



A Significant Transformation In India's NEP 2020: The Discontinuation Of M.Phil.

Perna Pawar

Abstract: Education plays an important role in building a nation, it determines the future of India and its destiny. The role of education and its importance cannot be ignored in the current scenario¹. Therefore, a well-defined and forward-looking educational policy for the country at the school and university level is essential, as education leads to economic and social progress. It's growth and development can be seen when we compare the era before and after independence. The government announced its new education policy based on the recommendations of a committee of experts led by Dr. Kasturirangan, the former president of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)². Several changes were proposed, but the one that hit us closest to home was the abolition of the M.Phil. course. The paper discusses initiatives and measures that must be synchronized and taken systematically from various locations in order to pave a smooth implementation.

Keywords: NEP 2020, M.Phil., policy, education, India, Ph.D.

Introduction

India is well known for having a rich and historic educational system, especially the well-respected and powerful Gurukul institution. After all, the Indian educational system has changed significantly after independence, keeping certain aspects of its past while adjusting to the demands of the present. These modifications are an attempt to strike a balance between cultural heritage and modern, international educational requirements. The first educational policy was founded in 1968, then in 1986 a new policy came and in 1992 few changes were made, since then we have followed the same educational pattern for 34 years³. After 34 years, the Indian government proposed a new education policy in 2020. India is a liberal country when it comes to educational reforms. India currently has around 845 universities and around 40,000 higher education institutions (HIEs), reflecting the overall high level of fragmentation and many small universities in the country affiliated with these universities. It turns out that more than 40% of these small institutions are running independent programs against the expected reform to a multidisciplinary university style, which is an essential prerequisite for the educational reforms of the country for the 21st century. It is also observed that more than 20% of universities enrol less than 100 students annually, which prevents them from improving the quality of education, and only 4% of universities offer it due to the regional imbalances as well as the quality of education they offer. The New National Education Policy (NEP), a visionary document for the years to come. Several changes were proposed, but the one that hit us closest to home was the abolition

¹ James, Cobanoglu, Cavusoglu, New Education Policy (NEP) 2020: A Roadmap for India 2.0 <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?amp=&article=1046&context=m3publishing>

² Analysis of the Indian National Education Policy 2020 towards Achieving its Objectives P. S. Aithal* & Shubhrajyotsna Aithal

³ Aiyappa, V. (2020, July 31). *New education policy 2020: Advantages and disadvantages of NEP*. <https://www.oneindia.com.https://www.oneindia.com/india/new-education-policy-2020-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-nep-3127811.html>

of the M.Phil. course. The M.Phil. is an independent research degree and one that gives you skills similar to a Ph.D. Even if it lacks the elements of originality and knowledge creation that characterize a Ph.D., it is an achievement and significant research. It can lead to the development of methods or to testing the soundness of existing theories. The platform that a M.Phil. provides is particularly useful for undergraduate students whose school and college education did not adequately prepare them for independent research that can take many years. It gives the supervisor and investigator time to discover their understanding and comfort of the other and the opportunity to change supervisors if the M.Phil. experience has not worked out well. M.Phil. is never a mandatory Ph.D. requirement, but it is still a useful option for many and provides immense help to those who really need it.

Education Policies of India⁴

- 1968

Based on the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the first National Education Policy in 1968, calling for a "radical restructuring" and proposing equal educational opportunities for achieving national integration and greater strength of cultural and economic development. The guidelines required compulsory schooling for all children up to the age of 14, as stipulated in the Constitution of India, as well as special training and qualification of teachers. The politicians called for a focus on regional language learning and outlined the "three language formula" to be implemented in secondary education, teaching English, the official language of the state in which the school is located, and Hindi. Language education was considered essential to bridge the gap between the intelligentsia and the masses. Although the decision to adopt Hindi as a national language had been controversial, the policy required that the use and learning of Hindi be uniformly promoted to promote a common language for all Indians. The policy also encouraged the teaching of the ancient Sanskrit language, which was considered an integral part of the culture and heritage of India. The 1968 NPE called for spending on education to be increased to six percent of national income.⁵

- 1986

The Rajiv Gandhi Govt introduced a new national education policy which had a "special emphasis on eliminating inequality and equal educational opportunity", especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribal (ST) and Scheduled Caste (SC) communities. To realize this social integration, the policies adopted include the expansion of scholarships, adult education, recruitment of teachers from SC, incentives for low-income families to send their children to school regularly, development of new institutions, and the provision of accommodation and services. The NPE focused on a "child-centred approach" to basic education and launched an "Operations Whiteboard" to improve primary schools nationwide. The policy expanded the Open University system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University which had been formed in 1985. The policy also called for the creation of a "rural university" model, based on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy, to promote grassroots economic and social development in rural India. The 1986 education policy was expected to spend 6% of GDP on education.⁶

