

Indian Higher Education from the Lens of National Policy of Education (1986) and National Policy on Education (2016): A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Higher education is considered as the part and parcel of education system. The Indian higher education system is getting better day by day. The Government of India while realizing the needs of today's generations brought NPE 1986. To enhance the functioning of higher education, recommendation were given. Many recommendations were implemented but some areas were left behind. To fill this gape, the GOI again in 2016 brought another policy of education. The policy paid special importance to the areas where the previous policy was lacking. The policy gave much attention towards the areas where it was felt that a change is necessary. But many areas where emphasis was necessary were not mentioned. The paper analyse the recommendation of NPE 1986 and 2016 in the field of higher education. It makes a comparative study of the recommendations in various aspects of higher education.

Keywords: NPE 1986, NPE 2016, Quality in Higher Education, Agricultural Education, Management of Higher Educational Institutions, Research and Innovations, Recognition, Accreditation and Assessment, International Linkage, National Higher Education Promotion Management Act, National Higher Education Fund, Open & Distance Learning and Promoting MOOCs

Introduction

Education is always conferred with an honoured place in the societies of India. The leaders of Indian Freedom Movement realised the role of education that was played in different spheres of the society. They realised the role that was played by the education in the development of nation. Gandhiji started this initiative by bringing forward the Basic Education scheme that was a base for harmonising intellectual and manual work. Gandhiji tried to make education directly relevant to the life of the common masses.

After independence, the Govt. of India started to give more attention towards the education sector. The Govt. realised the need to improve educational sector as it was a major factor that can be a cause for the development of the nation with respect to its progress and security. Several commissions and committees came forward to solve the problem and issues pertaining to education system of our country. These include, Radhakrishnan Commission, Mudaliar Commission and Kothari Education Commission (1964-66). These education commission gave many recommendation regarding the education system of our country. Radhakrishnan Commission gave a major recommendation to establish University Grants Commission that will supervise the education system of universities. Mudaliar Commission put forward numerous practical suggestions for the renovation of secondary education in the country. Similarly, Kothari Education Commission recommended to implement National System of Education that will be based on a national curriculum framework which contain a common core along with other components that are flexible.

Education is a powerful tool for national, social, economic and cultural development. The NPE 1968 was imitated on the basis of the necessities of India. The policy was formulated by the GOI for the promotion of education among the people of India. The policy majorly focussed on elementary education that was spread in rural/urban areas of India. The policy was headed by Dr. D. S. Kothari (Pandit, 2016).

While considering the national perception of our country, education is considered essential for all. Education is considered as an important base for development with respect to material and spiritual. Education has the potential for developing manpower at the different levels of the economy. It is also the important component on which research and development flourish (Sukanya, 2011).

National Policy of Education 1986

In January 1985, Rajiv Gandhi who was the Prime Minister of the country made a formal announcement by saying that new education policy is in development and will be issued in due course of time. In May 1986, new education policy was launched by PM Rajiv Gandhi. The policy gave its main emphasis on providing of equal opportunities in terms of education to all especially for Indian women's. After framing NPE 1968 to improve the standard of education in India, it was assumed that the progress of the policy will be conducted after five years regarding its progress and framing of new programmes and policies. Acting on this way of assessment, a review of the policy was made at the formation of New Five Year plan. The

review was conducted to access the drawbacks or shortcomings as well as the achievements in the field of education and deciding about the programmes and plans for coming Five Year Plan. National Policy on Education worked for major transformation of educational system of Indian country to make it more close to the life of the people. It was a continuous effort to enlarge the educational opportunities to each and every one. (Satpathy, 2013).

Each country seeks to improve its education system to meet the needs of its citizens, maintain the standards of education and to overcome the future challenges. Based on these aims, a discussion about NPE 1986 was made and hence during the budget session in 1985, it was adopted. It was the time, when the nation was led by Rajiv Gandhi as the PM of India. National Policy of Education is a document of immense importance as it covers each and every aspect of Education starting from Elementary to University Education. The NPE addresses all aspects of education: equity, efficiency, relevance, quality, content and process, linkages with culture, values, society, quality and economy. While considering the level of education, emphasis was given to the renewal of curriculum and improving the teacher competence. Moreover, it also gives due importance to other aspects of pedagogy that will have direct/indirect impact on the quality of teaching, its context and the various process.

