INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY (IJREP)
An International Peer Reviewed Journal
http://ijrep.com/

Vol.3 Issue 4
2017

RESEARCH ARTICLE

ISSN:2455-426X

NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 2016: QUALITY STANDARDS AND STATUS OF INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Dr. Mohsin Ali Khan

(Sr.Lecturer, Rameesh Institute Education, Greater Noida.)

Email: dr.khanalimohsin@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. The New National Policy on Education (NPE,2016) which is being formulated nearly three decades, since the last Policy (NPE,1986) recognizes the criticality of education; as the most important vehicle for social, economic and political transformation. While the Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world, the quality of universities and colleges and the education they offer, is far from satisfactory. Even the topmost Indian institutions do not figure in the international rankings of universities in the world. Though the alumni from IIT and IIM, Mr.Satya Nadela, CEO of Microsoft and Sunder Pichhai CEO of Google are the two best product of our technical institutes. The key to improvement in quality of education is to have better qualified, better trained, better motivated and more accountable teachers at every level of education. The poor quality of School education is a direct result of poor quality of teacher education and teacher training which in turn affects the quality of all spheres of education. The draft of New National Policy on Education (NPE 2016) has tried to address above said deficiencies and challenges, along with the need to sharply increase the quality of Indian education. It offers a framework for change, make education modern with optimal use of technology, without compromising on India's traditions and heritage, which may keep us more informed and motivated in techno world.

Keywords: *NPE 2016, Quality Standards, IIT, IIM, NAAC, NCTE, AICTE, CABE*

INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is the era of globalization, liberalization and techno driven, where all sectors of education including teacher education need to be revitalized keeping in view, the changing role of the teacher, and revision of content, teaching strategies and ultimately the whole education system accordingly. Education is a powerful tool for preparing our citizens in the knowledge society. Education will amalgamate globalization with localization, enabling our children and youth to become world citizens, with their roots deeply embedded in Indian culture and traditions.

Policies are part and parcel of almost all the countries across the globe. India is one of the countries which has been working on a number of education policies since long. A policy is a deliberate system of principles to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. The National Policy on Education (NPE 2016), which is being formulated nearly three decades since the last Policy, recognizes the criticality of Education as the most important vehicle for social, economic and political transformation. It reiterates the role of education in inculcating values, and to provide skills and competencies for the citizens, and in enabling him to contribute to the nation's well-being; strengthens democracy by empowering citizens; acts as an integrative force in society, and fosters social cohesion and national identity.

ISSUES IN QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

One cannot over emphasize the role of Education as the key catalyst for promoting socio-economic mobility in building an equitable and just society. It is an established fact that an education system built on the premises of quality and equity is central to sustainable success in the emerging knowledge economy.

The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) is the highest advisory body to advise the Central and State Governments. "The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavour to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it the powerful instrument of social, economic and cultural transformation necessary for the realization of the national goals. For this purpose, education should be developed so as to increase productivity, achieve social and national integration, accelerate the process of modernization and cultivate social, moral and spiritual values,"(Dr.S. Radhakrishnan Commission1948-49).

While the Indian higher education system is one of the largest in the world, the quality of universities and colleges and the education they offer is far from satisfactory. The number of institutions of high quality is limited. Even the topmost Indian institutions do not figure in the international rankings of universities in the world. This is an issue of major concern and the subject of frequent public discourse in India.

The quality and standards of Indian higher education institutions need to be upgraded systematically and sustained at a high level through rigorous screening, innovation and research, recognition of excellence and creativity. Currently there is no regular system of regular monitoring of educational outcomes. Higher education and research institutions in India have evolved in divergent specialised streams, with each stream being monitored by an apex body.

QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The UGC has an omnibus mandate, covering all aspects relating to recognition, accreditation, curriculum approval, permission to start courses, disbursement of grants to institutions, and management of scholarship programmes.The National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) are autonomous bodies, which recognise and accredit programmes offered by professional and technical institutions in the disciplines of engineering and technology, management, architecture, pharmacy and hospitality.

In addition, there are a number of other professional councils established by statute as well as autonomous coordinating or regulatory bodies, many of which are authorised to perform the functions of recognition and accreditation of institutions and courses of study under their jurisdiction.These include the Quality Council of India (QCI), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the Bar Council of India (BCI), the Medical, Pharmacy and Dental Councils of India (MCI, PCI and DCI), the Nursing Council of India (INC) the Central Councils of Homoeopathy and Indian Medicine (CCH and CCIM), the Institute of Management and Engineering (IME), the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), the National Councils for Teacher Education (NCTE), the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), among other regulatory bodies in the country.

According to UGC data for 2014-15, there were 329 state universities, 46 central universities, 128 deemed to be universities, 74 institutions of national importance, and 205 state private universities functioning in the country. There were40,760 colleges (UGC Annual Report, 2014-15).The total estimated enrolment in all higher education institutions in year 2014-15 was 3.33 crore. There is a large network of research institutions providing courses of advanced learning and research leading up to a Ph.D. in branches of science, technology, agriculture, social sciences, languages and other disciplines. Many of these institutions come under the umbrella of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Even though a very few of these national research institutions are referred to as islands of excellence, the overall impression about the quality of research, and the output and performance of most of these agencies over the decades has been not seen to be satisfactory.

VARIATIONS IN QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Education is a powerful tool for preparing our citizens in the knowledge society. Education will amalgamate globalization with localization, enabling our children and youth to become world citizens, with their roots deeply embedded in Indian culture and traditions.

At present, there are wide variations in the quality of higher education institutions in India. Some institutions, such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs) and the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), have been globally acclaimed for their high quality of education. Alumni from these institutions have made impressive contributions in science, technology, research, management, business and commerce both in India and abroad. Satya

Nadela, CEO of Microsoft and Sunder Pichhai CEO of Google are the two best example of indian American who are the product of indian institutes.

The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the National Institutes of Technology (NITs) and the Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), are among the most prestigious institutions in the field of science, technology, and management.Technical education has grown rapidly in recent years, with the annual enrolment of scientists, engineers and technicians exceeding 20 lakhs. The breakup includes around 9.5 lakh engineers, who have undergone a 4-year undergraduate degree; 7 lakh diploma holders; over a lakh computer scientists with post-graduate degrees and 2.4 lakh Management Professionals, apart from about 30,000 architects and 50,000 B Pharma graduates.

In UNESCO report (2014) related to scenario of higher education; India ranked 9th out of fourteen developing countries and maintain a target of 16 percent rate in the enrolment of higher education, which is far behind than Thailand and Philippine in the enrolment of higher education i.e. 28 &19 percent. Among top hundred universities, USA has fifty four (54) UK has eleven (11) and Japan has five (5) universities, whereas world's top ten universities belong to UK and USA.We are unfortunate to have none of the position among top ten or hundred world's premier universities, though we had a very old and strong system of higher education in form of Nalanda and Taxshila centers of higher education.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH GLOBAL UNIVERSITIES

More than 180,000 students travel abroad for higher education ever year and the Minister hopes that this number will reduce as foreign universities start operations in India. More than 35 per cent of India's 1.25 billion people are estimated to be under 14 and it is a large market for graduate courses. Presently, several foreign universities are already offering courses in India through partnerships with Indian institutions, but they are not allowed to grant foreign degrees.

According to the National Knowledge Commission (NKC, 2007) more emphasis is to be given to the right to education bill (RTE) and establishment of new central and state universities to reach a target of 15 percent enrolment in higher education. Min. of HRD has taken some stern steps in the direction of globalization of higher education by revising and refreshing, the sec. education syllabus, freedom of subject choices, and the criteria for admission and examination.

The NKC has recommended to MHRD regarding the quality of education that;

- The govt. has to increase investment in training and research for enhancement of quality education,
- Public-Private partnership to be encouraged. Cost-sharing of higher education is to be promoted to motivate meritorious and weaker students,
- Content and curriculum has to be reformed to meet the local, national and international demands for self employment,
- Finance and management of higher education accountable and flexible to cope up demands of masses not the classes,

- A strong mechanism at state and centre level is to be developed to initiate, control and coordinate the various segments of higher education.

15th March, 2010 is a historic day for the Education industry in India, since that day. India's cabinet approved a proposal to allow foreign universities to set up campuses in India and offer degrees. The Parliament has to still approve the Bill before it becomes a law, and given the fact that many politicians run Higher Educational Institutions in India. This Bill has been in cold storage even after the formation of new government which has taken many initiatives to revitalize higher education. The Bill really contain the following provisions are as under;

- Foreign Universities can now set up a campus in India and provide degrees to students in India
- Foreign University will need to deposit Rs 50 crore (Rs 500 million) as corpus fund and cannot take back the surplus generated from education activities in the country.
- Each institute will have to be registered with the university Grants Commission or any regulatory body in place at the time of registration.
- The bill has a provision under which the government can reject an application of a university if it feels that venture will have an adverse impact on national security.
- The proposed law sets out rules and regulations that foreign educational institutions would have to follow before opening in India. The process would take at least eight months.

FACTS ABOUT QUALITY STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Many of the private universities, colleges and institutes operate under political patronage and take advantage of a lax or corrupt regulatory environment to run courses and offer 'degrees' which are of little use in the employment market. Students mainly coming from rural and semi-urban backgrounds often fall prey to these institutes and colleges. The majority of higher education institutions fall in between these two extremes. These institutions vary widely in terms of infrastructure, library and laboratory facilities, quality of teachers and teaching-learning processes. Many universities and colleges have poor infrastructure facilities and face shortage of qualified teachers. In general, around 40 percent of the teaching positions remain vacant in many institutions. A fundamental weakness is the lack of transparency and accountability in the system, which is exacerbated by the strength of teacher unions, threat of strikes and the affiliations of student bodies with different political parties.

Teacher Availability With the rapid increase in the number of higher education institutions, the availability of quality teachers has emerged as a major constraint. This has implications for maintaining the quality of higher education even as the sector expands.Teacher availability in higher education depends upon enrolment in post-graduate courses and research programmes. Currently, students at postgraduate level and above constitute less than 12 percent of the total enrolment.

Private institutions rarely focus on education and research at the post graduate level. Moreover, for most students, teaching is not the preferred choice and comes only after private sector and government employment. A related issue is the need to ensure that good

candidates enter the teaching profession. Teachers in higher education are currently either selected to individual institutions, as in the case of university departments, aided colleges and private colleges, or to a system or cluster of institutions, as in the case of government colleges.

There is merit in recruiting and attaching teachers to institutions so that they develop institutional loyalty and commitment to improve the quality of that institution. However, whether the teachers are selected for an institution or for the system, the recruitment process should be so structured as to ensure the entry of quality of teachers into the system. It was brought to the notice of the Committee that there are several reasons for faculty posts remaining vacant. First, there is reluctance on the part of some states to fill posts on a regular basis with the aim of saving the outgo on salaries of full-time faculty. Second, the recruitment process through the public service commission is often time-consuming. A large number of teaching positions are lying vacant, especially in state universities and affiliated colleges. The process of recruitment also gets delayed due to litigation. However the alternative of recruiting ad-hoc and part-time faculty impacts adversely on the quality of teaching and research.

ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Accreditation is a higher threshold of minimal quality assurance; it validates and provides assurance that the quality of education provided by the institution meets a common standard. Accreditation is important for the institution, the student and for prospective employers. For assurance of quality and adherence to academic standards, accreditation enhances the reputation and acceptability of the institution and the degree conferred by it. It increases the employability and worth of the student in the job market by enabling prospective employers to filter and grade individuals on the basis of a common standard of accreditation. It reassures recruiters that the student has received quality education and will add value to the establishment when he joins it.

