

**CHALLENGES IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATION THROUGH  
NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY**

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**ABSTRACT**

India is an energetic country with younger population and having provided professionals and skilled persons for all the major developed sectors in various countries, such as software, medical, mechanical, engineering sector and others and its education system is third largest system in the world in terms of students' enrolment. During the period of diamond jubilee Independence Day celebrations, there is a need for transformation and reorientation in higher education system in India. Since quality education leads to quality life and as after seventy-five years of independence, country's school and higher education system still suffering with inadequate budget allocation, lack of infrastructure, poor quality teachers, inadequate research facilities and poor performance of institutions in global ranking system. It is also evidenced by lack of employability, skill developed and value-added courses. Indian universities and colleges have been producing more than ninety percentage of graduates is dismal. The Indian educational institutions of central and state are handicapped with bureaucratic and conventional administrative structure. The course structure and syllabi have not been catering the needs of local, national and global. More over 50 percentage of HEIs are lagging behind in enrolment and quality improvement. The shortage of financial support for the last ten years from the government agencies at state and central level also led to poor performance in quality and employment perspective. The following are the objectives of the research paper, as the paper focused on the issues and challenges of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) and need of the transformation through National Education Policy 2020 (NEP): To examine the issues and challenges of HEIs in India for the last decade and to evaluate the necessity of reforms in education system in India.

**Major Findings:**

India's Higher Education sector has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of Universities/University level Institutions & Colleges since independence. Comparing with enrolment in school education institutions the higher education institutions are not up to the mark. The following are issues and challenges in HEIs.

Low Enrolment Ratio in higher educational institutions necessitates the reformative measures to be initiated. According to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report 2021, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) increased to 27.1% which a marginal growth over last year's growth 26.3%. The GER is quite low as compared to developed countries as well as developing countries.

**GER in 2019-20**

India	Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Tribes
27.1 (Male 26.9 & female 27.3)	23.4	18.0

GER for male population is 26.9 and for female, it is 27.3. For Scheduled Castes, it is 23.4 and for Scheduled Tribes, it is 18.0 as compared to the national GER of 27.1. which is quite low as compared to the developed as well as, other developing countries.

The total enrolment in Higher education was 3.42 crores in 2014-15, 3.74 crores in 2018-19 and it was increased to 3.85 crores by 2019-20. The enrolment growth rate during 2018-19 and 2019-20 was 3.04 percent.

**STUDENT-TEACHER RATIO**

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Universities and Colleges is 28 if regular mode enrolment is considered whereas PTR for Universities and its Constituent Units is 18 for regular mode.

Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) over the years is shown in the table. State-wise PTR for All Institutions, University & Colleges and University & its Constituent Units for the last 5 years taking the enrolment through Regular Mode of education and through both Regular & Distance mode are shown in Table. It is pertinent to mention that PTR for the year 2016-17 and 2017-18, is showing declining trend.

**Teacher-Students Ratio for Regular Enrolment**

Year	Universities/Colleges	Universities/Its Constituency Units
2015-16	21	16
2016-17	25	19
2017-18	30	20
2018-19	29	18
2019-20	28	18

Source: All India Survey on Higher Education 2019-20

**Pupil-Teacher Ratio during last 5 years:**

Year	Telangana	India
2015-16	16	23
2016-17	17	26
2017-18	19	29
2018-19	18	26
2019-20	17	26

Source: All India Survey on Higher Education 2019-20

Poor infrastructural facilities and lack of qualified faculty are another issue in higher educational institutions. However, the government is focussing on improvement of these facilities, a greater number of institutions is suffering with lack of infrastructural facilities and less financial support. So, it is posing a challenge to them in retaining well qualified teachers in their institutions. The impact of poor infrastructural facilities in schools can also be seen in students' dropout rates and low-teachers retention rates in HEIs.

During 2015-16 to 2018-19, the country spent less than 3 per cent of its GDP on education sector. Thus, public education spending could not reach the benchmark set by education policies. This led to poor facilities and lack of accommodation, laboratory and research facilities in higher educational institutions after 70 years of independence.

Year	Expenditure as % of GDP	Expenditure as % of Budget
2013-14	3.1	1.47
2014-15	2.8	1.29
2015-16	2.8	1.43
2016-17	2.8	1.47
2017-18	2.9	1.62
2018-19	3.0	1.43

Source: Economic Survey 2018-19, Volume 2

Source: Union budget, GOI.

