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**NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: TOWARDS A HOLISTIC AND  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION**

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**Abstract:**

*National Education Policy 2020 aims to enhance the Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.03 % (2018) to 50 % by 2035. 3.5 crore new seats will be added to higher educational institutions. The new education policy is based on four pillars which are access, equity, quality, and accountability. The new education policy was drafted under the chairmanship of former chairman of ISRO and ex-member of parliament K. Kasturirangan. The National Education Policy 2020 launched on 29 July 2020, outlines the vision of India's new education system.*

**Keywords:** *National Education Policy, Higher Education, UGC, Language, Culture, etc.*

Education is very important for the development of each individual. Through education only we can create a just society. India adopted the agenda of sustainable development in 2015. The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. It ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all by 2030. It is necessary to reconfigure entire education system to support and foster learning to achieve all of the critical targets and goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The world has been undergoing fast changes in the knowledge situation. The world has advanced scientifically, and technologically. We have been experiencing developments in the rise of big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. Many unskilled jobs may be taken over by machines. The skilled workforce involving knowledge of mathematics, computer science, and data science, in combination with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, social sciences and the humanities will be in high demand. There will be a growing demand for humanities and art, as India moves towards becoming a developed country, as well as among the three largest economies in the world.

Quick changes are taking place in the employment landscape and the ecosystem. Therefore it has become important that children should not only learn, but more importantly learn how to learn. Education thus should move towards less content, and more towards how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in new and altering fields. Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centered, discussion-based, flexible, and enjoyable. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, language, literature, culture, and values in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of the learners. Education must build character. It should enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring. It should also prepare them for gainful and fulfilling employment.



Education system should prepare the learners to face the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century. There is the need to bring highest quality, equity and integrity into the system of higher education. India must aim to have the education system of the highest quality by 2040. It should offer highest quality education in all subjects and disciplines. Irrespective of social and economic background, every child in the country should get access to highest quality education from the school level to the university and the college level.

The National Education Policy is the first education policy of the twenty-first century. It aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of our country. The policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance. The new system should be aligned with the aspirational goals of the education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century while building upon India's traditions and value system.

### **Emphasis of the Education Policy:**

Education policy aims to develop creative potential of each individual. It is based on the principle that education must develop 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, emotional, capacities and dispositions. The rich heritage and eternal knowledge and thought has been a guiding illumination for this policy. The pursuit of knowledge, wisdom, and truth was considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest goals. The aim of education in ancient India was just acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for the complete realization and liberation of the self. World-class institutions of ancient India such as Takshshila, Nalanda, Vikramshila, and Vallabhi offered highest standards of multidisciplinary teaching and research. These institutions hosted students from across backgrounds and countries. The teacher must be at the centre of fundamental reforms in the higher education system. The new education policy must help re-establish, teachers at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, because they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers and help them to do their job as effectively as possible. The new education policy must help recruit the very best and the brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity, and autonomy. The system must also follow basic methods of quality control and accountability. Education is a great leveler. The education policy must provide a quality education system, with a particular focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. All students should enter and excel in the education system.

### **Principles of this Policy:**

The purpose of the education system is to develop good human beings. They should be capable of rational thought and action. The learners should develop compassion, empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our constitution. A good institution is one where every student feels welcomed, and cared for. Institutions should create safe and stimulating learning environment. Good physical infrastructure and appropriate learning resources should be available to all students. There must be integration and coordination across institutions, and across all stage of education. Students must be equipped with the knowledge of India and its varied social, cultural and technological needs. The public education system is the foundation of a vibrant democratic society. Higher education plays a very important role in promoting human as well as societal well being. Higher education contributes



towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation. India moves towards becoming a knowledge economy and society. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is essential that Indian higher education system must develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals through quality education. The education system should develop character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, and the spirit of service. The purpose of higher education is more than the preparation of learners for job opportunities. A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment. Learners should develop constructive public engagement and productive contribution to the society. The education system must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives. It should enable economic independence.

**The Fundamental Principles which Guide Education System and the Individual Institutions:**

- Recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student is necessary. Teachers as well as parents should be sensitized to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.
- Education system is flexible. Learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes. They should choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests.
- There should be no hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extracurricular, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning.
- Education system should be multidisciplinary and holistic. It should ensure the unity and integrity across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports.
- Creativity and critical thinking must be developed among the learners to encourage logical decision-making and innovation.
- Ethics and Human & Constitutional Values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality and justice must be developed among the learners.
- Research skills are important aspects of the higher education. These skills are important for the development of the problem solving skills and the critical thinking skills.
- Knowledge of languages culture is essential to develop a sense of identity, a sense of belonging, respect for others, and a spirit of society.

The main thrust area of the new education policy is to end the fragmentation of the higher education system. Moving to large multidisciplinary universities and the higher educational institutions is the highest recommendation of this policy. India has a long tradition of holistic and multidisciplinary education. Multidisciplinary and holistic type of education is the requirement of the twenty first century. Takshashila and Nalanda Universities offered multidisciplinary education in ancient India. Banbhata's Kadambari described a good education is the knowledge of the 64 Kalas of arts. All branches of human endeavors, singing, painting, chemistry and mathematics, carpentry and clothes making, medicine and engineering, as well as soft skills, communication, and debates were treated as arts. Holistic approach has shown positive learning outcomes. Integration of humanities and arts with science and technology, engineering and mathematics have consistently shown positive learning outcomes, including increased creativity and innovation, critical thinking and higher order thinking capacities, problem –solving abilities, teamwork, communication skills, more in –depth learning, and mastery of curricula across fields, increases in social and moral awareness, besides general engagement and enjoyment of learning. Multidisciplinary approach is also helpful to improve and enhance research.



A holistic and multidisciplinary education is very essential for the development of all capacities of human beings, intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional and moral in the integrated manner. The policy focuses on substantial investment in public education and mechanisms of good governance of all educational institutions / the policy endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the central government and the state government. The centre and the states will work together to increase the public investment in higher education sector to reach 6 % of the GDP at the earliest. This is considered critical for achieving the high – quality and equitable public education system that is truly needed for India’s future economic, social, cultural, intellectual and technological progress and growth. The current public spending on education in India by both central and state governments has been around 4.43 % of GDP (Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure 2017-18). It is only around 10 % of the total government spending towards education. These numbers are far smaller than most developed and developing countries. The new education policy should be implemented in its spirit and intent to achieve the goals of sustainable development. Through the effective implementation of the policy, Indian education system will be reformed to provide highest quality education in all subjects to develop well rounded citizens who will be capable to achieve the aim of equitable and just Indian society. India will be a Vishwa Guru through quality education. It is necessary that public investment in education by the central and state governments should be increased. Philanthropic private institutions should be encouraged. Moral education is also the need of the any century. Through moral education values of compassion, empathy, responsibility and honesty will be developed. It is important that new education policy should be effective implanted to provide highest quality education in arts, humanities, sciences, technology to all students. India will achieve the goal of economic and social progress through quality higher education.

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**To Cite the Article: Kokane, Govind, “National Education Policy 2020: Towards a Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education”. Literary Cognizance, III-2 (September, 2022): 51-54. Web.**