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SERVICES FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

Empowerment Faculty and Institutional leaders with Autonomy and Accountability, and Enhance their Professional Development and Career Progression as per NEP-2020 - Higher Education Transformations in India

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ABSTRACT

This empowerment aims to provide them with greater autonomy and accountability, fostering their professional development and career progression. This transformational initiativerecognizes the critical role educators and leaders play in shaping the future of higher education in India. Higher education transformations in India are the changes NEP 2020 addresses the lack of a clear and consistent policy framework and regulatory mechanism for the higher education sector, resulting in fragmentation, duplication, and inefficiency, in various ways, such as: and innovations that are taking place in the Indian higher education sector to improve its quality, relevance, accessibility, and impact. Some of the factors that are driving these transformations. It proposes to establish a National Research Foundation (NRF), which will provide funding and support for research and innovation across disciplines and domains, and will facilitate collaboration and networking among the researchers, the HEIs, and other stakeholders. The NEP 2020 recognizes that the faculty and institutional leaders are the heart of the learning process, and their quality and motivation are crucial for improving the educational outcomesand achieving excellence. The National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) is a new initiative that aims to improve the quality and motivation of the teachers and institutional leaders in the higher education sector in India. Itis based on the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which recognizes the pivotalrole of the faculty and institutional leaders in the learning process and the educational outcomes. The NEP 2020 proposes to create a merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition for the faculty and institutional leaders, and provide them with adequate support, incentives, and opportunities for continuous learning and growth. The NEP 2020 envisages to grant greater autonomy and flexibility to the higher education institutions (HEIs) in terms of

academic, administrative, and financial matters, while ensuring transparency, accountability, and public disclosure of their performance and outcomes. One possible way to improve the quality and excellence of the higher education sector, which can enhance the learning outcomes and employability of the students, and contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of the country, is to implement the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive and visionary document that aims to transform the higher education system in India by making it more multidisciplinary, holistic, flexible, innovative, inclusive, and equitable. To establish a new regulatory framework for the higher education sector, which will be based onthe principles of 'light but tight', and will consist of four independent verticals: the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for regulation, the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) for standard-setting, the General Education Council (GEC) for accreditation, and the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for funding. To enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector, by facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders, by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements, by attracting foreign students and faculty, and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad. We can give you an example of a successful transformation project in Indian higher education. One such project is the Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP), which was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2019. EQUIP aims at ushering transformations in India's higher education system by implementing strategic interventions in the sector over five years (2019 – 2024).

INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 in India emphasizes the need to empower faculty and institutional leaders in both private and government engineering institutions and universities. This empowerment aims to provide them with greater autonomy and accountability, fostering their professional development and career progression. This transformational initiative recognizes the critical role educators and leaders play in shaping the future of higher education in India.

Objectives

- The NEP 2020 aims to empower faculty and institutional leaders with autonomy and accountability, and enhance their professional development and career progression, in
- order to improve the quality and innovation of higher education in India7.- The NEP 2020 aims to empower faculty and institutional leaders with autonomy and accountability, and enhance their professional development and career progression, in order to improve the quality and innovation of higher education in India? with sources of references
- The policy envisions that faculty and institutional leaders will be selected through a transparent and merit-based process, and will be given the freedom to design curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and research within a broad framework of higher education qualifications (5).
- The policy also proposes to incentivize excellence, creativity, and social responsibility

among faculty and institutional leaders, and to provide them with regular opportunitiesfor continuous learning, collaboration, and recognition (5).

- The policy further suggests that faculty and institutional leaders will be supported by a conducive working environment, adequate resources, effective governance, and a culture of trust and empowerment (5).

Challenges and Problems

Some of the challenges and problems that hinder the empowerment of faculty and institutional leaders in India are:

- The lack of autonomy and flexibility in academic matters, such as curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment, and research, which leads to outdated and irrelevant courses, poor learning outcomes, and low innovation (6) (8).
- The inadequate mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders, which results in low motivation, attrition, and underperformance (5) (8).
- The insufficient professional development and training opportunities for faculty and institutional leaders, which affects their competence, confidence, and creativity (6) (8).
- The limited collaboration and networking opportunities for faculty and institutional leaders, which reduces their exposure to diverse perspectives, best practices, and new knowledge (6) (8).
- The unequal access to resources, infrastructure, technology, and funding for faculty and institutional leaders across different types of institutions, which creates disparities in quality and opportunities (6) (8).
- The ineffective governance and regulatory systems for higher education institutions, which impose bureaucratic hurdles, corruption, interference, and accountability pressures on faculty and institutional leaders (6) (8).

