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Reforms in higher education in India: National education policy - 2020

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Abstract--The world is transforming quickly, with it, the requirement for universal access to top-notch higher education. The present shift toward higher quality is the most effective way of developing and maximizing our country's vast talent pool. The new National Education Policy is being created to address the challenges of making every higher education institution a reputable and best institution for higher education. It is in shambles, and there is a lack of emphasis on cognitive skill development and learning outcomes. Higher education helps to shape a nation that is enlightened, socially conscious, ethical, knowledgeable, and skilled in devising and implementing effective solutions to its problems. The proposed reforms in India's Higher Education System, regulatory structure, and teaching pedagogy are analysed in this paper. The expenditures of various countries on education, including SAARC and BRICS, were also compared to their respective GDPs.

Keywords--National Education Policy, Reforms, Higher Education, Regulatory Structure, SAARC, BRICS.

Introduction

Expansion of higher education results in economic growth, variety, expanded resources, and technological advances; Higher education contributes to the

development of a nation that is liberal, socially conscious, intelligent, and capable of formulating and executing appropriate solutions to its issues (National Education Policy, 2020). Regarding quality, India's higher education lags other affluent nations. The National Education Policy focuses on bringing about significant changes to the higher education system to "provide more employment possibilities, be dynamic, and contribute to the development of an egalitarian, comprehensive, and plural society." The foundation of the policy lies in "access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability," It aspires to transform India into a "thriving knowledge hub." National Education Policy 2020 is an outstanding reform that refreshes a 34-year-old policy concept and foresees much-needed reforms in the Indian Education System while preserving a careful balance between tradition and an interdisciplinary approach (Indian Era, 2020). The recommendation made by the Kothari Commission that at least 6% of GDP be allocated to education spending was disregarded by the administration (Kumar, 2018). Higher education has had a hard time dealing with problems like unintentional growth, educated unemployment, uneven growth, the commercialization of education, financial crises, and the digital divide between quantity and quality, equity and excellence, and creativity and conformity. These problems are long-term threats to higher education (Saravana Kumar & Padmini, 2020). The Indian higher education system is divided into several levels, which include:

1. Technical and Vocational Education.
2. Diploma Programs.
3. Education at the undergraduate or bachelor's level.
4. Education at the postgraduate or master's level
5. Doctoral Programs or the Ph.D.

There are 10725 autonomous institutions in the United States, in addition to the 39931 colleges and 993 universities that now exist (AISHE, 2021). It is projected that 37.4 million people are now enrolled in some postsecondary program. The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for Higher Education in India is calculated to be 27.1 percent for students between the ages of 18 and 23, with males accounting for 26.9 percent and girls accounting for 27.3 percent of the total enrollment (AISHE, 2021).

Table 1: India's higher education gross enrollment ratio for the previous 8 years

Years	Male	Female	Total
2019-20	26.9	27.3	27.1
2018-19	26.3	26.4	26.3
2017-18	26.3	25.4	25.8
2016-17	26.0	24.5	25.2
2015-16	25.4	23.5	24.5
2014-15	25.3	23.2	24.3
2013-14	23.9	22.0	23.0
2012-13	22.7	20.1	21.5

Source compiled from (AISHE, 2021) : All India Survey on Higher Education 2019- 2020

The National Education Policy has increased the Gross Enrollment Ratio by 5% over the last seven years, so increasing the Gross Enrollment Ratio by 24% over the next 15 years is a difficult mission for the higher education system that can only be accomplished if the policy is properly implemented.

One of the major issues confronting the higher education system today is that it has become severely fermented, with less emphasis on developing cognitive skills and learning outcomes. The current pandemic's primary focus is advancing tools and techniques for e-learning and digital classes. There is a lack of teacher and institutional autonomy and inadequate procedures for merit-based career management and promotion of faculty members and administrators of educational institutions. Inadequate governance and leadership and an inefficient regulatory framework are additional contributing factors to the problems plaguing the higher education system. A tight division of subjects, along with early specialization and student segregation, produces specialized fields of study. Some students opt for a particular course simply because there are more employment opportunities without focusing on their interests. There is limited access, especially in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, as only a few higher education institutions teach in local languages. Despite the critical importance of research, India currently spends 0.69 percent of GDP on research and innovation, compared to 2.8 percent in the United States, 4.3 percent in Israel, and 4.2 percent in South Korea (National Education Policy, 2020). Most universities and colleges focus less on research, and funding for peer-reviewed research across fields is scarce. The total student enrolment currently pursuing PhDs in higher education is only 0.5 percent; the main reason for this low number is the saturated job market for PhDs, and they have very limited opportunities outside of academia (Bhattacharjee, 2019). Large affiliating universities result in low undergraduate education standards, the current area of study for improving higher education quality. The paper also investigates the SAARC countries and the amount they have incurred as a percentage of their GDP (GDP) so that the authors can see how each country spends on education, as the future of the country and its development can be seen through its education spending.

