ROLE OF NEP2020 IN UPLIFTING QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT :

Institutions of higher learning need to be specifically vigilant to this fact so that they may continue to be relevant to the society and come up to the expectations of people at large. This is primarily because the system of Higher Education has a pivotal role to play in facilitating an all-round development of society. I feel, it is from this particular angle that this Seminar assumes a strategic significance. With the dawn of independence the statesmen, leaders, freedom fighters, philosophers, scientists, political leaders and educationists of outstanding repute agreed upon the statement, "Education is the most potential instrument for total development of the nation." For giving it practical shape and picture, the harbingers of independent India engineered the plan of action with the help of educationists to educate the people of India in a long-term perspective. In this regard, elementary education was first in queue as it is the grass root level of education in determining the educational career of every learner.
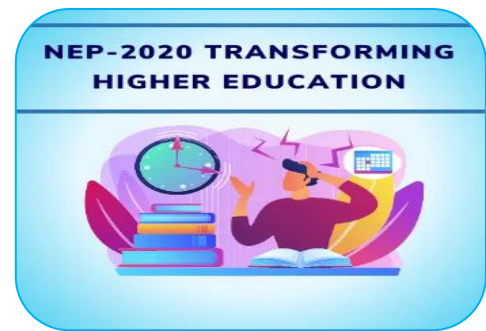
KEY WORDS: *Government Initiatives, Higher Education, Information Technology, Learning Environment.*

INTRODUCTION

The prime concern of providing elementary education was to ensure cent percent literacy with bringing a great deal of functional efficiency among the individuals. Thus, the programme of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) was started after the achievement of independence. Which is under active implementation for fulfilling its purpose i.e. cent percent literary. The Present 210 century, being regarded as the century of generating knowledge leading to create a global knowledge society, where attainment of adequate knowledge based and capacity building mechanism are important factors to make both the people and society prosper. This is the clarion call and target of the globe in the age of liberalization, globalization and privatization. Thus, generation of knowledge is the basic hallmark for establishment of a knowledge society through quality education ranging from primary to tertiary level is the immediate concern of the people of developed nations. But we the people of India are at the stage of bringing quality education at primary level. It implies that no doubt quality education ranging from primary level to higher level is the basic factor for the establishment and realization of a knowledge society. For actualizing this, we have to ensure quality or excellence in education starling from primary to higher level. For this, there is the essentiality of getting a complete picture of quality education with all its aspects.

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Nation, therefore, today is relying heavily on Colleges and Universities to meet these challenges. In order to take these challenges head on, the Higher Education Institutions will have to transform their structures, missions, processes and programs in order to be both more flexible and more responsive.

Not being fettered by the present scenario of Indian Higher Education listed below
1. India has the third largest student population only after China and USA.
2. Inroads by Private Sector and Foreign Universities ... and lack of level playing field for all institutions.
3. Misplaced perception of the Government from viewing *"Education as a private and personal good rather than viewing it as Public good"*. This misplaced perception has resulted in
➢ Reduced funding of Colleges and Universities from the government.
➢ Opening the doors for Private and Foreign Universities.
4. Lack of Coordinated efforts by different government agencies.
5. Scant and dismal use of Information Technology in Education and Training Programmes.
6. Growing Consumer Rights Movement.

The Institutions and Universities in India need to gird up their loins and bring about some missionary changes. Higher Education in India needs to create more flexible and responsive learning environment wherein creative, social, critical, and intellectual capabilities sprout and the defined goals viz. reach, equity and excellence are met. Hence, the need of the hour is to move aggressively towards Flexibility in Education and the use of Information Technology.

While Flexibility shall enable students to experience flexibility in terms of time, place, pace, learning style, content, assessment and pathways and make students more responsive towards education, as it is 'Student Centered' and not 'Teacher Centered', the use of IT in learning shall give students greater exposure and opportunity of enhanced self-spaced learning, removal of distance and time constraints, as well as reduction in cost.

However, simply making recommendations for educational improvement shall not work. It is therefore, imperative that we also ponder over the limitations of flexible learning and extensive use of IT in Higher Education. Also, those responsible for its successful implementation need to be tech-savvy to apply the techniques in unique ways that suit each specific change and context.