NPE 1986 stresses that education needs to play a positive and dominant role in eradicating the social and regional imbalance and empowering women. Furthermore, there is a need to provide a secure and fair place for the disadvantaged and the minorities. (Economic Survey 2005-2006).

National Policy of Education 2016

The NPE 2016 is a policy framed by the GOI to promote/support education among the people of India. The policy is a long document that covers various stages of education. Mainly the policy focusses on the elementary to college education in both rural and urban India. Indira Gandhi Government formulated the first NPE in 1968 and the second NPE was by the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1986. PV Narasimha Rao Government modified the NPE 1986 in 1992. On 27th July, 2015, the BJP led government initiated the process of formation of a new education policy. On 31st March 2015, under the chairperson of T.S.R. Subramaniam, a committee was constituted.

On 1st October 2016, the MHRD invited suggestions from the public by releasing the draft of NPE 2016. The NPE focussed on addressing the various issues pertaining to gender

discrimination, creating educational tribunals, and a curriculum that will be common with regard to English, Science and Mathematics.

Higher Education in National Policy of Education 1986 and 2016

India has a large system of higher education. The NPE 1986 stated that despite of this fact, the output rate is very low. The Govt. is taking timely measures to strengthen the higher education system still it is believed that the curriculum taught in Universities is not able to meet the interests of the students. The evaluation system in Universities is of another concern which needs to be solved at earliest.

The NPE 2016 believed that the universities in India doesn't properly cater to the needs of the students. The Universities in India are not able to compete at the international level. They further said that the universities in India aren't able to figure out themselves in the International ranking. It further stressed on the updating the educational system of our country to international standards.

Dynamic Education System

The NPE 1986 stressed on making the higher education system dynamic in nature. For making in fully dynamic, the expansion of institutions should be given first preference. The development of autonomous colleges and departments should be made. There is a vast need of redesigning the courses. These courses should fulfil the needs and interest of the student. The training to faculties should be made at earliest. The growth to research in institutions should be given utmost importance to make it compatible to the other universities.

However, the focal point of dynamic system of education was not figured in NPE 2016. The report of NPE 2016 which starts with the issues in quality of Higher education said that there should be an apex body which is monitoring the aspects related to recognition, accreditation, and curriculum development.

Quality in Higher Education

NPE 2016 report analysed the quality in higher education. The report says that there are only few institution in India who are able to maintain the quality in higher education system. The report highlighted the institutions like Indian Institute of Technology, National Institute of Technology, Indian institute of Information Technology and Indian Institute of Management

that have globally claimed the recognition at the international level due to maintaining good quality in Education. Despite this India still lacks in Universities that can best understood as the top ranked universities at the international level.

There are various institutions that are running like teaching shops which are being operated by incapable faculty members. Those institutions who are currently backed by the money power and are taking advantage of making money by this noble profession. Appropriate measure is needed to address this problem. The appointments in universities should be made as merit based rather by selecting through any other purpose. Public Service Commission should be setup to select the capable faculty members in universities. This will help in maintaining the quality to a great extent. There is a need to introduce 5 year integrated course for students who have passed class 12th examination and who are interested in teaching profession. The report further says that any teacher teaching the undergraduate classes should not be insisted for a doctoral degree. However such kind of teachers should be asked to attend refresher courses so that they can develop better communication skills and can integrate ICT in classrooms. To improve the quality of education, the faculties should be encouraged to carry out research. The funds for conducting research should be increased and the good researchers should be given an opportunities to explore new areas where research is needed.

The NPE 1968 identified the 150 universities and the 5000 colleges which are lacking behind due to unavailability's of infrastructure. To ensure the quality in higher education, special attention is needed towards these institutions and colleges. Furthermore there is an immense need to setup a Task Force which will monitor the plans or ways taken to solve the problem of infrastructure.