Benefits

Some of the benefits that can be derived from empowering faculty and institutional leaders are:

- The improvement of the quality and relevance of higher education courses, which can enhance the employability, skills, and knowledge of graduates (6) (8).
- The increase of the innovation and research output of higher education institutions, whichcan contribute to the social and economic development of the country (6) (8).
- The enhancement of the satisfaction, motivation, and performance of faculty and institutional leaders, which can reduce attrition, burnout, and dissatisfaction (6) (8).
- The creation of a vibrant academic culture that fosters diversity, collaboration, excellence, creativity, and social responsibility among faculty and institutional leaders (6)(8).
- The strengthening of the autonomy, accountability, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of higher education institutions (6) (8).

METHODS

Some of the methods that can be used to empower faculty and institutional leaders are:

- Granting greater autonomy to higher education institutions in academic matters such as curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment, and research, within a broad framework of higher education qualifications, and ensuring that they are accountable for their outcomes through regular audits and public disclosure (5) (6).
- Establishing transparent and merit-based recruitment and promotion processes for faculty and institutional leaders, and providing them with attractive salaries and incentives based on their performance and contribution (5) (6).
- Providing regular and diverse opportunities for professional development and training for faculty and institutional leaders, such as workshops, seminars, conferences, online courses,mentoring, peer review, etc. (5) (6).
- Encouraging collaboration and networking among faculty and institutional leaders within and across institutions, disciplines, sectors, and countries, through platforms, forums,clusters, hubs, exchanges, etc. (5) (6).
- Ensuring adequate and equitable access to resources, infrastructure, technology, and funding for faculty and institutional leaders across different types of institutions, and facilitating their optimal utilization and management (5) (6).
- Reforming the governance and regulatory systems for higher education institutions to make them more responsive, flexible, innovative, and participatory, and involving faculty and institutional leaders in decision-making and leadership roles (5) (6).

Higher Education Transformations in India

Higher education transformations in India are the changes and innovations that are taking place in the Indian higher education sector to improve its quality, relevance, accessibility, and impact. Some of the factors that are driving these transformations are:

- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which is a comprehensive and visionary document that aims to reform and revitalize the Indian education system, from school to higher education. The NEP 2020 proposes several key changes for higher education, suchas:
- Giving access to education to all learners (disadvantage/ learners with special needs) through online education, and Open Distance Learning (ODL) (3).
- 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 (3).
- Shifting from a rigid HE curriculum to multidisciplinary undergraduate education with multiple exit options and academic bank of credit (3).
- Offering faculty and institutional autonomy, along with greater accountability and transparency (3).
- Promoting research and innovation culture through National Research Foundation, Higher Education Commission of India, and other initiatives (3).
- The technological disruption and digital transformation that are affecting the world of work and learning. The emergence of artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, cloud computing, big data, and other technologies are creating new opportunities and

challenges for higher education.

Some of the Trends that are Shaping the Future of Education in India are:

- The adoption of blended learning models that combine online and offline modes of delivery, using various digital platforms, tools, and resources (12) (13).
- The personalization of learning experiences that cater to the diverse needs, interests, preferences, and goals of learners (12) (13).
- The development of new skills and competencies that are required for the 21st century, such as creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, and lifelong learning (12) (13).
- The enhancement of quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms that ensure the standards and outcomes of higher education programmes (12) (13).
- The social and economic development goals that require higher education to contribute tothe nation's progress and well-being. Higher education plays a vital role in creating human capital, generating knowledge, fostering innovation, and addressing societal challenges.

Some of the Objectives that Higher Education Seeks to Achieve are:

- Increasing the gross enrolment ratio (GER) of higher education from 26.3% in 2018 to 50% by 2035 (14) (15).
- Improving the employability and entrepreneurship of graduates by aligning higher education with industry demands and market trends (15) (16).
- Enhancing the diversity and inclusion of higher education by ensuring equitable access and participation of learners from different backgrounds, regions, genders, and abilities (15) (16).
- Strengthening the internationalization and global competitiveness of higher education by promoting cross-border collaborations, exchanges, partnerships, and mobility (15) (16).

