



## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020

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### RESEARCH ARTICLE



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### Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the Indian education system as a broad range and takes some important steps to develop the student's enrolment and enrich the quality of higher education. This theoretical paper searches the different measures of student enrolment related to higher education and its implications, challenges, and transformative potential in light of NEP 2020. This paper synthesises existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence, offering a comprehensive understanding of the conceptual underpinnings of student involvement and its implications for pedagogical practices, institutional policies, and educational outcomes. It critically examined the policy's directives about curriculum design, assessment methodologies, teacher training, technology integration, and institutional autonomy. Moreover, this paper highlights the imperative of aligning institutional strategies and faculty development initiatives with the principles of student engagement in higher education outlined in the National Educational Policy 2020. This paper also highlights the need for collaborative efforts among policymakers, educators, administrators, and students to co-create vibrant learning communities characterised by active participation, interdisciplinary collaboration, and a lifelong learning ethos.

**Keywords:** Student Engagement; NEP-2020; National Educational Policy; Higher Education; Higher Education Transformation; Pedagogical Practices

### Introduction

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi conducted the first national education policy in 1968 to create an intense educational perspective in the Indian context and establish the idea of the 10+2+3 education structure. Secondly, the national education policy of 1986 was established after 1968. The National Education Policy 1986 emphasises the importance of enhancing national integration by aligning education with the country's socio-cultural context. The NEP 1986 was amended in 1992 (a programme of action), giving more importance to job-oriented education and showing that education is the main element of the dynamic requirement of the economy. After 34 years, the (NEP) 2020 is the most valuable education policy, which reconstructs the National Policy of Education of 1986 (Sarkar, 2023). It gives importance to remaking the education system with some rules, regulations, and governance to make a system that fulfils the aim of the 21st century (Singh et al., 2023). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is an exceptional strategy which plays an essential role in Indian education and takes a multifaceted and modern approach. It tries to restructure the educational aspect related to higher education, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has taken more care of the students about changes in their thinking level and motivated them to discuss any educational topic and create new concepts. The new Education Policy focuses on developing each individual's creative potential. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities--both the "foundational capacities" of literacy and numeracy and "higher-order cognitive capacities," such as critical thinking and problem-solving but also social, ethical, and emotional capabilities and dispositions (NEP) 2020. For encouraging them to building those cognitive capabilities, students' engagement plays a significant role.

The term "student engagement" describes students' interest, focus, and participation during their educational endeavours. It includes putting forth mental effort, emotional commitment, and active engagement in the learning process. Engagement among students is positively correlated with motivation, commitment, and focus on their studies, improving academic

achievement and overall student happiness. Importance of Student Engagement in Fostering Effective Teaching and Learning Environments. Its Enhanced Learning Outcomes and actively seek out knowledge, ask questions, and participate in discussions, which facilitates deeper understanding and better academic performance. Student engagement fosters intrinsic motivation and a genuine interest in learning. An appropriate classroom setting where the pupils are appreciated, valued, and supported plays a significant role in effective student involvement. Actively, information analysis and judgement, applying their mastery in a practical context and thinking about any ideas deeply are common features of actively engaging students. The learners adapt some special skills that are necessary for academic performance and lifetime learning through several learning activities. In our modern society, students who are actively connected help others in the field of group work. They also adapted a skill that helps others solve a problem in a new way, and they think of phenomena in depth, which will benefit for our nation. Lakshmi & Ugandhar, (2023) declare that to perceive deeply about a crucial issue, National Education Policy 2020 accepts the significance of multifaceted education systems and global education in providing effective motivation. The NEP 2020 aims to increase GER in higher education from 26.3% in 2018 to 50% by 2035, improve quality, and position India as a global education leader. The NEP (2020) motive creates a context for a four-year bachelor's degree to increase stakeholders' cooperation ability, research matters, and internationalism through interdisciplinary systems (Yakkundimat,2023). Creating the topic of formative assessments and peer reassessment procedure, the NEP 2020 designed to make a National Assessment Centre. The induction of the Higher Education Commission of India, a single regulatory body, to restore current organisations like the UGC and AICTE is the other vital aspect of NEP 2020. The policy intends to acquire inclusive, high-quality education by closing disparities in the educational system. The NEP 2020's historical context encloses earlier education policies, which were established in 1968 and 1986, with ongoing modifications and advancements culminating in the creation of the present policy. The NEP 2020, which aims to experience and liberate the individual via education totally, is based on the advanced legacy of ancient Indian philosophy and knowledge.