For ensuring the quality in higher education, it is need of the hour that the pedagogy used while teaching the content should be the regional language. It will make the teaching learning process more effective (Throat, 2015)

Management of Higher Educational Institutions

India has a vast higher education system. This include State Universities, Central Universities, Deemed to be universities and other types of institutions. The NPE 2016 report recommended that no University in India should have more than 100 affiliated colleges. If any University have more than 100 affiliated colleges, the University should be splited. This will help in attaining management efficiency. The report further realized the need of setting up new National Higher Education Promotion and Management act that will be supported by state level

laws and institutions. The act will establish a new system of recognition, assessment and evaluation.

The NPE 1986 report does not laid stress on setting up any new act rather focused on reviewing the management pattern of the Universities. The report recommended that role and responsibility of different bodies should be re organised in light of the new demands of the University system. The UGC in this regard should take steps to promote the evolution of new and effective management system. There is also a need to take effective steps so that no institutions is established without the proper planning.

India need highly skilled people who can handle the management of higher education. When we are able to drive our people to manage the affairs of higher education of other countries, why can't we manage our higher education system (Singh, 2011).

Research and Innovations in Higher Education

The quality of higher education in India can be best strengthen by promoting research in high education. The research will should be promoted in the areas of Science, technology, humanities and Social Sciences. The report of National Policy on Education 1986 paid attention in strengthening the infrastructure and enhancing the funding of research in educational institutions. It further asserted to locate the research institutes that will be established in in future in Universities. These research institutions will be provided appropriate management system. The committee recommended to encourage the industries to establish their research centres within the Universities. Furthermore, the committee recommended to establish National Research Foundation. It will be an independent body.

The report of NPE 2016 also focused on encouraging research in higher education. The committee recommended that 100 new centres of excellence needs to be established. These centres will be established in Govt as well as private sector during the next 10 years. The committee also proposed the establishment of Council of Excellence in Higher Education (CEHE) by MHRD. The committee also stressed to replace the API by a more scientific producer of assessing the quality of contributions. These contributions need not to be only publication and attendances in seminars. The committee towards this, recommended a task force of senior experts that can study the recruitment and promotion.

Recognition, Accreditation and Assessment

Accreditation and Assessment are the key components for the quality assurance in higher education. The NPE 1986 lays emphasis on setting up Accreditation and Assessment Council as an autonomous body. The UGC will take a key role in establishing the body. The body will be empowered by having its own criteria of evaluation for accreditation and assessment. The body will not enforce any norms and standards. It will only evaluate the institutions in terms of their performance to facilitate the self-evaluation among educational institutions.

The report of NPE 2016 in terms of accreditation recommended that until a new higher education act is enacted, the National Accreditation Board will continue to accredit institutions of higher learning and it will be the agency to govern the whole process of accreditation. The committee also asserted that some Govt. and Private universities should be selected which will organise the 1 year course or any other suitable course for providing training to accreditation personals for making the accreditation process more flexible and in time bound manner. The committee highlighted that India has about 40000 higher education institution. Out of this number, the NAAC has accredited 6446 educational institutions. There are various universities in India which figure among the top universities. These universities should be given autonomy and should be made able of making their own curriculum. The committee also realized that a new method is needed to undertake assessment and accreditation in an effective manner. Because the method chosen by NAAC has proven a lot of backlog that is to be cleared at earliest. The committee also suggested for creation of National Accreditation Agency which will revamp NAAC. The NAB will keep its eyes on all the accreditation agencies so that they can perform their activities well.

The assessment in higher education is due importance for maintaining the quality. The NPE 2016 asserted that while making the ranking of the universities, a space for research or teaching competence as well as innovations should be given. The institutions which are provided a rank after a proper evaluation should be reassessed after three years. However, the assessment can be made within five years as well. All the information pertaining to this should be made public on official website of NAB.

In order to ensure quality assessment and accreditation, there is a dire need of a joint effort between the accreditation bodies and the higher education institutions. With this a fair assessment and accreditation can take place (Dey, 2011).

International Linkage of Higher Education

Receiving best education is an ultimate goal for a student. As per the report of NPE 2016, around 50 lakh students migrate to other countries for receiving best education. China has become the best destination for students. In India, at least 75000 students visit India for receiving quality education. These students visit India for pursuing short time courses. Above all at least 20000 foreign students are enrolled for degree courses in India. Some of them are pursuing under graduate courses. The most number of foreign students India has received are from South Asia. In India at least 3 lakh students are studying in foreign universities and are spending 60,000 crore per year. The students who are studying in foreign universities are pursuing their Post Graduates courses and Doctoral degrees. The reason for this loss is the lack of quality education in India. The number of students visiting foreign universities can be reduced if the quality of higher education in India is improved and made according to the standards at the International level.