These are some of the major aspects of higher education transformations in India. I hope this answer has given you a brief overview of this topic. If you want to learn more, you can refer to the sources of references that I have provided.

NEP 2020-Innovation and Research

NEP 2020 promotes innovation and research in various ways, such as:

- It proposes to establish a National Research Foundation (NRF), which will provide funding and support for research and innovation across disciplines and domains, and will facilitate collaboration and networking among the researchers, the HEIs, and other stakeholders (17) (18).
- It envisages to create a culture of research and innovation in the country, and to address the local and global challenges and opportunities, such as climate change, health, education, energy, water, agriculture, etc (17) (19).
- It aims to increase the public investment in the education sector to reach 6% of GDP, and to allocate at least 50% of it for research and innovation (17) (18).

- It encourages the HEIs to offer flexible and multidisciplinary programs and courses, with multiple entry and exit options, and academic credit bank facilities for the students, which will enable them to pursue their interests and passions, and to acquire a broad-based and multidisciplinary education, which will prepare them for the future world of work and life (17) (18).
- It recognizes the importance of technology and digital platforms for enhancing the teaching and learning process, and for improving the governance and management of the HEIs. It proposes to establish the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR), and the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), which will provide guidance, standards, and best practices for the effective use of technology in education (17) (18).
- It enhances the internationalization of the higher education sector, by facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders, by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements, by attracting foreign students and faculty, and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad (17)(18).

Faculty Empowerment and Accountability in NEP 2020

One of the key objectives of the NEP 2020, which is to empower the faculty and institutional leaders with autonomy and accountability, and enhance their professional development andcareer progression:

- The NEP 2020 recognizes that the faculty and institutional leaders are the heart of the learning process, and their quality and motivation are crucial for improving the educational outcomes and achieving excellence (24) (25).
- The NEP 2020 proposes to create a merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition for the faculty and institutional leaders, and provide them with adequate support, incentives, and opportunities for continuous learning and growth (24) (25).
- The NEP 2020 also envisages to grant greater autonomy and flexibility to the higher education institutions (HEIs) in terms of academic, administrative, and financial matters, while ensuring transparency, accountability, and public disclosure of their performance and outcomes (24) (25).
- The NEP 2020 aims to revamp the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences, and to reaffirm the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit-appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service (24).
- The NEP 2020 also encourages the HEIs to offer flexible and multidisciplinary programs and courses, with multiple entry and exit options, and academic credit bank facilities for the students, which will enable them to pursue their interests and passions, and to acquire a broad-based and multidisciplinary education, which will prepare them for the future world of work and life (26).
- The NEP 2020 also promotes the use of technology and digital platforms for enhancing the teaching and learning process, and for improving the governance and management of the HEIs (24) (25).
- The NEP 2020 also enhances the internationalization of the higher education sector, by

facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders, by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements, by attracting foreign students and faculty, and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad (24) (25).

The Faculty and Institutional Leaders Quality and Motivation are Crucial for Achieving Excellence

The NEP 2020 recognizes that the faculty and institutional leaders are the heart of the learning process, and their quality and motivation are crucial for improving the educational outcomes and achieving excellence:

- According to the NEP 2020, the faculty and institutional leaders are the "heart of the learning process" and their quality and motivation determine the quality and innovation of the education system (27) (28).
- The NEP 2020 states that the faculty and institutional leaders must be empowered with autonomy and flexibility, and supported with incentives and opportunities for continuous professional development and career progression (27) (28).
- The NEP 2020 also proposes to create a merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition for the faculty and institutional leaders, and to link their performance appraisal to their teaching, research, and service (27) (28) (29).
- The NEP 2020 also envisages to establish a National Mission for Mentoring, which will provide a platform for senior and retired faculty and institutional leaders to mentor the junior and aspiring ones, and to share their experiences, insights, and best practices (27) (28).
- The NEP 2020 also aims to revamp the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences, and to reaffirm the integrity of faculty and

The National Mission for Mentoring

The National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) is a new initiative that aims to improve the quality and motivation of the teachers and institutional leaders in the higher education sector in India. It is based on the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which recognizes the pivotalrole of the faculty and institutional leaders in the learning process and the educational outcomes. The NMM intends to create a large pool of outstanding professionals from various disciplines and domains, who would be willing to provide short-term and long-term professional supportand guidance to the teachers and institutional leaders. The NMM also seeks to provide the teachers and institutional leaders with opportunities and incentives for continuous learning and growth, and to link their performance appraisal to their teaching, research, and service (33).