Until recently, accreditation was voluntary and institutions of higher education had to approach the accreditation agencies to get their institution or programme accredited. However, in 2013, stemming from the recommendations of the National Knowledge Commission (2007-08) and the Yashpal Committee (2009) the UGC notified new regulations (the Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions Regulations, 2012) making accreditation mandatory for all institutions of higher education other than those in the technical and medical streams. Without accreditation, no general-stream university or college was to be eligible for grants from the UGC. Thus, the current position is that accreditation is mandatory only for general stream higher education institutions receiving grants-in-aid from the UGC. Technical and medical institutions are not required to go through the accreditation process. This is an anomaly and lacuna which needs to be corrected. A detailed recommendation to this effect has been made elsewhere in this Report.

Out of the 164 universities recognized by the UGC, 140 have got themselves accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), with only 32%

percent being rated as A grade or above. Among the 4,870 colleges, 2,780 are accredited by the NAAC, with barely 9% making the A or above grade. Among the accredited institutions, 68% of the universities and 91% of the colleges are rated average or below average in terms of the quality parameters specified by the NAAC. Quality and excellence in colleges clearly leaves much to be desired. Apart from accreditation, ranking of higher educational institutions is another useful indicator of institutional performance. There is no official ranking system for higher education institutions in India. The MHRD has recently announced an official ranking system for higher education institutions in India.

TEACHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The key to improvement in quality of education is to have better qualified, better trained, better motivated and more accountable teachers. The poor quality of School education is a direct result of poor quality of teacher education and teacher training. Teacher education programs, both at the graduate and diploma level are of indifferent quality. Reforms have been neglected for far too long. The main issues facing teacher education are:

(i) Teaching is not the preferred choice when it comes to career options. Students with better scores prefer engineering, medical, management and technology courses. Even those who join humanities courses, do not prefer the teaching profession. Those who do not get admission in any of these courses join B.Ed. as a last resort.

(ii) The quality of most B.Ed. and diploma programs is far from satisfactory. A one-year programme of teachers' education does not cover either the subject content or pedagogy adequately. These courses have been mainly theoretical with little attention to practical training.

(iii) There has been a proliferation of substandard institutions offering B.Ed. and other diploma courses in teachers' education. State governments and NCTE were partners in approving such institutions, most of which were nothing better than degree shops.

(iv) NCTE has recently prescribed minimum course of two years for B. Ed which would result in government schools getting better quality teachers in future. Until then the system will have to depend on inadequately qualified or trained teachers.

(v) For many years the entry level for diploma programs was 10th pass and these teachers were expected to teach classes up to 7th or 8th standard. It is only recently that RTE has prescribed graduation as the minimum qualification for new teachers of upper primary classes.

(vi) The introduction of a four-year post senior secondary, integrated BA/B.Sc., B.Ed. courses in all States will greatly improve the quality of teacher education. The student will then make an affirmative career choice in favour of teaching; the course will be strong in subject content and the student will get adequate time for practical training to acquire pedagogical skills.

(vii) The States should gradually convert the existing two-year B.Ed. Program to a four-year integrated course, supported by an offer of preferential employment to such graduates.

(viii) In the long run a five-year integrated course after class X for elementary school teachers and another five-year course after XII for higher secondary teachers should be introduced.

(ix) An advance one-year diploma course for secondary teachers should also be introduced to enable them to teach higher secondary classes.

(x) For hilly, tribal and remote areas, alternative models of pre-service training need to be explored.

(xi) DIETs, in these areas should run five-year course after standard 8th or three year-courses after the 10th exclusively for girls, with full financial support and job assurance.This will address the problem of teacher shortages which are endemic in such areas.

(xii) There should be minimum eligibility condition with 50% marks at graduate level for entry to existing B Ed courses.

(xiii) Teacher Entrance Tests (TET) should be made compulsory for recruitment of all teachers. The Centre and states should jointly lay down norms and standards for TET.

(xiv) For existing teachers compulsory training every five years should be the norm.