Table 2: Government expenditure of SAARC Countries on education in % of GDP

Government expenditure on education of SAARC countries in % of GDP									
Country/Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
India	3.9	3.8	-	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.5
Sri Lanka	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.2	3.4	2.8	2.1	1.9	-
Bhutan	-	5.7	6.0	7.6	7.0	7.2	6.9	5.7	-
Nepal	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.9	4.8	4.4	4.2	4.4
Bangladesh	2.2	1.9	-	-	1.5	2.5	1.9	1.3	-
Afghanistan	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.3	3.5	3.7	3.2	3.2	-
Pakistan	2.2	2.5	2.5	2.7	3.0	2.9	-	2.5	-
Maldives	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.1	-

Source: Compiled by the researcher from (BRICS, 2018) and (World Bank, 2022)

According to table 2, Bhutan spends the most on education in terms of percentage of GDP, followed by Nepal and India. Government spending on

education in India was 3.9 percent of total GDP in 2012 and 3.84 percent in 2013, an increase from 2015 and nearly constant for four years. It has risen slightly to 4.5 by 2020. Higher education spending in India has remained largely stable as a percentage of total budgets, with an average of 1.47 percent over the last 12 years (Economic Survey (2019-2020), 2020-21); to educational quality, education policy must reform; Bhutan, Nepal, Afghanistan, and the Maldives spend a higher percentage of their GDP than India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. From 2012 to 2018, India ranked last among the BRICS countries in government education spending as a percentage of GDP. South Africa and Brazil spend more than 5% of their GDP annually on education.

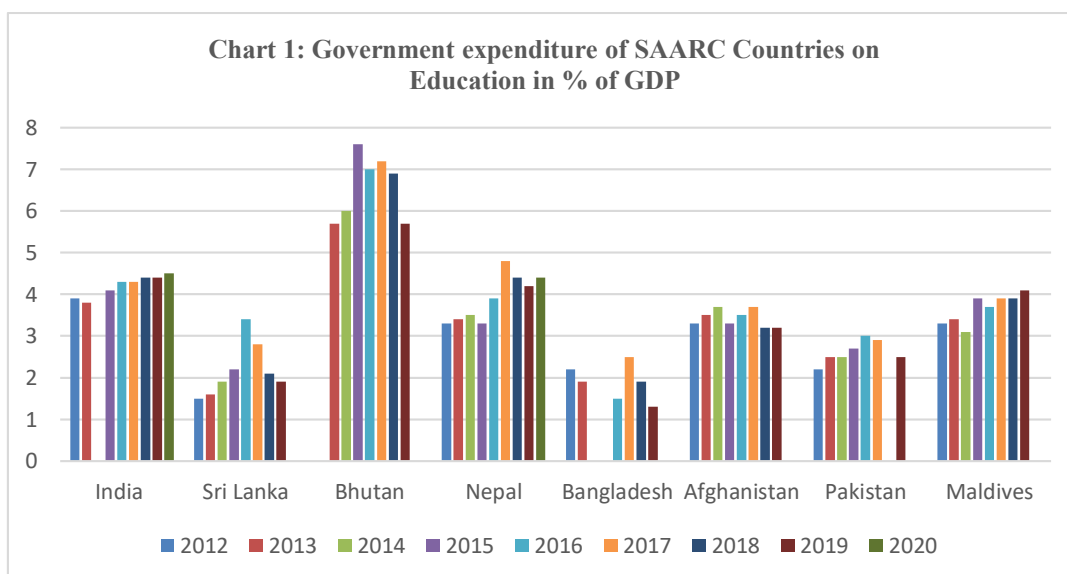


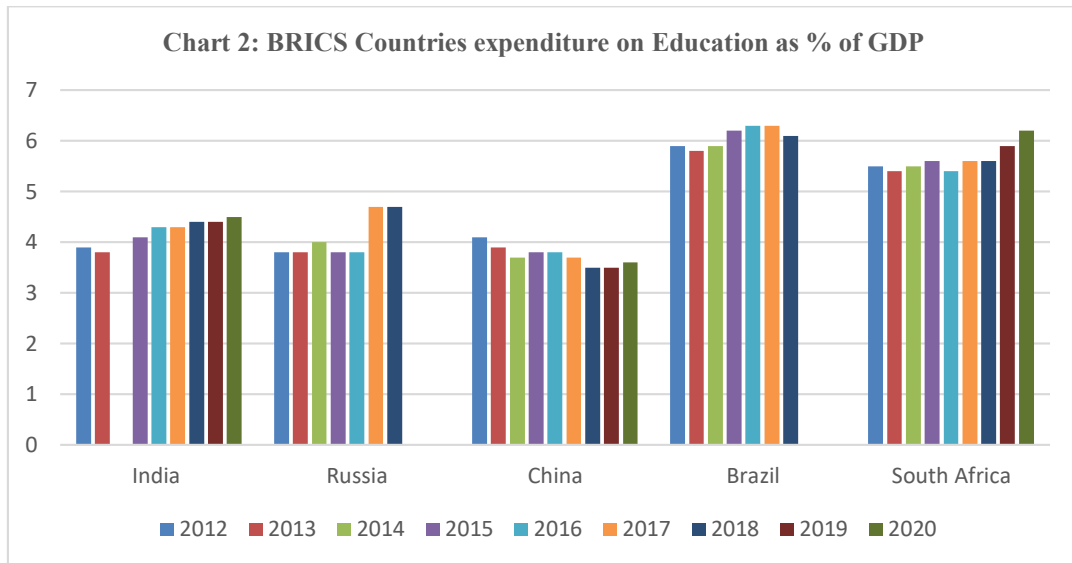
Table 3: Government expenditure of BRICS Countries on Education as % of GDP

BRICS Countries expenditure on Education as % of GDP									
Country	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
India	3.9	3.8	-	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.5
Russia	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8	4.7	4.7	-	-
China	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.6
Brazil	5.9	5.8	5.9	6.2	6.3	6.3	6.1	-	-
South Africa	5.5	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.6	5.6	5.9	6.2

Source: Compiled by the researcher from, (World Bank, 2022), (BRICS, 2018)

From the table 3 it can be understood that South Africa and Brazil is spending the highest amount as percentage of GDP on Education among the BRICS countries (World Bank, 2022). South Africa spent from 2012 to 2018 around 5.5% of GDP on education but increased their expenditure to a great extent in 2019 and 2020. China is more or less constant on its spending on education. