



Role of National Education Policy -2020 in Employment Generation in India

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced recently will change the face of the education and skill ecosystem in the coming time. The policy adopts a learner-centric approach while focusing on experiential & lifelong learning, vocational education, and the transformation of higher education institutions. It proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of education, including the educational structure, regulations and governance, to create a new system which is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century students. National Education Policy- 2020 has been designed keeping in mind that the school and college education will not only be seen as a facilitator of degree but it will be treated as a medium to build personality and it'll help the students in their holistic professional growth. The proposed vocational skill exposure starting from the middle and secondary grades through internship opportunities with local industry, businesses, artists, craftsmen, professionals, among others is also a welcome step to lay the foundation of early technical education and would accelerate the skilling efforts in the country. So it envisages broad-based, multi-disciplinary, holistic Under Graduate education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and entry and exit after each year with appropriate certification. In this way, students will be trained to learn useful skills that will help them to get jobs. All in all, the new policy seems to focus more on skill development over points like just building a good "report card" and hence, will lead to the creation of a more educated and employable Indian population. In this paper the researcher has discusses in detail about the role of National Education Policy -2020 in employment generation in India.

Keywords :The National Policy on Education (NPE) -1986, New Education Policy -2020, **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)**, Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), National Education Technology Forum (NETF), **Time-bound development, Global knowledge superpower** etc.

Introduction : Education is the key to achieve full human potential, developing and promoting national development. Granting unlimited access to quality education is the solution for continued growth in economics, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation. At the same time, the need for a skilled workforce is increasing in greater demand. Vocational training is the instructional program that prepares one for an occupation that requires a specialized skill, such as a technician, artisan or tradesperson. It may involve imparting classroom instructions, hands-on training or a combination of both. Secondary and higher secondary education in India usually includes one or two vocational subjects.

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Still, real vocational training is imparted outside the formal education system and it often leads to a certification or a diploma. One may also undergo vocational training directly as an apprentice or a trainee with or without any formal qualification. Initial Vocational Education and Training prepares young men and women with the relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes to successfully enter the world of work or continue higher education. It is education that prepares people to work as a technician or to take up employment in a skilled craft or trade as a tradesperson or artisan. It is sometimes referred to as career and technical education.

According to NEP 2020, by 2025, at least 50% of learners shall have vocational exposure through school and higher education. Every child is supposed to learn at least one vocation and be exposed to several more. The NEP 2020 stated that there will be 'no hard separation' between the 'vocational and academic streams. School students will have 10 bagless days in a year, during which they are to be exposed to a vocation of choice. This will be supplemented by experiential vocational learning from Grades 6 to 8. Every student will take a fun course during Grades 6 to 8 that gives a survey and hands on experience of vocational crafts. Skill labs will also be set up and created in the schools in a Hub and Spoke model, which will allow other schools to use the facility.

The vocational education system in schools will be reintegrated under National Skills Qualifications Framework for providing training to the dropouts. Bachelor in Vocation (B.Voc.) programme offered by higher education institutions is to be expanded and a credit-based framework will facilitate mobility across general and vocational education. At the Secondary stage i.e., for students of ages 15 to 18 years or Grades IX to XII, every student will receive training in at least one vocation, and more if they are interested. The entire four-year period in secondary school, Grades IX to XII, can be used not just to expose a student to different vocations but to help him/her to progressively build a considerable degree of expertise (number of courses) that a particular student takes should be left entirely to them. Regarding the appointment of teachers, the NEP 2020 has laid emphasis on recruiting adequate teachers of vocational subjects to schools and school complexes as well as hiring a local eminent person or expert as a master instructor in various subjects, such as traditional local arts, vocational crafts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, or any other subject where local expertise exists to benefit students and help preserve and promote local knowledge.



With the roll-out of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, vocational education has garnered the required spotlight. The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive policy document that extensively discusses the revamping of vocational education. The policy focuses on bringing vocational education into mainstream education, as recommended by successive commissions on education over the years. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 suggests the integration of vocational education into mainstream education in all educational institutions in a phased manner over the next decade. It proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of education, including the educational structure, regulations and governance, to create a new system which is aligned with the aspirational goals of 21st century students.

Policy Initiatives to Create Employment-Friendly Environment in Whole Education Sector in India: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced recently will change the face of the education and skill ecosystem in the coming time. The policy adopts a learner-centric approach while focusing on experiential & lifelong learning, vocational education, and the transformation of higher education institutions. One of the most crucial policy overhaul in the NEP pertains to the dismantling of the rigid distinction between curricular, extra-curricular, and co-curricular subjects in school along with the integration of vocational education into mainstream education in a gradual manner. This would provide the much-needed flexibility to the students to realize their interests and sharpen in-built skills while also acquiring new ones.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 shall have potentially explosive growth of vocational education in the country since it requires all educational institutions to integrate vocational education into their offerings. The policy has a multi-disciplinary, value-based approach focusing on holistic education with special emphasis on skill development to improve the employability rate. Education should ideally be a mix of skilling and knowledge. This will bring in a very large number of schools, colleges and universities into the fold of potential Vocational Education and Training providers during the coming decade and making vocational education available to millions of students. In this regard some of the policy initiatives have been taken to create employment friendly environment in the whole education sector that are:

- **Policy Initiatives to be taken at Elementary and School Level:** The crust of the NEP is the skills of students since the lower classes. When the division



between streams, or curricular and co-curricular activities, or vocational and non-vocational subjects are removed, the students get a chance to pursue the education based on their aptitude and interests, which is impossible in the current system. Thus, the students are able to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, in other words, students will consume only useful content. By the time they finish school, the students will have a specialized area of interest and pursue higher education in that area. In higher education, the policy envisages broad-based, multi-disciplinary, holistic Under Graduate education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and entry and exit after each year with appropriate certification. Here are some of the policy initiatives to be taken at elementary and school level:

- No hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc.
- The Secondary Stage will comprise of four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject-oriented pedagogical and the students shall have the option of exiting after Grade 10 and re-entering in the next phase to pursue vocational or any other courses available in Grades 11- 12th.
- Students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school - including subjects in physical education, the arts and crafts, and vocational skills – so that they can design their own paths of study and life plans.
- Integration of vocational education programmes into mainstream education in a phased manner, including beginning with vocational exposure at early ages in middle and secondary school.
- Important vocational knowledge will be made accessible to students through integration into vocational education courses.
- Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade.



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- Individual institutions that are early adopters must innovate to find models and practices that work and then share these with other institutions through mechanisms set up by NCIVE, so as to help extend the reach of vocational education.
 - The credit-based Framework will also facilitate mobility across ‘general’ and vocational education.
- **Policy Initiatives to be taken at Higher Education Level:**The National Education Policy, 2020 is meant to provide an overarching vision and comprehensive framework for both school and higher education across the country. All in all, the new policy seems to focus more on skill development over points like just building a good “report card” and hence, will lead to the creation of a more educated and employable Indian population.” “This policy will be very lucrative, students will be awarded certificates for the completion of every academic year, during graduation. This will encourage them to hone their skills with more confidence, with the backing of a degree, even if they need to leave mid-way due to some issue. Other points like making colleges autonomous, a single governing authority for colleges, inviting top global universities, multi exit and entry for courses will surely favour our student community. Here are some of the policy initiatives to be taken at higher education level:
- **Choice Based Credit System & a Break from Traditional Career Paths :**NEP empowers the future workforce with more flexibility to choose their courses. As the policy says, “There will be no hard separation among ‘curricular’, ‘extracurricular’, or ‘co-curricular’, among ‘arts’, ‘humanities’, and ‘sciences’, or between ‘vocational’ or ‘academic’ streams.” Further to close the gap in achievement of learning outcomes, classroom transactions will shift, towards competency-based learning and education. In addition to all of this NEP will also allow students to accumulate & retain credits which will enable them to continue their learning process from where they had left, in case they discontinue for some reason. “One of the key aspects that the policy has addressed is the implementation of the Choice Based Credit System- a multi-disciplinary approach which will provide flexibility to students to choose between programs of choice. It is a huge step towards improving the employability of the students in the future,” says Neeti Sharma, Senior Vice President, TeamLease Services.