The Two Dimensions of Change

What and How are the two areas of change in Higher Education where we need due focus. We have to get smarter at *both* the "what" of change (identifying change ideas that will really make a difference for students) and the "how" of change (making sure these ideas work in practice).

What to change?

Students respond best to the learning programs which engage them in productive learning and optimize their retention and outcomes.

Our Learning Programmes must be of High Quality consisting of the following characteristics :
- *Relevant* to the background, abilities, needs, and experiences of the students and delivered by accessible, responsive, up-to-date, and effective teachers.
- More opportunities for *active* learning than they do for passive learning.
- Link *theory with practice*, especially through the provision of guided practice-based learning opportunities, real-life learning, and work-placements.
- Manage students' *expectations,* from the outset, about what level of service, support, and contact the students will be entitled to.
- Ensure that learning proceeds in *digestible* "chunks."
- Use a valid graduate *capability* profile to generate professionally and academically relevant assessment tasks.

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- Provide students with opportunities to pursue flexible *learning pathways.*
- Ensure that feedback on *assessment* tasks is both timely and focussed.
- Actively coach students in how to undertake it.
- Provide *support and administrative services* found responsive to students' needs.
- *Acknowledge* prior learning and make provision for its recognition in both program- delivery and program assessment.

How to change?

The following guidelines may be useful for conceptualizing the change:

- It is essential that evidence-based priorities for improvement and innovation in teaching and learning are set. The task here is to identify only those changes found most relevant, desirable, and feasible.
- Whenever a change priority is set, it is important to identify what staff see as being distinctive (different) for them in their daily practice. These capability "gaps" should form the basis for a need-based, change-specific staff learning strategy.
- A wide range of parallel enhancements in IT systems, infrastructure, support, and monitoring.
- A team effort in which the most-appropriate and best-positioned people are involved in a process of action learning.
- A positive and collaborative workplace and system culture; enabling while identifying the most-appropriate players for each change priority.
- Effective change management should not only be team-based but also follow good practices in workplace-action research.
- In education, the most-crucial leaders of change are the teachers. Therefore, everyone needs to pay attention to research on effective change leadership.
- Change should be concerned with the external forces and the individual action.
- We must look outside as well as inside for viable change ideas and solutions.

NEP 2020 for Higher Education

The National Education Policy 2020 for higher education aims to transform the existing higher education system in India. This policy emphasizes on promoting interdisciplinary studies, introducing new subjects, and providing flexibility in courses and fresh opportunities for students. It aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education, provide multiple entry and exit options, and allow students to choose courses according to their interests and aptitude.

The policy envisions setting up of a National Research Foundation, a National Education Technology Forum, and setting up of more Higher Education Institutions in the country. The policy is aimed at creating a holistic and flexible education system that is adaptive to the needs of the 21st century.

National Education Policy 2020 for Higher Education Highlights

- The policy aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education to 50% by 2035.
- Around 5 crore seats to be added in higher education.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund and promote research in all disciplines.
- The policy recommends the establishment of a single regulator for higher education, called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), to replace multiple regulatory bodies.
- The policy proposes the introduction of a four-year multidisciplinary undergraduate degree, with multiple exit options and opportunities for skill development.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to promote the use of technology in higher education.

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- The policy recommends the development of a credit-based system for degree programs, which would enable students to pursue multiple degrees or programs simultaneously.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Academic Credit Bank (NAC-Bank) to facilitate the transfer and accumulation of academic credits across institutions.