To overcome this issue, NPE 2016 laid importance of encouraging the high quality foreign universities to collaborate with India universities. However, there is a variations in Indian and foreign universities. The foreign universities which are agreed to collaborate with India universities should agree on issuing their degree certificates to students. NPE 2016 also recommended that those universities which was in top 200 in foreign should be enabled to collaborate with Indian universities. By doing all this, it will help to maintain access quality, access in high education system. The report of NPE 1986 does not paid attention towards the matter. It can be believed that in 1986 the policy makers does not got any such issue pertaining to Indian Higher Education system.

The international linkage of Higher Education not too easy. It needs financial potential. However if we spent that amount on the state universities in India, it will solve some major problems in these universities (Parikh, 2016).

National Higher Education Promotion Management Act

India has a vast education system that comprise of many universities established in India from time to time. These universities include State Universities, Central Universities and Deemed to be University. The states in India with their own laws are capable of establishing their universities within their territory. The Government of India has also established many universities like the Central Universities. NPE 2016 report clearly mention that there is no law in India that can cater the need of management and regulation of higher education institutions

in India. Therefore keeping this in mind the NPE 2016 report proposed the need to establish national Higher Education Promotion Management Act which will be capable of providing a legal framework that will confer the authority of promoting, managing and stimulating the higher education system. The NPE 2016 also proposed that recognition to the new universities should be made accordance to the rules set by the NHEPM Act. The council will also monitor the funds released by the State Governments to the universities.

The National Policy of Education 1986 does not made any such regulation towards improving the quality in higher education institutions in India. The committee must have focused on this very part or something better than this. The situations might have been better.

Autonomous Status

The report of NPE 1986 elaborated the issue of college affiliation. The committee believed that affiliating system does not provide autonomy to colleges. This becomes a hurdle to the colleges to frame their own curriculum and courses of study or the system of evaluation. The committee stresses on the fact that about 500 colleges should be developed as a status of autonomous from the 7th Plan. It also proposed to replace the existing affiliation system. The committee stressed on formulating a scheme of incentives such as creating posts of Readers and Professors for those colleges which become autonomous. It further laid importance to the colleges in tribal/Backward areas to become autonomous. The committee payed path for making autonomous colleges more empowered by issuing their own degrees to students. As per the report of NPE 1986, the programme of autonomous colleges will be funded by UGC for a period of five years. Though the policy has told much more related to autonomy but the policy fails in to provide a suitable mechanisms through which it can be achieved (Sankaran & Joshi, 2016)

The NPE 2016 also proposed for autonomy for higher educational institutions. The report clearly mentioned that any universities cannot be truly called as autonomous unless it is receiving funds for it. The Government should be a major source of funding for these institutions. The committee proposed that Government should fund these institutions so that they can start new courses and recruit new staff. Although the NPE 2016 admits that there is dire need for providing autonomy to higher education institution but the policy fails to provide a suitable mechanism that can guarantee autonomy to higher education institutions (Sankaran & Joshi, 2016).

National Higher Education Fund

To promote research in higher education, the UGC is distributing an amount of Rs/1050 crore annually as tuition/fellowship to at least 82000 students or beneficiaries reveals the report of NPE 2016. For encouraging the fellowship on merit basis to promote quality, the NPE 2016 proposed the creation of National Fellowship Fund. The national Fellowship Fund will offer 10 lakh new fellowship to students every year. Although the report highlight the category of economically weaker sections but it forgets to include any such imitative for students of other categories. However, the report mentions to conduct national level examination namely national talent scholarship for the students who have passed class 12th examination.

Although the fellowship are the main back bone for conducting the research in an effective manner, the report of NPE 1986 doesn't highlight any such imitative to be taken up by the Government. However, the report also mentions to conduct talent search examinations for promoting scholarships schemes at undergraduate and Post graduate level. The committee also recommended to conduct all India tests for admission to research programmes. The report of NPE 1986 which does not clearly specify anything related to fellowship but recommends to conduct a periodic review of fellowships.