**Objectives of the study:** The primary objectives of the present study were:

1. To comprehend the context of higher education, elucidating its significance, challenges, and transformative potential in alignment with the mandates of the NEP 2020.
2. To understand student involvement and its implications for pedagogical practices, institutional policies, and educational outcomes.
3. The present study critically examined the policy directives about curriculum design, assessment methodologies, teacher training, technology integration, and institutional autonomy. It also focused on the imperative of aligning institutional strategies and faculty development initiatives with the principles of student engagement.
4. To gain insights into the perspectives of educators and faculty members regarding the changes proposed by NEP 2020.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Review of Existing Literature**

Restructuring the educational paradigms and the student's involvement in higher education is the primary goal of NEP2020. Several conceptual papers provide insights into student engagement in higher education. Student engagement in higher education is critical for student success and satisfaction (Isaeva et al., 2023). Roy et al., (2023) have indicated that students' learning and participation depend upon the appearance of a helpful student atmosphere, high-quality intercommunication, and student-faculty cooperation. Incorporating technology in teaching can increase student engagement, with co-production behaviour and decision comfort being prominent drivers of engagement. Sa, (2023) indicated that co-curricular activities are essential for our society's fields in higher education, where the student to participate as a member of our society, which will make the learners be a human resource and the learner make his or her own comment about taking any resolution. Sulla et al, (2023) evaluated that the learner's internet-related learning abilities are also judged there, for it has been clear what is the level of success of the student and increment areas. The learner's participation is essential to produce knowledgeable information and significance for society, which is the goal of a higher education organization. Redmond et al., (2023) found the pupil's feelings of internet-connected work participation and focused on the significance of workable, hands-on activities for student involvement. Petry et al., (2022) compare teachers' and students' perspectives on student engagement, emphasising the performativity associated with engagement and the potential for teachers to oversimplify it. Alonso-Tapia et al., (2023) Investigated the relationship between engagement and learning situations, highlighting the multidimensional nature of engagement and its potential effects on performance and satisfaction. Malik et al., (2021) Propose a conceptual framework for student engagement that focuses on generic and targeted outcomes. Adjusting the objectives of National Education Policy 2020, this investigation indicates the very beneficial aspect of comprehending any matter and increasing the learner's participation in Higher education.

### **Experiential learning**

Sachdeva & Latesh, (2023) Found experiential learning is very significant in reducing critical problems and doubtfulness and to enhancing hand-to-hand work skills, deep thinking about a problem, and the capabilities of finding an answer to a matter. The NEP 2020 recognises the need for a shift towards a more holistic and interdisciplinary education system that encourages

active engagement with the world and a deeper understanding of complex issues. The papers also emphasised bridging the theory-practice gap and aligning experiential learning programs with career goals and aspirations.

### **Collaborative learning**

Collaborative learning promotes critical thinking and deeper understanding through shared idea exchange and elaboration (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Collaborative learning environments cultivate a sense of community, which can significantly enhance student motivation and engagement (Matongo & Goronga, 2024). The NEP 2020 recognizes collaboration as a fundamental component in cultivating creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which are indispensable for student success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Active learning**

Students are the most critical stakeholders in the educational system. Students will be given various opportunities to participate in many groups, including sports, culture/arts, eco-clubs, activity clubs, and the community. To discourse oppression and emotional issues, Counselling services must be obtainable in every instructional organisation. For the village areas, a systematic method will benefit learners, and a hostel setup is required. All higher education institutions will provide quality medical facilities to their students.

### **Methodology of the study**

This is a conceptual paper. It synthesises existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence and reviews policies and guidelines that align with or are influenced by NEP 2020. It is a desktop study and qualitative study.

### **Results and discussion**

Critically examine the directives and recommendations of NEP 2020 about student engagement in higher education by analysing the specific policy provisions related to

### **Curriculum design and structure**

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to revamp the education structure, including curriculum design, to align with the goals of 21st-century education. It gives importance to the requirement of all-round, empiric, and student-centred ways of education. In the context of 21st-century assertion, higher education intends to increase the developmental aspect, developing thinking, all-round enhancement and innovative personality. It enables a man active to think deeply about the best phenomenon and ethical considerations, to give value to the constitutional concept, knowing interest about a phenomenon, scientific curiosity, enhance the personality, and innovative thinking and 21st-century enables the different disciplines with social sciences, arts, humanities, science, literature and the professional, technical, and vocational subjects. The objectives would be to enhance the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education, with vocational education, from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. While several new institutions may be developed to attain these goals, a large part of the capacity creation will be achieved by consolidating, substantially expanding, and improving existing HEIs. Environmental education will include climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, biological diversity conservation, biological resources and biodiversity management, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living. Moreover, Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of truth (Satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life-skills; lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programs will be considered an integral part of holistic education. According to NEP 2020, The undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications, e.g., a certificate after completing 1 year in a course with vocational and professional field or a diploma for 2 years of practice or a graduation degree for a 3-year programme. The 4-year different subjects graduation programme shall be the proposed option since it gives a chance to gain knowledge of the all over and multidisciplinary lessons in addition to focusing on the chosen major and minors per the student's choices. An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) shall be structured to digitally preserve the academic credits attained from different accepted HEIs; therefore, the certificate from an HEI can be awarded considering credits earned. The 4-year programme may also lead to a degree 'with Research' if the student completes a rigorous research project in their central area(s) of study as specified by the HEI. For postgraduate programs, (a) there may be a 2-year program with the second year devoted entirely to research for those who have completed the 3-year Bachelor's program; (b) for students fulfilling the 4 year graduation program with Research, there could be a 1-year Master's program; and (c) there may be an integrated 5-year Bachelor's/Master's program. Connecting with a Ph.D. course shall need either a master's degree or a 4-year Bachelor's degree with Research. The M.Phil. programme shall be discontinued.