Poor quality issue is also to be focused in HEIs, as without improving the quality in education, the country cannot attain the sustainable development goals. It can be fulfilled by providing career-oriented and value-oriented courses and accordingly need based education to cater their needs in national and global level.

India's education system, in terms of students, is third largest in the world. In future, country will be one of the largest education hubs. The 'Right to Education Act' which stipulates compulsory and free education has brought about a revolution in the education system of the country with statistics revealing a staggering enrolment in schools over the last four years. The number of universities has increased 34 times from 20 to 677 during 1950 to 2014. Despite these numbers, international education rating agencies have not placed many of these institutions within the best of the world ranking. However, investment in education is growing, 25 per cent of its population is still illiterate; only 15 per cent of Indian students reach high school and just 7 per cent graduate. The education quality in India, both in primary and higher education, is significantly poor as compared to major developing and developed nations in the world.

Insufficient financial resources, inadequate focus on research facilities in higher education institutions led to ambiguity among the students and teachers to continue in higher education or to seek alternative sources, which turns them to poor life standards. There are insufficient resources and facilities as well as limited numbers of quality teachers to advise students. Moreover, most of the students and research scholars in colleges and universities are without fellowships or not getting their fellowships on time which affecting their research and Indian higher education institutions are poorly connected to research centres, both in private and government sectors. So, this is another important area of challenge to the higher education in India.

Faculty turning out from teacher and researcher to administrative supporter and document makers, as the education system has been gradually becoming obsolete. Despite more these challenges, Indian higher education system equally has lot of opportunities to overcome these challenges and issues and have the capability to make its identity in the world. However, India provides highly qualified and skilled people to other countries, it is also utmost important to have greater transparency and accountability and emerging scientific research in education system. Therefore; it is very easy for India to transfer our country from a developing nation to a developed nation with high quality of education with in the short period through new education policy.

#### Transformation of HEIs through NEP:

The New Educational Policy (NEP) in 2020, announced by the Indian Government, envisages major initiatives for the transformation of school and higher education in India following manner:

The budget allocation for education is increased to 6 percentage of GDP. This may cater the financial needs for the development of academic and research activities in higher education.

Establishment of National Higher Educational Commission (NHEC) and National Research Foundation (NRF) help in strengthening of HEIs and enable them to meet the challenges of the future as well as the aspirations.

Transforming Higher Educational Institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, higher education clusters and autonomous degree colleges may give liberation to HEIs in designing and developing the curriculum and co-curriculum with more focussing on skill and value-based education and to offer employability courses to their stakeholders, along with catering their students' educational needs. The quality teaching is imperative, in order to attract learners to higher educational institutions. Currently, colleges and universities across the country are short on faculty. Country needs 3.3 million more teachers in educational institutions to improve the teacher-student ratio, from 1:28 to an ideal 1:15.

There is a need for the implementation of innovative practices and transformational approach to make Indian educational system more relevant and competitive at national and international level.

Government must take initiatives for the collaborations and generate linkages between Indian higher education institutions and international institutions and also linkages between national research laboratories and research centres of top institutions of the world for better quality and collaborative research. Then the graduate students and research scholars can achieve excellence, gain deeper knowledge of subject so that they will settle with a best career after recruitment in the companies. Then the higher education institutions will succeed in producing globally capable younger generation with more diversified qualities.

**Conclusion:**

After Independence, though school and higher education in India has expanded very rapidly in the last six decades, it is not equally accessible to all in the society. Still a large section of the population remains illiterate and a large number of children do not get even primary education. India is still facing various challenges and issues in higher education but has to take measures and to boost higher education is also utmost important. India is a country of huge human resource potential, to utilise this potential properly is the issue to be tackled through the implementation of new education policy 2020. There are more number of opportunities but how to get benefits from these opportunities and how to make them accessible to others is the matter of concern. In order to sustain the rapid rate of economic growth and quality in education system, there is need to increase the number of institutes and also the quality of higher education in India. To reach and achieve the future requirements of higher education institutes, there is an urgent need to relook at the allocation of financial resources, access and equity, quality standards, relevance, infrastructure and at the end the responsiveness.

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