

**Source:** Economic Survey 2018-19<sup>9</sup>

6 *All-India Survey on Higher Education Report, 2020-21*, available at: [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/aishe\\_eng.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/aishe_eng.pdf)

7 *Salient Features of NEP 2020: Higher Education*, available at: [https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/5294663\\_Salient-Featuresofnep-Eng-merged.pdf](https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/5294663_Salient-Featuresofnep-Eng-merged.pdf)

8 *Mridusmita Bordoloi and Sharad Pandey, A Missed Milestone: How India has been Unable to Boost Public Education Spending to 6% of GDP, 2022*, available at: <https://accountabilityindia.in/blog/india-has-been-unable-to-boost-public-education-spending-to-6-percent-of-gdp/>

9 *State of the Economy in 2018-19: A Macro View, Economic Survey 2018-19, Vol. 2*, available at: [https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2019-20/economicsurvey/doc/vol2chapter/echap01\\_vol2.pdf](https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/budget2019-20/economicsurvey/doc/vol2chapter/echap01_vol2.pdf)

- g. The majority of universities and colleges place very little emphasis on research in all areas<sup>10</sup> along with shortage of finances for cross-disciplinary research post the end of British rule and subpar research amenities further impacted the poor teacher retention percentage. Another problem in higher education institutions is the lack of qualified faculty and inadequate infrastructure. Although the government is concentrating on improving these facilities, more institutions are suffering due to a lack of funding and other resources. So, it is difficult for them to keep highly trained teachers in their institutions. The effects of inadequate infrastructure in schools and colleges are also evident in the number of students who drop out.
- h. Weak educational standards have prevented us from competing with the rest of the world. This is due to ineffective regulatory systems, poor governance, and leadership at universities and colleges.
- i. Big affiliate institutions and independent colleges also contribute to low standards in undergraduate and graduate education.

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive reforms in the Indian higher education system, including increased funding, modernization of curriculum and teaching methods, enhanced research opportunities, and measures to improve accessibility and inclusivity. Additionally, reducing bureaucratic interference and promoting a culture of innovation and excellence are crucial for the future of higher education in India.

### **Transformation of HEIs through NEP**

NEP seeks to significantly change HEIs throughout the nation. In order to solve different issues and enhance the value, accessibility, and usefulness of higher education, it anticipates a thorough revamp of the higher education system. The New Education Policy gives students' potential for creativity more attention. It is based on the notion that education needs to encourage dispositional, social as well as moral traits in addition to cognitive ones like thinking critically and problem-solving capabilities. In order to support and foster research of the highest calibre, NEP promotes professional growth for faculty, research advancement, and the creation of a National Research Foundation. HEIs are urged to adopt a multidisciplinary approach by letting students select programmes from many fields of study. Collaboration between HEIs and foreign organisations is encouraged in order to advance global learning along with exposure. HEIs are granted greater autonomy to make decisions related to curriculum, governance,

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<sup>10</sup> David Rosowsky, *The Role of Research At Universities: Why It Matters*, *Forbes*, 2022, available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidrosowsky/2022/03/02/the-role-of-research-at-universities-why-it-matters/?sh=56103aa26bd5>

and administration. The policy emphasizes the need for reform in teacher education to produce high-quality educators. The NEP proposes a new regulatory framework for HEIs to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficiency in governance.

The successful transformation of HEIs through the NEP depends on effective implementation at the institutional and policy levels, adequate funding, and the commitment of educators, administrators, and students. Continuous monitoring and evaluation will be essential to track progress and address any challenges that arise during the transformation process.

The Indian Government's New Educational Policy (NEP) for 2020 envisions significant measures for the transformation of school and higher education in India in the following ways:

- The amount of money set aside for education will rise to 6 percentage points of GDP. The financial requirements for the growth of academic and research activities in higher education may be met by this.
- The creation of the National Research Fund (NRF) and the National Higher Educational Commission (NHEC) aid in building HEIs and equip them to address present and future challenges and goals.
- Higher education institutions may have more freedom while they design and develop the curriculum having greater emphasis on skill and value-driven learning and to provide employability programmes to participants in addition to addressing the educational requirements of their students, if they are transformed into large multidisciplinary universities, higher education clusters, and autonomous degree colleges. To draw students to higher education institutions, high-quality instruction is essential. There is a lack of qualified faculty in colleges and universities around the nation right now. Country needs 3.3 million more teachers in educational institutions to improve the teacher-student ratio, from 1:28 to an ideal 1:15.<sup>11</sup>

In order to overcome these obstacles and to deliver high-quality higher education with equity and inclusion, this strategy anticipates the re-energizing of the higher education system. **The following crucial actions are included in the policy's vision to address the aforementioned systemic challenges:**