⁴ An Empirical Study on NEP 2020 [National Education Policy] with Special Reference to the Future of Indian Education System and Its effects on the Stakeholders
Pawan Kalyani

⁵ NPE-1968.PDF. (n.d.-i). https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/NPE-1968.pdf

⁶ Pjvois. (2023, March 5). *State of happiness*. Dynamics of Personality.
<https://dynamicsofpersonality.wordpress.com/category/state-of-happiness/>

- 1992

The P. V. Narasimha Rao government revised the 1986 National Policy on Education in 1992. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh implemented a new policy in 2005 based on his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's "Common Minimum Programme." Under the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986,⁷ the Programme of Action (PoA) 1992 envisaged the conduct of a common entrance examination on an all-India basis for admission to professional and technical programmes in the country.⁸ The Government of India, in a Resolution dated 18 October 2001, established a Three – Exam Scheme (JEE and AIEEE at the National Level and State Level Engineering Entrance Examinations (SLEEE) for State Level Institutions – with an option to join AIEEE) for admission to Engineering and Architecture/Planning programmes. This addresses the varying admission standards in these programmes while also assisting in the maintenance of professional standards. This also eliminates overlap issues and reduces the physical, mental, and financial burden placed on students and their parents as a result of the numerous entrance examinations.⁹

- 2020

The NEP 2020 proposes an education system centred on India, taking into account its tradition, culture, and values, in order to directly contribute to the country's transformation into an equitable, sustainable, and plangent knowledge society. The goal of the newly adopted education policy, NEP 2020, is to provide every student with a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary liberal education in order to improve the current situation. The policy's benefits and drawbacks are discussed further below.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
NEP 2020 has modified the structure from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4.	Regional and local languages will be promoted but English will take a back seat.
Multiple exit options will provide enough flexibility to students to learn & work together with varying certification options at different levels.	Introducing English from class 6th onwards will not give proper confidence & command in the English language to students.
The importance of board exams is made less important thus reducing pressure on students	Students willing to complete their graduation have to pursue a four years degree program while one can easily complete their diploma degree in two-year time.
NEP 2020 will promote our Indian culture & hence unity in diversity will be promoted.	Language is a negative factor as there is a problematic teacher-student relationship in India, so the introduction of native languages for any subject in academic institutes is a problem.
Higher education system & quality of colleges will improve through a common HECI.	

⁷ Nayak, New Education Policy 2017: Key changes and developments

⁸ Programme of action-. (n.d.-j). https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/POA_1992.pdf

Policy Evidences

According to the NEP 2020, students willing to complete their graduation have to pursue a four years degree program while one can easily complete their diploma degree in two-year time. This might encourage the students to leave the course halfway. The emphasis has been placed on a four-year Bachelor's degree (undergraduate) and a research-oriented Master's degree (post-graduation). Research will be included in UG, PG level and have a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach. More importantly, how will a low-income child answer this question when asked to graduate and contribute to the family income? Most of the students pursuing M.Phil. across the country see this as a drastic step and have expressed concern for their fate. With jeopardizing the future of some students who are currently pursuing M.Phil. programs, NEP 2020 has also undermined the relevance and importance of a degree like M.Phil.¹⁰ The academics said M.Phil. creates a "stronger foundation" for doctoral studies. Most graduate programs in our country do not offer students the opportunity to write on their own. There is usually homework and the jump from homework to thesis is too big. MPhil helps people get used to the rigors of research.

Policy Alternatives

Any policy is only as good as its implementation. Such implementation will require various initiatives and measures that must be synchronized and taken systematically from various locations.

1. **Restructuring of UG course system:** The course system should be redesigned in a manner that students can manage their internships/research and their academics. There should be a choice given to the students between the activities of the society or internship to secure grades and to be seen as a multi-disciplinary approach.

Rationale:

- To ease the burden of academics on students as the syllabus is vast with assignments and tests.
- To build confidence in students through societal activities as it will help them socialise with students of other departments.
- This will give a safe platform to students to venture into business through internships and volunteering.

2. **Introduction of 3-year post-graduate course:** post-graduate course should be introduced for 3 years means 2 years of theory and 1 year of intensive research. This should include research-based report writing and dissertation as a compulsion.

Rationale:

- To help the scholar build practical knowledge and real-life skills.
- This will enhance and brush up a scholar in the field of research before starting up Ph.D.
- It will also fulfil the vacuum created by the removal of M.Phil.

¹⁰Discontinuation of mphil may affect research at phd level: Scholars. Hindustan Times. (2020, July 30).

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi-news/discontinuation-of-mphil-may-affect-research-at-phd-level-scholars/story-sJV8ZwsLQtgki2zzeHICyL.html>

3. **The under-graduation program should remain for 3 years as it is and the diploma program should not be removed** - Diploma program open doors for education for students who are not financially stable and who are working full-time

Rationale:

- Short term programs will be helpful for students who are not financially stable.
- A 3-year program with 6 semesters won't make the course cumbersome.
- To ease the pressure of finances for the students belonging to an economically weaker section of the society.

The Criteria of Selection and Outcome Matrix

POLICY ALTERNATIVE	COST EFFECTIVE ANALYSIS (5)	TARGET THE ROOT CAUSE (5)	OUTREACH (5)	FINANCIAL LIABILITY (5)	TOTAL (20)
Restructuring of UG course system	No additional cost will be incurred since a basic foundation exists	Focus on Higher education reaching all students i.e. availability and accessibility	Students of the urban population will benefit a lot	Infrastructure already exists	
	Cost will be only on the qualitative upliftment and upgrading of the education	Target the issue of balancing between education, internships or extracurricular activities	Students from the rural background will still need a push to enrol in UG programmes	Finances will be borne by UGC	
	4	4	2	5	15
Introduction of 3- year post-graduate course	Along with the existing budget the student fees will face a hike and so will the salaries of the teachers	To help the scholar build practical knowledge and real-life skills	Helpful for students who are especially willing to pursue Ph.D.	The govt can provide scholarships to academically brilliant students so that the human resource does not drain out to foreign universities	

	The research guidance teachers hired should be industry experts with a good amount of experience, and not limited to just college professors	To train the scholars in the field of research in order to pursue a Ph.D.	Beneficial for students who will join the workforce after a masters as they will gain field knowledge	Funds can be brought from HRD Ministry	
	3	5	5	3	16
The under-graduation program should remain for 3 years as it is and the diploma program should not be removed	No new finances will be incurred	Short term programs will be helpful for students who are not financially stable	Students from EWS category would benefit	Govt will have to allocate funds for the 3-year Graduation and Diploma courses and the colleges can decide on the fees structure	
	Loss of jobs if the Diploma course is done away with	Another target is that a 3-year program with 6 semesters won't make the course cumbersome			
	3	4	3	5	15

Based on the evaluation above, the introduction of a 3-year post-graduate course will have the largest impact. Given the scale of the problem and seriousness of the issue it is the chosen alternative.

Projected Outcomes

The policy aims to shorten the time period of an under-graduate to a 3-year course as it was and to increase the post-graduate course by adding an extra year. This will help the scholar to use their theory knowledge of 2 year and implement it in their final year through field work. This intervention will help the scholar to use the theory in different areas to write their research paper and reports which help them explore different research methodologies. These methodologies and field work will help the scholars to write their thesis while pursuing their Ph.D. if they wish to. While framing this policy alternative, the expected outcomes were:

- To target the scholar to build practical knowledge and real-life skills
- To train the scholars in the field of research in order to pursue a Ph.D. This will enhance and brush up a scholar in the field of research before starting up Ph.D.
- It will also fulfil the vacuum created by the removal of M.Phil.

Drawbacks

The discontinuation of the M.Phil. programme under the New Education Policy 2020, will affect the quality of research at Ph.D. level as well as question the validity of degrees of the researchers who are currently pursuing the programme. Viewing this drastic decision taken by the government, most students pursuing M.Phil. across the country have expressed their concern over their fate. The M.Phil. course is one of the most advanced and intensive research degrees and trains students in field work. In this way, the program also enables students seek better career opportunities compared to master's degrees. After their M.Phil., several students could work for a time and then decide on a Ph.D. program.

Conclusion

In order to conclude, it is clear that regular improvement of the educational system is essential for human development and the sustainable progress of society. The country can prosper and outperform by planning and adopting educational policies. In this sense, this National Education Policy 2020 is an integrative model of the NPE 2019 with many innovations to allow a liberal but specialized and tailored school and university education through the integration of research components at both the school and university levels. One of the main goals of NEP 2020 was to align higher education with international standards. Without hastily eliminating the M.Phil. program, it would have been helpful if NEP 2020 had reviewed the relevance and importance of a program like M.Phil.

References

1. National education policy 2020. (n.d.-i). https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
2. Kumar, K. (2005). Quality of Education at the Beginning of the 21st Century: Lessons from India. *Indian Educational Review*, 40(1), 3-28.
3. Aithal, P. S. & Aithal, Shubhrajyotsna (2019). Analysis of Higher Education in Indian National Education Policy Proposal 2019 and its Implementation Challenges. *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML)*, 3(2), 1-35.
4. Discontinuation of mphil may affect research at phd level: Scholars. *Hindustan Times*. (2020a, July 30). <https://www.hindustantimes.com/delhi-news/discontinuation-of-mphil-may-affect-research-at-phd-level-scholars/story-sJV8ZwsLQgtgki2zzeHICyL.html>