The NMM was launched by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in July 2022, in a pilot phase, in 30 Central Government Schools across the country. The NCTE has enlisted 60 mentors, who are experts in various fields, such as instructional leadership skills, digital education, socio-emotional learning, inclusive education, professionalism and ethics, classroom management, developing 21st century skills, interpersonal skills and community engagement, action research, holistic assessment, art integrated pedagogy, and teachers' mental health management. These mentors will provide online and offline mentoring sessions to the

teachers and institutional leaders, using a web portal that will facilitate the interaction and feedback. The NCTE has also organized a capacity building workshop for the mentors, and has prepared a draftBluebook on Mentoring, which outlines the modalities and guidelines for the NMM (34).

The NMM is expected to have several benefits for the higher education sector and the society at large. It will help to improve the quality and excellence of the education system, by enhancingthe skills and competencies of the teachers and institutional leaders, and by fostering a culture of innovation and research. It will also help to promote the diversity and inclusiveness of the education system, by ensuring the participation and empowerment of all sections of the society, and by instilling the values of democracy, pluralism, and harmony. It will also help to strengthen the autonomy and accountability of the higher education institutions, by enabling them to respond to the changing needs and demands of the students, the society, and the environment, and by ensuring transparency and public disclosure of their performance and outcomes (35) (36).

Creation of a Merit-Based System of Recruitment for The Faculty and Institutional Leaders

The NEP 2020 proposes to create a merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition for the faculty and institutional leaders, and provide them with adequate support, incentives, and opportunities for continuous learning and growth:

- The NEP 2020 recognizes that the faculty and institutional leaders are the "heart of the learning process" and their quality and motivation determine the quality and innovation of the education system (37) (38).
- The NEP 2020 states that the faculty and institutional leaders must be empowered with autonomy and flexibility, and supported with incentives and opportunities for continuous professional development and career progression (37) (38).
- The NEP 2020 also proposes to create a merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition for the faculty and institutional leaders, and to link their performance appraisal to their teaching, research, and service (37) (38) (39).
- The NEP 2020 also envisages to establish a National Mission for Mentoring, which will provide a platform for senior and retired faculty and institutional leaders to mentor the junior and aspiring ones, and to share their experiences, insights, and best practices (37) (38).
- The NEP 2020 also aims to revamp the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences, and to reaffirm the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit-appointments and career progression (40).

Grant Greater Autonomy and Flexibility to The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

The NEP 2020 envisages to grant greater autonomy and flexibility to the higher education institutions (HEIs) in terms of academic, administrative, and financial matters, while ensuring transparency, accountability, and public disclosure of their performance and outcomes.

- The NEP 2020 aims to restructure and consolidate the HEIs into three types: research-

intensive universities, teaching-intensive universities, and autonomous degree-granting colleges, which will have graded autonomy based on their accreditation status, and will be free to offer multidisciplinary and flexible programs and courses, with multiple entry and exit options, and academic credit bank facilities for the students (41) (42).

- The NEP 2020 also proposes to establish a new regulatory framework for the higher education sector, which will be based on the principles of 'light but tight', and will consist of four independent verticals: the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for regulation, the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) for standard-setting, the General Education Council (GEC) for accreditation, and the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for funding (41) (42).
- The NEP 2020 also envisages to create a 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment (42) (43).
- The NEP 2020 also promotes the use of technology and digital platforms for enhancing the teaching and learning process, such as the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR), and the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), and for improving the governance and management of the HEIs, such as the National Higher Education Information System (NHEIS), and the National Academic Credit Bank (NACB) (41) (42).