The flexibility and autonomy now presented to the future workforce will enable them to explore a variety of options and build more relevant and in-demand skills rather than following traditional career paths. However, this emerging workforce will need mentorship, coaching and guidance to ensure that the given flexibility doesn't lead them to get more lost than before. If implemented effectively, a flexible learning ecosystem will create a more self-driven workforce.

○ **A Focus on Essential Subjects, Skills, and Capacities Relevant for All Employments/Jobs:**

In recent times the need for behavioural competencies like resilience, agility, innovation and adaptability in the workforce has increased. From hiring to performance reviews, these skills are always prioritized. The traditional education system lacked the focus on building such competencies but the new policy has increased the scope of learning beyond subject-matters and made learning these skills essential. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; and problem-solving and logical reasoning, among others.

Additionally, these essential skills also include vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking. The future workforce shall now be more digital-ready. They already had the advantage of being in the digital era, and now with skills like coding becoming essential to learn, they will further have the edge when it comes to being future-ready. But how will these skills be taught and what teaching methods should be used by all? Will uniformity of learning methodology be an important element to ensure that each and every student/emerging job seeker gets equal exposure.

○ **Increasing GER:** The NEP aims to increase the GER in higher education to 50% by 2035 (GER that was 26.3% in 2018). Institutions will have the option to run open distance learning and online programmes to improve access to higher education, which will improve GER in the country.

○ **Restructuring of institutions:** All higher education institutions (HEIs) will be restructured into three categories: (i) research universities focusing equally on research and teaching, (ii) teaching universities focusing primarily on teaching, and (iii) degree granting colleges primarily focused on undergraduate teaching. All such institutions will gradually move



towards full autonomy - academic, administrative, and financial. All HEIs should eventually be transformed into large multidisciplinary universities and colleges with 3,000 or more students. By 2030, there should be one multidisciplinary HEI in, or near every district.

- **Multidisciplinary Education:** The curricula of all HEIs should be made multidisciplinary to integrate humanities and arts with science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The undergraduate degree will be made more flexible with multiple exit options with appropriate certification. For example: students will receive a certificate after one year, diploma after two years, bachelor's degree after three years, and bachelor's with research degree after four years. Further, an academic bank of credit will be established to digitally store academic credits earned from various HEIs for awarding degrees based on credits. HEIs will have the flexibility to offer different designs of masters' programmes. The M.Phil. programme will be discontinued.
- **Regulatory Structure:** The regulatory structure of higher education in India will be overhauled to ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding and setting academic standards are performed by separate, independent bodies. This will minimise conflict of interest and eliminate concentration of power. To ensure this, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be setup with four independent verticals: (i) the National Higher Education Regulatory Council as a single regulator (including teacher education, excluding legal and medical education), (ii) the National Accreditation Council for accreditation of institutions, (iii) the Higher Education Grants Council for financing of higher education institutions, and (iv) General Education Council for specifying the curriculum framework and learning levels for higher education. Disputes between the four vertical will be resolved by a body of experts under the HECI.
- **Improving Research:** The Committee observed that investment on research and innovation in India is only 0.69% of GDP, compared to 2.8% in the USA, 4.2% in South Korea and 4.3% of GDP in Israel. The NEP recommends setting up an independent National Research Foundation for funding and facilitating quality research in India. Specialised institutions which currently fund research, such as the Department of Science and Technology, Indian Council of Medical Research will continue to fund independent projects. The Foundation will collaborate with such agencies to avoid duplication.



