



National Education Policy 2020: education opportunities after school completion

THE REFORMS UNDER THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 MAKE IT EASIER FOR INDIAN STUDENTS TO ENTER REPUTED INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES AND ENHANCE INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIAN AND FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES, SAY **JYOTI SHARMA** AND **PRASAD KDV YARLAGADDA**.

The world is undergoing rapid technological advances as a result of global problems and unforeseen challenges. Climate change and pollution, increasing demand for energy, water, food, and sanitation, and depleting natural resources have created the need for a workforce with a new set of skills.

The growing threat of epidemics and pandemics calls for collaborative research and learning, and heightens the need for multidisciplinary education. Highly skilled human resources in areas of big data, machine learning, artificial intelligence, mathematics, physics, and computer sciences, in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across sciences, social sciences, and the humanities are the need of the hour.

India will have the highest global population of young people over the next decade with the potential of becoming one of the largest economies in the world. Building an education system that provides equitable access to high quality education for all learners regardless of social or economic backgrounds will support future economic development.

The skills mismatch and a missing link between education and employment have remained at the centre of educational debates. In an increasingly competitive world, it has been proved that the invention and profusion of new technologies are necessary for economic progress. Thus, the newly revamped and reenergised education policy has the potential to become the framework for closing the gap through inter-institutional partnerships and vocational training.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) announced in India recently supports and promotes problem-solving, innovation, and creative thinking. It also recognises students' interests, inherited skills, the need for well-resourced infrastructure and a trained passionate

team of teachers. The policy focuses on recognising, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student through the development of conceptual understanding.

Multidisciplinary and holistic education across sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports are the main pillars of this policy. The new policy encourages the development of vocational courses and strengthening of literacy and numeracy at the foundational level, and provides opportunities to complete a four-year undergraduate and master's degree with exit options at different stages. This policy aligns with the current educational practices of many developed countries and renews the scope for collaboration with international institutes.

A large number of Indian students attend foreign universities and are placed in second position in international student mobility after China. A UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2018 report says that more than 5.3 million higher education students study abroad, and 75 000 out of those belong to India; Australia, Canada, Germany, UK, and USA are favourite destinations. For example, cultural and university diversity, natural environment, financial aid options, employment opportunities, and scope to become permanent residents act as the driving force for Indian students to opt for Australia as a choice of preference. The Project Atlas report of 2019 also showed that Australia (28%), Canada (21.4%), U.K (20.9%), and New Zealand (15.5%) host the largest shares of international students in comparison to their total higher education student intakes.

Why do Indian students prefer to go abroad?

Tough competition in premium educational institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc), Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research

(IISER), etc.

The multidisciplinary approach and high quality of education in foreign universities and the availability of need-based programmes that can fulfil industrial demands.

The opportunity to study disciplines that are not offered by Indian universities and the scope for research. Immigration opportunities after completion of education.

NEP 2020 paves the way towards a new era of education that will enable more Indian students to enter foreign universities including institutes of excellence and promote collaboration with them. It recommends the overhauling of the school and higher education sectors to deliver high quality education, with equity and inclusion. A holistic and multidisciplinary education through Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), introduction of vocational courses, and multiple exit options during the undergraduate or master's degrees, combined with credit transfer, may foster international mobility programmes with other parts of the world. The new policy provides two major propositions for Indian students that enable entry of Indian students to foreign universities without loss of time or money.

Multiple exit options with an appropriate certificate, diploma, or degree and permission to acquire credits in foreign universities.

An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) to store academic credits earned from various recognised Higher Education Institutes (HEIs).

The policy makes foreign education accessible to those students who cannot afford higher education abroad by advising legislative framework to facilitate the establishment of branches of the top 100 foreign universities in India. As per the policy recommendation, Memoranda of Understandings (MoUs) will also be signed

with high-quality foreign institutions to facilitate research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges. Additionally, high-performing Indian institutes have also been encouraged to set up campuses in other countries.

During the earlier Five Year Plans, there was no serious attempt to establish formal linkages between vocational courses and higher education, or creating horizontal and vertical mobility avenues for students from vocational education streams. The social stigma attached to vocational education and the lack of clear guidelines for students who had such qualifications made it less popular in India. The changes now suggested by the new policy will open doors to learning from established vocational institutes around the world and highlight the dignity of labour and the importance of various Indian traditional vocations at the global level.

The vocational education training (VET) system of developed countries like Australia, Germany, South Korea, and the United States are well recognised. Sharma and Yarlagadda reported in 2018 that other than formal education, the Australian education system focuses on strong linkages between schooling, vocational, and higher education systems. NEP 2020 encourages a culture of vocational education and opens well defined vertical mobility – students can move from Indian vocational institutes to higher education institutes in India and abroad. Similar to exchanges between higher education institutions, there is scope for increased engagement between Indian vocational institutes and those outside.

The new policy envisages expanding the horizon of opportunities for students from India to obtain world-leading education from renowned foreign educational institutes. To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4.4 and utilise the full potential of India's demographic dividend, NEP 2020 is aligned with education policies of other developed countries and opens multiple pathways for

investment in innovation capital and skill development through international collaborative avenues. **T**

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