Policy Framework and Regulatory Mechanism for the Higher Education

NEP 2020 addresses the lack of a clear and consistent policy framework and regulatory mechanism for the higher education sector, resulting in fragmentation, duplication, and inefficiency, in various ways, such as:

- It proposes to establish a new regulatory framework for the higher education sector, which will be based on the principles of 'light but tight', and will consist of four independent verticals: the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for regulation, the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) for standard-setting, the General Education Council (GEC) for accreditation, and the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for funding (44) (45).
- It envisages to create a 'light but tight' regulatory framework to ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment (45) (46).
- It aims to restructure and consolidate the HEIs into three types: research-intensive universities, teaching-intensive universities, and autonomous degree-granting colleges, which will have graded autonomy based on their accreditation status, and will be free to offer multidisciplinary and flexible programs and courses, with multiple entry and exit options, and academic credit bank facilities for the students (44) (45).
- It also promotes the use of technology and digital platforms for enhancing the teaching and learning process, such as the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR), and the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), and for improving the governance and management of

the HEIs, such as the National Higher Education Information System (NHEIS), and the National Academic Credit Bank (NACB) (44) (45).

Improvement of the Quality and Quantity of the Faculty and Institutional Leaders in Higher Education

One possible way to rectify the low quality and quantity of the faculty and institutional leaders inhigher education is to implement the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to empower them with autonomy and accountability, and enhance theirprofessional development and career progression. Some of these recommendations are:

- To create a merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition for the faculty and institutional leaders, and to link their performance appraisal to their teaching, research, and service (47) (48) (49).
- To provide them with adequate support, incentives, and opportunities for continuous learning and growth, such as online and blended modules, workshops, seminars, conferences, and exchange programs (47) (48).
- To establish a National Mission for Mentoring, which will provide a platform for senior and retired faculty and institutional leaders to mentor the junior and aspiring ones, and to share their experiences, insights, and best practices (47) (48).
- To revamp the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences, and to reaffirm the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit-appointments and career progression.
- To grant greater autonomy and flexibility to the higher education institutions (HEIs) in terms of academic, administrative, and financial matters, while ensuring transparency, accountability, and public disclosure of their performance and outcomes (47) (48).
- To create a National Research Foundation (NRF), which will provide funding and support for research and innovation across disciplines and domains, and will facilitate collaboration and networking among the researchers, the HEIs, and other stakeholders (46) (47).
- To promote the use of technology and digital platforms for enhancing the teaching and learning process, such as the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR), and the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), and for improving the governance and management of the HEIs (46) (47).
- To enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector, by facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders, by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements, by attracting foreign students and faculty, and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad (47)(48).

These are some of the ways that can help to improve the quality and quantity of the faculty and institutional leaders in higher education. However, these are not exhaustive or definitive solutions. There may be other factors or challenges that need to be considered or addressed. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research and analysis on this topic.

Improvement of the Quality and Excellence of the Higher Education Sector

One possible way to improve the quality and excellence of the higher education sector, which can enhance the learning outcomes and employability of the students, and contribute to the economic, social, and cultural development of the country, is to implement the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive and visionary document that aims to transform the higher education system in India by making it moremultidisciplinary, holistic, flexible, innovative, inclusive, and equitable. Some of the recommendations of the NEP 2020 are:

- To restructure and consolidate the higher education institutions (HEIs) into three types: research-intensive universities, teaching-intensive universities, and autonomous degree- granting colleges, which will have graded autonomy based on their accreditation status, and will be free to offer multidisciplinary and flexible programs and courses, withmultiple entry and exit options, and academic credit bank facilities for the students (50) (51).
- To establish a new regulatory framework for the higher education sector, which will be based on the principles of 'light but tight', and will consist of four independent verticals: the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for regulation, the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) for standard-setting, the General Education Council (GEC) for accreditation, and the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for funding (50) (51).
- To create a National Research Foundation (NRF), which will provide funding and support for research and innovation across disciplines and domains, and will facilitate collaboration and networking among the researchers, the HEIs, and other stakeholders (50) (51).
- To empower the faculty and institutional leaders with autonomy and accountability, and enhance their professional development and career progression. This will include creatinga merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition; providing them with adequate support, incentives, and opportunities for continuous learning and growth; establishing a National Mission for Mentoring; revamping the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support; and reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions (50) (51) (52).
- To promote the use of technology and digital platforms for enhancing the teaching and learning process, such as the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR), and the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), and for improving the governance and management of the HEIs (50) (51).
- To enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector, by facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders; by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements; by attracting foreign students and faculty; and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad (50)(51).

