

Prospects Of Nep 2020 In the Field of Research in Higher EducationLemkhaba¹ and Pattnaik, P.K.²¹Research Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus,
Meriema²Professor, Department of Teacher Education, Nagaland University, Kohima Campus, Meriema**Abstract**

The National Education Policy of 2020 came after 34 years, the last being the NPE in 1984. The NEP 2020 envisages transforming India's education system and has touched upon every aspect of education. Educational research is the heart of any education system as it is through educational research that improvements in education can be brought through well-designed research studies. To keep abreast with the change in times, new researches have to be undertaken; only then can we bring changes that society expects, and if we want to introduce any policies in the education system, we can undertake educational research to know whether these policies would be applicable or not in the education system as well as any dead leaves can be identified and removed from the system. However, the NEP 2020 has remarked that India is spending a low amount in the field of research and realizing the importance of research for the advancement of our nation; it has given much impetus to it and envisages establishing the National Research Foundation in the field of research. With the strides our country is making in the field of research, if the recommendations proposed by the NEP 2020 in the field of research are realized, the future prospects of research look promising. This paper attempts to understand the importance of educational research and what the future prospects of research will look like in light of NEP 2020.

Keywords: Research, NEP 2020 and Higher education

INTRODUCTION

The wealth of a nation depends on the health of the education system, and the health of education may well depend on quality

research. Higher education is characterized by advanced teaching and research undertaken at this stage of education, and this stage of education is also responsible for

producing human resources for the development of our nation, so in this connection, the health of our higher education is highly crucial. The NEP 2020 has emphasized that as India aspires to become a knowledge powerhouse, the number of prospective higher education students is expected to rise (NEP 2020, p. 33).

In this connection, higher education must give opportunities for innovation, creativity, curiosity, and experimentation and provide room to undertake research activities. Today, we live in a competitive world, and since our education system is responsible for producing human resources, it cannot afford to remain stagnant. Instead, it should continue to evolve with the changes and be able to meet the needs of the present demands. One of the ways is to develop the research ecosystem of higher education. Through research, new knowledge is generated, which can be used for the advancement and improvement of our nation, and the NEP 2020, on realizing the importance of research, has given a significant place in its policy.

RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Research is not a blind attempt to solve problems, but it "is an original and systematic investigation undertaken to increase existing knowledge and understanding of the unknown to establish facts and principles" (Ahmad & Khushboo, 2023) and educational research refers "to a systematic attempt to gain a better understanding of the educational process, generally with a view to improving its efficiency" (Koul, 2009). In this sense, research follows a systematic attempt to establish facts and knowledge that will be ultimately used to solve problems, and as we know, no education system is free of any issues and challenges; these are addressed by undertaking educational research as educational research is the application of scientific methods for the solution of educational problems (Koul, 2019).

In this ever-changing world, nothing is static but keeps on changing, so we as a nation should also keep up-to-date with the changes in time. New knowledge and facts need to be generated through rigorous research; in this connection, higher education plays a pivotal role in the field of research. Higher education occupies a very significant place and includes all undergraduate colleges, post-graduate, universities, centre of advanced learning and

the latest innovations and development take place in this stage of education. This stage of education acts as a pool of knowledge generation generated through advanced research. It should pave a way to explore the unexplored horizon, aim to discover or establish facts, and solve problems (Ahmad and Kushboo, 2023). So, since this stage of education is very important, we should establish a good research ecosystem where researchers are allowed to explore, innovate, be creative, and research laboratories also need to be established as well. The National Education Policy of 2020 has taken examples of India's famous higher education institutions, such as Takshashila, Nalanda, Vallabhi, etc, to emphasize moving to multidisciplinary higher education institutions.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY AND RESEARCH

The NEP 2020 has identified significant problems that higher education faces, including less importance given to higher education institutions and lack of funding for research across different disciplines. NEP 2020 envisages a new conceptual understanding of higher education institutions, i.e., multidisciplinary higher

education institutions offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, a Research-Intensive Universities focusing on both research and teaching, or Teaching-Intensive Universities placing more emphasis on teaching but conducting essential research. According to the policy, the university would be a multidisciplinary institution conducting high-quality research and teaching. The policy has also done away with M.Phil. degree. The NEP 2020 proposes that India's higher educational institutions should be flexible to offer 4 years bachelor's degree with research and a Master's degree needing only one year, so in this connection, Ph.D. entrants will require a Master's degree or 4-years bachelor's degree with research. Social problems are in plenty in this world, and looking at the issues of pandemics and diseases, Higher Education Institutions have been given the critical task of conducting advanced research in these areas; in this connection, it proposes to establish the National Research Foundation NRF to support research and innovation culture and provide peer-reviewed research funding across all disciplines. The activities of the National Research Foundation proposed by the policy include:

1. **Funding:** Funding of research across all disciplines.
2. **Support:** It will support emerging institutions to facilitate, seed, and grow research.
3. It proposes to raise awareness of urgent research issues in the country, which will act as a liaison between researchers and the government.
4. It will also seek to recognize significant and outstanding research and progress (NEP 2020).

One of the important recommendations of the policy is that higher education institutions focus on research and teaching collaboration and faculty exchange, which will be between Indian and global institutions. In the field of Ph.D., the programme will be reoriented, and new entrants will be given the opportunity to acquire teaching experiences and take credit-based courses in teaching, education, and pedagogy related to their subject. The NRF will support research in Indian languages, arts, and history.