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- **Foreign Universities:** High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries. Similarly, selected top global universities will be permitted to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place. Such universities will be given exemptions from regulatory and governance norms on par with autonomous institutions in the country.
 - **Vocational Education:** The Committee observed that less than 5% of the workforce in the age-group of 19-24 received vocational education in India during 2012-2017. This is in contrast to 52% in the USA, 75% in Germany, and 96% in South Korea. The NEP recommends that vocational education should be integrated in all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next 10 years. A national committee for integration of vocational education will be setup under the MHRD for this purpose. The national skills qualifications framework will be detailed further for each discipline vocation and profession. The NEP aims to ensure that at-least 50% of learners in school and higher education should be exposed to vocational education by 2025. Here are some of the policy initiatives to be taken in vocational education i.e. : a). Different models of vocational education, and apprenticeships, will also be experimented by higher education institutions. b). Incubation centres will be set up in higher education institutions in partnership with industries. c). The National Skills Qualifications Framework will be detailed further for each discipline vocation and profession.
 - **Financing education:** The NEP reaffirmed the commitment of spending 6% of GDP as public investment in education. Note that the first National Education Policy, 1968 had recommended public expenditure in education must be 6% of GDP, which was reiterated by the National Policy on Education, 1986. In 2017-18, public expenditure on education in India was 4.4% of GDP.
 - **Adult education:** A national curriculum framework for adult education will be developed to cover five broad areas: (i) foundational literacy and numeracy, (ii) critical life skills (such as financial and digital literacy, health care and family awareness), (iii) vocational skills development, (iv) basic education (equivalent of middle and secondary education), and (v) continuing education (through engaging courses in arts, technology, sports and culture).
 - **Technology in education:** The National Education Technology Forum (NETF) will be setup to facilitate decision making on the induction, deployment and use of technology.
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This Forum will provide evidence-based advice to central and state-governments on technology-based interventions.

- **Digital education:** Alternative modes of quality education should be developed when in-person education is not possible, as observed during the recent pandemic. Several interventions must be taken to ensure inclusive digital education such as: (i) developing two-way audio and video interfaces for holding online classes, (ii) creating a digital repository of coursework, learning games and simulations through virtual reality, (iii) use of other channels such as television, radio, mass media in multiple languages to ensure reach of digital content where digital infrastructure is lacking, (iv) creating virtual labs on existing e-learning platforms to provide students with hands-on experiment-based learning, and (v) training teachers on how to become high-quality online content creators.
- **Other Policy Initiatives to be taken to Generate Employment Friendly Edu-ecosystem :** The proposed vocational skill exposure starting from the middle and secondary grades through internship opportunities with local industry, businesses, artists, craftspersons, professionals, among others is also a welcome step to lay the foundation of early technical education and would accelerate the skilling efforts in the country. Hence, the NEP envisages a renewed focus to promote creativity and curiosity among young minds to make the curriculum of schools & colleges more skill-oriented, thereby, leading to a transformation of our youth into tangible global resources.

To ensure that young learners must be the right fit for the job market, the policy aims to put forth major reforms to bridge the gap between the current state of learning and what is required for the coming age. The policy aims to have an education system by 2040 that is second to none, with equitable access to the highest-quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic background. In this regard the NEP brings about a range of changes in the eco-system of higher education aiming to improve it with the goal of “creation of greater opportunities for individual employment. The key highlights from the new policy aim at:

- NEP will replace the fragmented nature of India’s existing higher education system and instead bring together higher education institutions (HEIs) into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/knowledge hubs. The policy states that over time, single-stream HEIs will be phased out over time.