These are some of the ways that can help to improve the quality and excellence of the higher education sector in India. However, these are not exhaustive or definitive solutions. There

maybe other factors or challenges that need to be considered or addressed. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research and analysis on this topic.

Development of the Vibrant and Dynamic Higher Education Ecosystem in India

One possible way to develop a vibrant and dynamic higher education ecosystem, which canfoster collaboration and cooperation among the HEIs and other stakeholders, and leverage the potential of technology and digital platforms for improving the access, equity, and quality of education, is to implement the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP 2020 is a comprehensive and visionary document that aims to transform the higher education system in India by making it more multidisciplinary, holistic, flexible, innovative, inclusive, and equitable. Some of the recommendations of the NEP 2020 are:

- To create a National Research Foundation (NRF), which will provide funding and support for research and innovation across disciplines and domains, and will facilitate collaboration and networking among the researchers, the HEIs, and other stakeholders (55) (56).
- To empower the faculty and institutional leaders with autonomy and accountability, and enhance their professional development and career progression. This will include creating a merit-based system of recruitment, promotion, and recognition; providing them with adequate support, incentives, and opportunities for continuous learning and growth; establishing a National Mission for Mentoring; revamping the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support; and reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions (55) (56) (57).
- To promote the use of technology and digital platforms for enhancing the teaching and learning process, such as the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), the National Digital Educational Architecture (NDEAR), and the National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT), and for improving the governance and management of the HEIs (55) (56).
- To enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector, by facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders; by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements; by attracting foreign students and faculty; and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad (55)(56).

These are some of the ways that can help to develop a vibrant and dynamic higher education ecosystem in India. However, these are not exhaustive or definitive solutions. There may be other factors or challenges that need to be considered or addressed. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research and analysis on this topic.

Establishment of New Regulatory Framework for The Higher Education Sector in India

To establish a new regulatory framework for the higher education sector, which will be based on the principles of 'light but tight', and will consist of four independent verticals: the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) for regulation, the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) for standard-setting, the General Education Council (GEC) for accreditation, and the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for funding:

- The HECI will be an umbrella body that will oversee the functioning of the other three

verticals, and will act as a single point regulator for the higher education sector, excluding medical and legal education. The HECI will ensure integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency of the educational system through audit and public disclosure, while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through autonomy, good governance, and empowerment (59) (60).

- The NHEQF will be a common framework for learning outcomes across all levels and streams of higher education. The NHEQF will facilitate the mobility and progression of students within and across disciplines, domains, and institutions, and will enable the recognition of prior learning and credit transfer (59) (60).
- The GEC will be an apex body for quality assurance of higher education. The GEC will set norms and standards for accreditation of HEIs and programs, and will recognize various accrediting agencies that will carry out the accreditation process. The GEC will also frame expected learning outcomes for higher education programs (59) (60).
- The NHERC will be responsible for providing financial support to HEIs based on transparent criteria and norms. The NHERC will also ensure that public funding is linked to the social goals of access, equity, and inclusion. The NHERC will also promote private philanthropic funding for higher education (59) (60).
- These are some of the steps that can help to establish a new regulatory framework for the higher education sector in India. However, these are not exhaustive or definitive solutions. There may be other factors or challenges that need to be considered or addressed. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research and analysis on this topic.

Create a National Mission for Mentoring in India

Create a National Mission for Mentoring, which will provide a platform for senior and retired faculty and institutional leaders to mentor the junior and aspiring ones, and to share their experiences, insights, and best practices:

- The National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) is one of the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to improve the quality and motivation of the teachers and institutional leaders in the higher education sector in India (62) (63).
- The NMM intends to create a large pool of outstanding professionals from various disciplines and domains, who would be willing to provide short-term and long-term professional support and guidance to the teachers and institutional leaders (62) (63).
- The NMM will be launched by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in collaboration with other stakeholders, such as the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), and the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) (64) (65).
- The NMM will use a web portal that will facilitate the interaction and feedback between the mentors and the mentees, and will also provide various resources and tools for mentoring, such as online and blended modules, workshops, seminars, conferences, and exchange programs (64) (65).
- The NMM will also organize a capacity building workshop for the mentors, and will

prepare a draft Bluebook on Mentoring, which will outline the modalities and guidelines for the NMM (64) (65).