DISCUSSION

Educational aims change with the change in time; when India got her independence from the clutch of British rule, education aims

concentrated mainly on agriculture, but today's world is dominated by science and technology S&T, so it is right to say that education system is geared towards the advancement of science and technology and for the advancement and improvement of science and technology, the foundations of research should be strong, only then can we expect to compete and excel in this ever competing world. Today's world is characterized by rapid changes in all spheres of life, and our society is faced with many issues and challenges; these vary from economic, scientific, environmental, and social problems, and these issues and challenges warrant advanced research not only in science and technology but also educational research as well as some problems demand the attention of educational researches. In this regard, it should also be noted that some social problems can only be solved through educational research, so along with science and technology, the field of educational research should be strengthened as the findings of an academic study conducted in the field of education have far-reaching significant implications for the health of our educational system. As education is responsible for producing a

skilled workforce who, in turn, will carry the nation on their shoulders, we must also look after the health of our educational system and like "research in education as in other fields is essential for providing useful and dependable knowledge through which the process can be made more effective" (Koul, 2009). And it is through educational research that programmes and interventions and their effectiveness can be evaluated, which will help in making necessary adjustments and interventions in educational programmes.

Owing to rapid changes happening in the world, NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of the research ecosystem. Although the policy emphasizes the importance of research for India if it is to become a world leader, it has highlighted that the country is spending a meagre amount of its GDP (0.69%) in the field of research compared to other advanced countries (NEP 2020). So, it needs to step up when it comes to funding of the research studies.

There are many outstanding higher educational institutions in the country which have achieved laurels not only at national but also international level as well, but it is unfortunate to see that there are also many educational institutions which are ill-

equipped and considered not more than academic ghettos. All these institutions should be identified and transformed to a Research-Intensive Universities which will play a crucial role in contributing to the pool of knowledge.

NEP 2020 also proposes that students should be exposed to research in their Bachelor's programme with 4-year Bachelor's programme with Research this will tremendously help those who are planning to enter in the field of research.

As the policy has proposed to establish National Research Foundation NRF, we can expect that the field of research will have a strong foundation if it is implemented properly and as funding is the major issues in research, through the NRF, there will be peer-reviewed research funding. The NRF is also proposed to mentor institutions which are emerging in the field of research.

The Kothari Commission of 1964-66 also recommended on expanding higher education opportunities and make efforts for the promotion of research, this also coincides with the promotion of research ecosystem by the National Education Policy 2020. Furthermore, the Yash Pal Committee of 1993 recommended that students should be

given opportunities to interact with researchers and scientists, in this connection, provisions must be made for students pursuing 4-years Bachelor's programme to interact with researchers since these students are going to deal with research during their programme. The National Knowledge Commission also talked about promotion of domestic research; efforts should also be made that the unexplored horizons in the country need to be explored for the further advancement of our nation.

According to Aggarwal the discipline of education has witnessed explosion of knowledge. The emerging problems of these present times have attracted the attention of researchers. In connection to NEP 2020, some of the areas that warrant the attention of educational research for the advancement and improvement of our education system include Early Childhood Care and Education ECCE, educational technology as the educational system cannot be separated from technology, vocational education as it is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goal SDG goal 4.4, teacher education as teacher education is responsible for producing and training effective teachers, inclusive education as everyone has right to

education, curriculum to suit the needs of the current demands, leadership and governance, adult education, enrolment in higher education as “disparities in enrolment among the urban and areas have continued to exist” (Azad, 2021), as educational achievement is measured by achievement in competitive exams, some students are not able to cope with the pressure, and seeing as how unemployment is one of the major issues in the country, the mental of youths takes a toll, so research should explore the area mental health of students. Aggarwal is of the opinion that researches thus conducted have been isolated, repetitious and haphazard rather than continuous and systematic, all the inadequacy, invalidity of data, and flaws make them null and void (Aggarwal, p. 1), thus prospective researchers should be trained from their Bachelor's stage in the methods and techniques of research, in this sense the NEP 2020 has proposed to offer 4-year Bachelor's programme with Research.

The present Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education stands at 27.1 percent and the policy aims to increase GER to 50% by 2035. If the current educational institutions are not able to accommodate all the aspirants, we can make use of the non-formal education to

achieve target of GER as Kundu has rightly remarked that non-formal education has its own role to play in development (Aggarwal, 1988).

Conclusion

Rapid changes are taking place around the world, and our education system must also keep abreast with the changes in time. Educational aims and objectives must also change to suit the needs of the current times. Education is a man-making process, and enables one to achieve an optimum development of their personality, so it should be strengthened and flexible to serve diverse learners. Today's world is dominated by science and technology, and their applications are widely used to advance and develop nations; however, not every problem can be solved by science and technology. Some problems can be solved through educational research; thus, both fields should be given equal importance and strengthened. The National Educational Policy of 2020 proposes to transform the entire research ecosystem as it is through research, new knowledge and facts will be generated, which can be used for the improvement and advancement of our educational system,

which in turn will produce human resources who will play a pivotal role for the development of the country. Higher education institutions should focus on undertaking advanced research in crucial areas. as research plays a critical role, more funds should also be allocated and different agencies should fund critical research. Therefore, along with science and technology, arts and humanities research are crucial for our country's progress and advancement.

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