Features of the NEP 2020 for higher Education
The features of the NEP 2020 for Higher Education has been given below:
- Interdisciplinary education: The NEP 2020 proposes the breaking down of rigid boundaries between different academic disciplines and faculties. It encourages universities to offer multi-disciplinary courses that allow students to explore various subjects and fields of study.
- Flexible curriculum and credit transfer: The NEP 2020 recommends a flexible curriculum that allows students to choose from a range of courses and subjects to meet their individual interests and career goals. The policy also proposes a credit-transfer system that enables students to shift between institutions without losing academic credit, thereby boosting mobility and promoting academic excellence.
- Research and innovation: The NEP 2020 aims to make India a global hub for innovation and research by encouraging universities to prioritize research and increasing investment in science and technology. The policy also recommends the establishment of a National Research Foundation to support and fund research activities across all disciplines.
- Vocational education and skill development: The NEP 2020 recognises the importance of vocational education and skill development in preparing students for the job market. It proposes the integration of vocational education into mainstream education, offering apprenticeships, and work-integrated learning programmes to help students acquire relevant skills.
- Online education: The NEP 2020 acknowledges the importance of technology in education and proposes the development of a comprehensive digital infrastructure for education. It encourages universities to offer online courses and blended learning models to reach a broader student population and promote access to education.
- Inclusivity and Equity: The NEP 2020 places significant emphasis on promoting inclusivity and equity in education by addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups such as girls, low-income families, and students with disabilities. It also seeks to provide equal opportunities to students from all socio-economic backgrounds.
- Internationalization: The NEP 2020 aims to promote internationalization by encouraging collaborations with foreign universities, attracting international students, and facilitating student and faculty exchanges. The policy also recommends the establishment of a National Education Exchange Programme (NEEP) to promote educational exchanges between states.
- Autonomy and accountability: The NEP 2020 proposes greater institutional autonomy and decentralization of decision-making to improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education. The policy also emphasizes the importance of accountability, transparency, and regulatory mechanisms to ensure that institutions adhere to quality standards.

Merits of National Education Policy 2020 for higher education
- Flexibility: The new policy offers a flexible, multi-disciplinary and student-centric approach to higher education, allowing students to choose their courses, the pace of their learning and the mode of delivery.
- Multiple Entry and Exit Points: The system allows students to enter or exit their courses at various points, giving them the freedom to opt for different courses at different times during their education.
- Investments in research has been urged: The policy aims to establish a robust research and innovation ecosystem by investing in research and development, funding, and encouraging collaborations between academia and industry.

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- Job oriented Training: The policy includes vocational training as an integral component of higher education, aiming to equip students with practical skills to enter the job market.
- Teacher Development: The NEP 2020 focuses on providing comprehensive teacher training and development programs that will help build an effective and competent teaching force. It also seeks to promote a culture of continuous professional development among teachers.
- Enhanced ways: The policy aims to leverage technology to enhance teaching and learning experiences, including the creation of online courses, open educational resources, and e-learning platforms.
- Challenges of National Education Policy 2020 for higher education
- Overhauling of higher education system: The National Education Policy 2020 proposes a major overhaul of India's higher education system. While this could potentially create a more streamlined and effective system, some stakeholders are concerned about the challenges that could arise during the transition.
- Financing: The policy proposes several new initiatives such as setting up of new universities, restructuring of the education system, and promoting online education. Implementing these will require significant funding, and the government needs to find ways to finance them without putting an additional burden on the taxpayers.
- Bridging the Digital Divide: The policy envisions promoting online education and making it accessible to all, including those living in remote areas. However, this will require bridging the digital divide, which remains a challenge in a country where many people still lack access to basic internet connectivity.
- Faculty Development: The policy places a strong emphasis on faculty development and training, but there is a shortage of qualified faculty in many areas of higher education, and it may take time for institutions to build the necessary capacity.
- Equity: While the National Education Policy 2020 seeks to promote equity and inclusion in higher education, there are concerns that some of the proposed measures, such as the four-year undergraduate program, may disadvantage students from marginalized communities or those with disabilities.

SUGGESTIONS TO REMOVE THE LACUNAS:

Higher education must be commensurate with the changing expectations of students, faculty, industry, administrative staff, society, management and Government. To counter the emerging challenges, the following measures are to be effective.
- Higher education for Co-operatives, Hospitals, NGOs, Public governance, etc.
- We have to explore ways in which the interaction between academia and management is initiated.
- Enriching the quality of faculty and research can not be undermined.
- Modern library and well equipped infrastructure for computer lab need due attention.

Of late, the higher education needs a complete overhauling. The participation of all the stakeholders, faculty, management, trustees, corporate recruiters, alumni and society may provide to us the desired results. The focus on ethical, social, vocational and academic aspects can not be undermined. If the B. Schools develop their Product profile in the face of globalization, their products would not be required to go the Finishing Schools. They need to respect the changing requirements of the present globe.

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