Entrance Examinations

The ratio of enrolments in higher education is increasing day by day which is clearly a sign of equality and access to education. Regarding the entrance examinations, the report of NPE 2016 is of the opinion that the entrance examinations which is being conducted in various states have put the students in stress. The students applying for admissions are being put under pressure by enforcing the entrance examination. The report of NPE 2016 propose to rationalize the system of entrance examinations to professional courses. In this regard, the report recommends for a national level examinations for admission to professional courses. The questions set in these entrance examination should test the aptitude of the students instead of the memory.

The report of NPE 1986 also proposed to develop entrance examinations for admissions to higher education institutions in India. The report also propose to reduce the burden of entrance examinations to reduce the pressure on students. There is a need to conduct a national level examination after class 12th. The entrance test conducted at Bachelors level should be eligibility for admission to Post Graduate level. Similarly after completing Post Graduate course, an entrance test should be conducted that will be the eligibility criteria for admission to research programmes.

Open & Distance Learning and Promoting MOOCs

Distance learning is considered as the convenient system of getting education in the whole world. It is a flexible system of education where a person who regardless of distance can continue his education. Under Open and Distance Learning, IGNOU and various state universities are providing this flexibility to students reveals the report of NPE 2016. While the ODL's are increasing still IGNOU has remained only one institution that is providing the ODL's in full fluidized manner. Regarding the MOOCs the report propose for an awareness among students. The report also mentions one study that was conducted at University of Pennsylvania which shows that course completion on MOOCs in the University was only 5 %. The report recommends MOOCs as the best ODL's. The Ministry of Human Resource Development has now moved ford to sponsor SWAYAM. As the technology is increasing, the demand for MOOCs will also increase.

The committee in its report of NPE 1986, propose to setup body for distance education. These bodies should function on the norms of University Grants Commission. The report has also mentioned the popularity of IGNOU for providing open and distance learning. The National Open University will set the norms and standards on which the distance learning system will work. The report miss to mention anything regarding the MOOCs. This might be the reason because in 1986, the popularity of Internet was less. However the report mentions of importance of emerging technologies in the development of nation and also reveals that India has not adopted many new technologies and are yet to kick start the work.

Medical Education

The report of NPE 2016 mentions in its report that there are 400 medical colleges which are functional in India. These 400 institutions are majorly from the private sector. The admission capability in these institutions is about 57000 for undergraduate and 26000 for the postgraduate courses reveals the report of NPE 2016. Majority of these institutions are in south and west of India. However in the north side of India, there are very less colleges that cater the need for medical education. The NPE 2016 recommends that the number of seats in existing medical colleges are very less and hence recommend to increase them at earliest. The framework that medical education is following needs to be restructured. The medical education is in need of more public investment. Not only this, the private sector should be encouraged to set up new institutions that will boost the medical education in India.

Regarding the medical education the report of NPE 1986 propose for formation of an apex body at national level which will supervise the medical education. The committee in its report highlight that there are separate agencies for monitoring the different types of education. The body will be established on the norms and standards set by UGC.

Indian is in possess of at least 350 colleges. It shows the strength of our country in Medical Education. Yet many of our citizens don't have access to it. We need to solve the issue of access at earliest (Malhotra, 2013).

Agricultural Education

The report of NPE 2016, highlights the need of agricultural education in India. The report recommends to bring the agricultural education into the mainstream. After bringing it in mainstream, it is not necessary that we include it in curriculum or as a separate school subject at the primary level. Still it can be included into curriculum at the secondary or senior secondary level as an optional subject. The committee recommends NCERT to reforms in curriculum. The Agricultural Universities in different states need to restructure their curriculum. To address the interests and needs of the students, there is also need to look into the aspect of pedagogy. The State Universities need to take one step ahead by spreading the awareness among the common public though the use of digital media.

The report of NPE 1986 also talks about formation of a research council for spreading the agricultural education. It also talks about formation of a National Apex Body in the field of agricultural Education. The report talks about the COSIST programme which is covering different types of institutions in India. Its range should be made wide by covering the agricultural education as well.