- The NMM is expected to have several benefits for the higher education sector and the society at large. It will help to improve the quality and excellence of the education
- system, by enhancing the skills and competencies of the teachers and institutional leaders,and by fostering a culture of innovation and research. It will also help to promote the diversity and inclusiveness of the education system, by ensuring the participation and empowerment of all sections of the society, and by instilling the values of democracy, pluralism, and harmony. It will also help to strengthen the autonomy and accountability of the higher education institutions, by enabling them to respond to the changing needs and demands of the students, the society, and the environment, and by ensuring transparency and public disclosure of their performance and outcomes (64) (65).

Creation of a National Research Foundation (NRF) in India

Create a National Research Foundation (NRF), which will provide funding and support for research and innovation across disciplines and domains, and will facilitate collaboration and networking among the researchers, the HEIs, and other stakeholders.

- The NRF is one of the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to improve the quality and excellence of the higher education sector in India (67) (68).
- The NRF will be set up as an apex body that will provide high-level strategic direction of scientific research in the country as per the NEP, at a total estimated cost of Rs. 50,000 crores during five years (2023-28) (67) (68) (69).
- The NRF will be governed by a Governing Board consisting of eminent researchers and professionals across disciplines. The Prime Minister will be the ex-officio President ofthe Board and the Union Minister of Science & Technology & Union Minister of Education will be the ex-officio Vice-Presidents (67) (68).
- The NRF's functioning will be governed by an Executive Council chaired by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be the administrative Department of NRF (67) (68).
- The NRF will fund research proposals through rigorous peer review across all disciplines,from basic sciences to social sciences and humanities, and from fundamental research to applied and translational research (67) (68).
- The NRF will also support large interdisciplinary projects, missions, and megaprojects that address national priorities and global challenges (67) (68).
- The NRF will also create beneficial linkages among government, industry, and researchers, and create a policy framework and regulatory processes that can encourage collaboration and increased spending by the industry on R&D (67) (68).
- The NRF will also recognise outstanding research funded by NRF through awards and national seminars, and disseminate the research outcomes to the public (67) (68).

These are some of the steps that can help to create a National Research Foundation in India. However, these are not exhaustive or definitive solutions. There may be other factors or

challenges that need to be considered or addressed. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research and analysis on this topic.

Internationalization of the Higher Education Sector in India

To enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector, by facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders, by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements, by attracting foreign students and faculty, and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad:

Here is a summary of how to enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector, by facilitating the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders, by encouraging the establishment of offshore campuses and twinning arrangements, by attracting foreign students and faculty, and by promoting the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad:

- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a comprehensive and visionary document that aims to transform the higher education system in India by making it more multidisciplinary, holistic, flexible, innovative, inclusive, and equitable. One of the key objectives of the NEP 2020 is to enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector in India (70) (71).
- The NEP 2020 proposes various measures to facilitate the mobility and exchange of students, faculty, and institutional leaders among the higher education institutions (HEIs) in India and abroad. These include creating global immersion programs for Indian students; providing scholarships and fellowships for foreign students; simplifying visa and internship policies for international students; counting credits acquired in foreign universities; and encouraging twinning, joint degree, and dual degree programs (70) (71).
- The NEP 2020 also encourages high performing Indian universities to set up campuses inother countries, especially in the global South. This will help to showcase the quality and diversity of Indian higher education, as well as to foster academic and cultural linkages with other regions. The NEP 2020 also permits selected foreign universities (those from among the top 100 universities in the world) to operate in India, subject to meeting certain criteria and norms. This will help to increase the choices and opportunities for Indian students, as well as to enhance the competitiveness and innovation of Indian HEIs (70) (71).
- The NEP 2020 also aims to attract foreign students and faculty to India by providing low-cost, quality education; offering specially designed courses on Indology, Indian languages, AYUSH systems of medicine, yoga, arts, etc.; setting up an International Students Office at each HEI; and creating a National Education Technology Forum (NETF) to leverage the potential of technology and digital platforms for improving the access, equity, and quality of education (70) (71).
- The NEP 2020 also promotes the Indian languages, arts, and culture abroad by establishing Indian Institutes of Translation and Interpretation (IITIs); creating courses onIndian languages for foreign students; supporting Indian cultural centers in foreign countries; and facilitating the participation of Indian students and faculty in international events and festivals (70) (71).