### **Assessment methodologies**

The assessment technique must be a scientific approach, planned at development of learning and gradual testing the implementation of education. For high-quality education, some enhancing power that promotes the student's health like-

healthy, psycho-social well-being, mental health. The HEI shall also decide all assessment systems, including those that lead to final certification. The Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) will be revised to instill innovation and flexibility. HEIs will be converted to a criterion-based assessment system, which will enhance the students' success in meeting the learning objectives for every project. This will make the system authentic and the results more comparable.

### **Teacher training/ faculty development**

Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of schoolteachers to shape the next generation. Teacher formulation is the process where the depth of knowledge and overall development is most important and the values and personality of the instructor is crucial who will study the content. The instructor will depend on in our norms, education system, intuition, medium of instruction, ethics, culture and the generic culture as they stay modern with the contemporary progress in education and pedagogy.

In 2030, the minimum degree requirement for school instructor will be the 4-year integrated B.Ed. provided by these multidisciplinary HEIs. The HEI offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed. may also run a 2-year B.Ed. for learners who have accepted a graduation degree in a special field. A 1-year B.Ed. may also be offered for candidates with a 4-year undergraduate degree in a specialised subject. Scholarships for meritorious students will be established to attract outstanding candidates for the 4-year, 2-year, and 1-year B.Ed. Programmes.

### **Technology Integration**

ODL and online education show a congenial way to enhance entry to higher education. ODL will be newish by integrated, proved based energy towards expansion while ensuring adherence to clearly articulated standards of quality. The ODL programme aims to be similar to the best quality in-class programmes obtainable. Top ODL-accredited universities will be encouraged and supported to create quality online courses. High-quality online courses will be included in higher education curricula, with a preference for blended learning. The use of technology platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA for online teacher training will be encouraged so that standardised training programmes can be administered to large numbers of teachers within a short period.

### **Institutional strategies /autonomy**

The primary aim of this policy related to higher education is to end the division of higher education institutions by convert into broad multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and HEI clusters/information Hubs, all of which will aim to have 3,000 or more learners. A stage-wise technique for granting graded autonomy to the institution by a transparent system of graded accreditation will be founded. To provide the college with motivation, guidance, and cooperation, and continuously help to attain the criteria for every stage. Accreditation. Over time, it is envisaged that every college will develop into either an autonomous degree-granting College or a constituent college of a university in the latter case, it would be fully a part of the university. The autonomous degree-granting colleges could be transferred in Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities if they have an interest.

### **Collaborative efforts**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India give importance to the pupil's active participation and solving problems with group work together as a vital dimension of the education system. NEP 2020 motivates group work with the staff of government organisations and academic bodies, the members of society, instructors, and parents. It promotes partnerships to improve the quality and inclusivity of education. This can include collaborations for teacher training, curriculum development, infrastructure improvement, and other areas. The policy gives importance to creating education that is more impressive and holistic for the learners. It emphasises the importance of experiential learning, critical thinking, creativity, and life skills. NEP 2020 intends to transfer education from repetition learning to more glamorous and practical activity-based learning, motivating learners to take part fully in their educational time.

### **Conclusion**

The National Education Policy 2020 give importance to higher education and gives some recommendations on higher education because we know that higher education is the crucial element which makes people a human resource, contributing human beings to create an ideal society, developing a society higher education plays a vital contribution. Higher education creates a man's social, emotional, intellectual, economic, and spiritual development, as well as overall development and grows different types of values like- social, moral, and spiritual. It increases people's innovative thinking. In higher education, student engagement is a crucial element that will depend upon the classroom environment, the motivation level of the instructor, and the cooperative behaviour of teachers, stakeholders and students. NEP 2020 give importance student involvement, basically promoting their active learning capability, critical thinking about any topic, and problem-solving skills in the learning process. National education policy 2020 main goals are to overcome the barriers in a different way that ductile the curriculum which are appropriate for the learners, to increase access and equity in higher education, a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, experiential and lifelong learning by synthesizing practical skills, vocational training, and real-

world application of knowledge, connected of information and communication technology, and the cooperation of the authority.

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