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11 Venkatesham Akula, *Revamping Higher Education in India: A Study of New Education Policy*, Madhya Bharti, Vol. 82, 2022, available at: <https://ccets.cgg.gov.in/Uploads/files/buttonDetails/101467.pdf>

- (a) Creating large multidisciplinary universities, higher education clusters, and autonomous colleges may allow higher education institutions (HEIs) more freedom in developing their curricula and co-curricular with a stronger emphasis on skill- and value-based education as well as the ability to provide employability courses to their stakeholders in addition to meeting the educational needs of their students.
- (b) Achieving faculty and institutional autonomy for universities and the institutions they are connected with.
- (c) Redesigning the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student assistance for improved learning outcomes.
- (d) It can reinforce the integrity of faculty members and institutional leadership positions through merit-based appointments and career advancement based on teaching, research, and service.
- (e) Create a National Research Foundation and fund great, peer-reviewed research as well as the growth of early-stage research in universities and colleges.
- (f) The governance of HEIs by a highly qualified independent board will increase the institutes' academic and administrative autonomy.
- (g) Control over higher education by a single regulatory body.
- (h) Through the aforementioned measures, there will be greater access, equity, and inclusion. Additionally, there will be more opportunities for outstanding public education, online learning, Open Distance Learning (ODL), and scholarships from private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students.
- (i) Implement a new curricular and pedagogical structure for education that places a strong emphasis on child care and education. The current 10+2 structure of school curricula is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 structure that corresponds to ages 3–8, 8–11, 11–14, and 14–18 years, with UG courses lasting 4 years rather than 3 years.<sup>12</sup>

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12 National Education Policy 2020, available at: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1642061>

- (j) A National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) offers a sizable pool of exceptional senior and retired faculty—including those with the ability to teach in Indian languages—who would be eager to offer university and college teachers both short- and long-term mentoring and professional support.<sup>13</sup>
- (k) The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), an independent forum that offers a venue for the unrestricted exchange of ideas on the use of technology, shall be established in order to improve learning, evaluation, planning, and administration in education.<sup>14</sup>

## Conclusion

It is noteworthy that the successful implementation of the NEP depends on various factors including adequate funding, commitment from educational institutions, and effective policy execution at both the state and central levels. Furthermore, addressing the challenges posed by the NEP's ambitious reforms, such as ensuring quality in a flexible system and preserving cultural diversity, will be critical.

A comprehensive study on the NEP's impact on higher education in India should involve assessing the progress made in these areas, gathering feedback from students, educators, and institutions, and analyzing the policy's effectiveness in addressing the long-standing challenges faced by the Indian higher education system. Additionally, it should consider the evolving landscape of education in India and adaptability to changing circumstances, including global events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

The institutions of higher learning in India have faced many difficulties, but there are also many chances to address these difficulties and improve it as a whole. The need for increased openness and responsibility, as well as the importance of new empirical investigations on how individuals learn, as well as the function of higher education institutions in the coming decade. India needs individuals with advanced degrees and expertise who can advance the economy of our nation. India easily transforms its situation from developing to developed since it exports exceptionally qualified employees to foreign nations. The present research intends to identify obstacles and difficulties in the higher educational system of the nation.

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13 National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) Report, NCTE, Ministry of Education, Government of India, November 2021-March 2022, available at: <https://ncte.gov.in/website/images/NMM/notice-board/Booklet%20on%20Open%20House%20Discussions.pdf>

14 National Educational Technology Forum, available at: [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/upload\\_document/NETF.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/NETF.pdf)

HEIs will have additional important duties in addition to teaching and research, which they will carry out with the help of the right resources, incentives, and frameworks. The primary stakeholder in the educational system is the student. High-quality teaching and learning processes depend on a positive and active campus environment. Students will have several possibilities to participate in sports, cultural and arts clubs, eco-clubs, activity clubs, community service initiatives, and other activities in order to achieve this. There must be counseling programmes for managing stress and emotional adjustments in every educational institution.

The caliber and commitment of a faculty member is yet another crucial element in the success of a higher education institution. Many efforts have been implemented over the past 60 years, all of which understand and acknowledge the importance of faculty and their limitations in attaining the objectives of higher education. Faculty motivation in terms of teaching, service, and research in HEIs, however, remains far below the required level despite these many advancements in the prestige of the academic profession. To guarantee that every faculty member is content, enthusiastic, engaged, and motivated to advance the students, institution, and profession of their own, it is important to address the numerous issues that contribute to low faculty motivation levels and poor teaching quality.