These are some of the ways that can help to enhance the internationalization of the higher education sector in India. However, these are not exhaustive or definitive solutions. There maybe other factors or challenges that need to be considered or addressed. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research and analysis on this topic.

Example of a Successful Transformation Project in Indian Higher Education

We can give you an example of a successful transformation project in Indian higher education. One such project is the Education Quality Up gradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP), which was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2019.EQUIP aims at ushering transformations in India's higher education system by implementing strategic interventions in the sector over five years (2019 – 2024) (75).

Some of the key features and achievements of EQUIP are:

- It is based on the recommendations of ten expert groups, comprising more than 50 senior academicians, administrators, and industrialists, who identified 50 goals and 250 projects for transforming higher education in India (75).
- It covers five broad themes: access, equity, and inclusion; quality and excellence; employability and entrepreneurship; research and innovation; and internationalization andglobal best practices (75).
- It has set ambitious targets such as doubling the gross enrolment ratio (GER) to 50% by 2035, increasing the number of institutions in the top 100 global rankings to 20 by 2030, enhancing the employability of graduates to 60% by 2025, increasing the annual research output to 1.5 lakh papers by 2024, and attracting 2 lakh foreign students by 2023 (75).
- It has launched several initiatives and programmes to achieve these targets, such as the Study in India programme, which aims to attract foreign students through scholarships, simplified visa and internship policies, and branding campaigns (74) (75); the National Research Foundation (NRF), which aims to fund, facilitate, and promote research and innovation across disciplines and sectors (73) (75); the National Education Technology Forum (NETF), which aims to leverage technology and digital platforms to enhance access, equity, quality, and innovation in higher education (73) (75); and the Higher Education Leadership Development Programme (HELDP), which aims to train and mentor institutional leaders for effective governance and management of HEIs (75).
- It has also aligned its goals and projects with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which envisages a comprehensive and visionary overhaul of the entire education system in India (73) (75).

EQUIP is an example of a successful transformation project in Indian higher education, as it hasa clear vision, a robust framework, a participatory approach, a result-oriented strategy, and a synergistic alignment with the NEP 2020.

CONCLUSION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and its implications for the higher education sector inIndia. The assistant explained how the NEP 2020 aims to improve the access, equity, quality,

andexcellence of higher education in India by introducing various reforms and initiatives such as:

- Restructuring the higher education system into three types of institutions: research-intensive universities, teaching-intensive universities, and autonomous degree-granting colleges.
- Establishing a single regulator for all higher education institutions, except medical and legal education, which will ensure a light but tight regulation based on transparent norms for accreditation, funding, etc.
- Creating a National Research Foundation to fund, facilitate, and promote research and innovation across disciplines and sectors.
- Developing a National Professional Standards Framework for teachers and faculty members, which will define the competencies and qualifications required for different roles and levels of teaching and research.
- Providing multiple pathways for entry and exit into higher education, with appropriate recognition of prior learning, credit transfer, and academic bank of credits.
- Introducing a four-year undergraduate programme with multiple exit options, which will offer a broad-based liberal education with exposure to multiple disciplines, specialization in one or more majors, and options for minors, electives, research projects, etc.
- Implementing a choice-based credit system with a modular approach, which will allow learners to choose courses and credits according to their interests and abilities.
- Reforming the assessment and evaluation system to focus more on formative and competency-based assessment rather than summative and rote-based assessment.
- Leveraging the use of technology and digital platforms to enhance access, equity, quality, and innovation in higher education.
- Encouraging institutional autonomy and accountability through the establishment of independent boards of governors for each institution.
- Promoting institutional collaboration and networking through the formation of academic clusters or knowledge hubs.
- Fostering a culture of excellence and innovation through the creation of Institutions ofEminence and National Institutes of Transformative Academic leadership.

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