(xv) The learning outcomes of each class should be laid down and evaluated through periodic internal and external assessments.

(xvi) Teachers should be held accountable for failure to achieve learning outcomes within the prescribed time frame.

(xvii) Compulsory licensing or certification for teachers in government and private schools should be made mandatory, with provision for renewal every 10 years based on independent external testing.

(xviii) Poor quality of teaching is partially attributable to the SCERTs and DIETs, which lack the required competence and capability. There are a large number of vacancies in these two organisations which have not been filled up for years. These positions should be filled immediately to strengthen the institutions and build capacity.

(xix) At present the DIETs do not have an independent cadre. A separate cadre for teacher trainers is to be established in every state.

(xx) Ideally, teacher trainers should have the same qualifications and pay scales as college lecturers.

The minimum teaching experience should also be prescribed for such teacher trainers.In addition to SCERT and DIETs, B.Ed. colleges having good academic record as well as the university departments of education should be utilised for inservice training of teachers.In many States teachers' unions have taken keen interest in improving quality of education. In such cases, teachers unions and associations should be encouraged to accept academic responsibility and contribute to the development of curriculum and textbooks.

CREATION OF A NATIONAL EDUCATION FUND

The UGC currently distributes 35,000 fellowships worth about Rs.1050 crores each year. Fellowships are also awarded by other ministries like Agriculture, Defence and Science &Technology of Government of India. It is estimated that around 40-50 thousand fellowships

are available every year in the country.With the objective of encouraging merit and promoting equity, a National Fellowship Fund, primarily designed to support the tuition fees, learning material and living expenses for about 10 lakh students every year should be created. The scholarships from this fund should be made available to students belonging to the economically weaker sections, specifically those below the poverty line. A separate national talent scholarship scheme to be administered after class 12 should be set up for meritorious students of all categories selected through a national level examination to be linked with this scheme.

CONCLUSION

India today has one of the largest systems of education in terms of number of institutions, teachers and students. An enormous infrastructure exists. Decades of insufficient focus, lack of adequate attention and mismanagement have seriously eroded the quality of our education system. For the first time, the Government of India has embarked on a time-bound grassroots consultative process, which has enabled the Ministry of HRD to reach out to individuals across the country through over 2.75 lakh direct consultations while also taking input from citizens online to frame the policy.The New National Policy on Education NPE,2016 has tried to address above said deficiencies and challenges, along with the need to sharply increase the quality of Indian education. It offers a framework for change; make education modern with optimal use of technology, without compromising on India's traditions and heritage, which will keep us more informed, alert and jubilant. There is an imperative need to implement and monito the new policy with full courage and on time to get desired results in quality of Indian higher education.

REFERENCES

1. Agarwal, Pawan (2009): Indian Higher Education Envisioning the Future. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
2. Anandakrishnan,A.(2010): 'Accountability and Transparency in University Governance', University News, Vol. 48, No. 45, 8-14 November, pp. 18-23.
3. Association of Indian Universities (2012): Foreign Educational Providers in India, 2010. New Delhi: AIU.
4. Government of India (2012): Committee on Corporate Sector Participation in Higher Education: Report of N R Narayana Murthy Committee, Planning Commission, New Delhi.
5. Government of India (2015): Report on a Policy Framework for Reforms in Education,MHRD, New Delhi.
6. MHRD (2016): Report of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) Committee on Autonomy of Higher Education Institutions, Department of Secondary and Higher Education, New Delhi.
7. MHRD: Ministry of Human Resource Development (2009): Report of the Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education, New Delhi, MHRD.
8. Joshi, S.K. (2011): 'A new direction of governance and regulation in higher education', Journal of Educational Planning and Administration, Vol.1, No.2, pp.173-178.
9. Knight, J. (2006): Higher education crossing borders: A guide to the implications of the GATS for cross-border education, Paris: UNESCO/Commonwealth of Learning.
10. Antony, Stella (2002): External quality assurance in Indian higher education: Case study of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Paris: International Institute for Educational Planning.