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- Creating an HE system consisting large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and more HEIs across India which offer their programmes in local/Indian languages.
 - For now, while the NEP states that a system of granting graded autonomy based on accreditation will be adopted for colleges, eventually, the aim is to transform them into an autonomous degree-granting college, or a constituent college of a university.
 - Shifting from a rigid HE curriculum to multidisciplinary undergraduate education.
 - Offering faculty and institutional autonomy.
 - Revamping the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences.
 - Reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit-appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service.
 - Establishing National Research Foundation to fund brightest, peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges.
 - Improved Governance of HEIs by high qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy.
 - “light but tight” regulation by a single regulator for higher education;
 - Giving increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures such as offering scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and underprivileged students.
 - Giving access to education to all learners (disadvantage/ learners with special needs) through online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL).
 - New and existing HEIs will evolve into three distinct categories:
 - i. Research Universities (RUs)
 - ii. Teaching Universities (TUs)
 - iii. Autonomous Degree Granting Colleges (ACs)

Challenges and Deficiencies that Persists to Overcome :The NEP 2020 is very much aligned with the global practices and allows students to build their own degree by choosing a diverse range of subjects of their interest, which would provide ample opportunities to learn earn and enjoy



together."With the NEP 2020, the industry will witness a shift from summative assessment to regular and formative assessment, which is more competency-based that promotes learning and development, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, logical thinking and clarity," said Mrityunjay R Narayanan, CFI President. Skills intensify the productiveness and quality of work for more significant results. In this era, many organizations prefer skilled employees over fresh ones. Skilled workforce always improves the productivity of the organization and they themselves are benefited by upgrading their skills and seek growth in their employment. Here are some challenges and deficiencies that may hinder the way of policy initiatives of NEP-2020 :

- Teachers, especially at higher secondary levels, are not fully skilled to teach vocational courses and sufficient teachers with proper skilled training is required.
- The curriculum of vocational courses at school levels is fragmented and disjointed. There is no proper detailed curriculum, only basic introduction to all the vocational courses, which proves to be ineffective in sparking an interest in vocational education among school students. The existing system fails to attract students from taking up vocational courses in future and it needs to be rectified.
- Apart from the other issues, vocational schooling creates a sense of 'second class' schooling among the students. A student pursuing a vocational course is considered weaker in education to those students opting for mainstream higher education avenues. This inferiority complex needs to be given due care.
- Irrelevance of courses leading to a mismatch between the labour market needs and the training skills which needs to be addressed.
- Overall poor enrolment in vocational stream for which more stress on publicity, advertisement and counselling is required.

Conclusion : Nation Education Policy-2020 is a comprehensive policy document that extensively discusses the revamping of vocational education. The policy focuses on bringing vocational education into mainstream education, as recommended by successive commissions on education over the years. The NEP- 2020 is meant to provide an overarching vision and comprehensive framework for both school and higher education across the country. It suggests imparting skill-based education to increase employability among youth. As per NEP-2020, the school curriculum will be reduced to core concepts and there will be an integration of vocational education from Class VI. It



aims to develop core capacities and employability skills of youngsters' side by side. The policy has a multi-disciplinary, value-based approach focusing on holistic education with special emphasis on skill development to improve the employability rate. Education should ideally be a mix of skilling and knowledge. The proposed vocational skill exposure starting from the middle and secondary grades through internship opportunities with local industry, businesses, artists, craftspersons, professionals, among others is also a welcome step to lay the foundation of early technical education and would accelerate the skilling efforts in the country. Hence, the NEP envisages a renewed focus to promote creativity and curiosity among young minds to make the curriculum of schools & colleges more skill-oriented, thereby, leading to a transformation of our youth into tangible global resources.

To ensure that young learners must be the right fit for the job market, the policy aims to put forth major reforms to bridge the gap between the current state of learning and what is required for the coming age. In this regard the NEP brings about a range of changes in the eco-system of higher education aiming to improve it with the goal of "creation of greater opportunities for individual employment. This will bring in a very large number of schools, colleges and universities into the fold of potential Vocational Education and Training providers during the coming decade and making vocational education available to millions of students. As Mrityunjay R Narayanan, CFI President says, "With the new policy coming in picture, the school and college education will not only be seen as a facilitator of degree but it will be treated as a medium to build personality and it'll help the students in their holistic professional growth.

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