India is not short of funds in Agricultural education. The state and the central universities need to provide human resource. India is also in need of a political will to ensure excellence in Agricultural Education in India (Tamboli & Nene, 2013).

Conclusion

National Policy of Education 1986 is document of immense importance. The document has provided many recommendations which if implemented will change the whole scenario of higher education system in India. The recommendation for Higher education are commendable. The document analyse the present situation of higher education in India. The policy proposes for making the Indian education as dynamic so that new courses are started to meet the needs

of youth of India. For bringing quality in higher education, first the problem of infrastructure should be upgraded. However, the author fails to find any recommendation about ICT which is considered an important factor for effective teaching and learning process. The policy also fails to talk about the management system of higher education. The policy only recommends to review the management process by UGC. The policy recommends establishment of National Research Foundation to strengthen the research carried out in universities. The NPE 1986 lays emphasis on setting up Accreditation and Assessment Council as an autonomous body. The author fails to find any recommend anything in the aspect of International linkage of higher education. In respect of autonomy, the policy stressed on formulating a scheme of incentives such as creating posts of Readers and Professors for those colleges which become autonomous. With regard to fellowship and incentives, the policy recommended to conduct talent search examinations for promoting scholarships schemes at undergraduate and Post graduate level. It also proposed to develop National level exam as an entrance examinations for admissions to higher education institutions in India. The national Policy of Education 1986 propose to setup body for distance education. These bodies should function on the norms of University Grants Commission. Regarding the medical education the report of NPE 1986 propose for formation of an apex body at national level which will supervise the medical education. It also talks about formation of a research council for spreading the agricultural education and formation of a National Apex Body in the field of agricultural Education.

With respect to higher education, the NPE 2016 talks about quality issues in Indian Higher Education System. The policy gave landmark recommendation in the field of higher education. The policy recommends that appointments in universities should be made as merit based rather by selecting through any other purpose. Public Service Commission should be setup to select the capable faculty members in universities. There is a need to introduce 5 year integrated course for students who have passed class 12th examination and who are interested in teaching profession. However, the author fails to find anything about the dynamic system of education which is of immense need in today times. The teachers posted in higher education system should be subjected to attend refresher courses for integrating the ICT in classrooms to make the teaching and learning process more effective. The policy recommend that there should be no University in India should have more than 100 affiliated colleges. If any University have more than 100 affiliated colleges, the University should be splitted. The report of NPE 2016 also focused on encouraging research in higher education. The committee recommended that 100 new centres of excellence needs to be established. These centres will be established in Govt as well as private sector during the next 10 years. It also proposed the establishment of

Council of Excellence in Higher Education (CEHE) by MHRD. The policy realized that a new method is needed to undertake assessment and accreditation in an effective manner. Because the method chosen by NAAC has proven a lot of backlog that is to be cleared at earliest. The committee also suggested for creation of National Accreditation Agency which will revamp NAAC. The NAB will keep its eyes on all the accreditation agencies so that they can perform their activities well. The policy laid importance in encouraging the high quality foreign universities to collaborate with India universities and recommended that top 200 foreign universities should be facilitated to collaborate with Indian universities. The policy proposed the need to establish national Higher Education Promotion Management Act which will be capable of providing a legal framework that will confer the authority of promoting, managing and stimulating the higher education system. NPE 2016 proposed for autonomy for higher educational institutions. The report clearly mentioned that any universities cannot be truly called as autonomous unless it is receiving funds for it. It also proposed the creation of National Fellowship Fund that will offer 10 lakh new fellowship to students every year. The policy propose to rationalize the system of entrance examinations to professional courses. In this regard, the report recommends for a national level examinations for admission to professional courses. Regarding the MOOCs the policy realizes for a need in awareness among youth regarding the MOOCs. The policy recommends that the number of seats in existing medical colleges are very less and hence recommend to increase them at earliest. The framework that medical education is following needs to be restructured. Regarding the Agricultural Education, the policy recommends that the Agricultural Universities in different states need to restructure their curriculum.

Overall, both the documents are of immense importance. The recommendation made by both these policies should be implemented to on time to make the higher education system more and more effective.

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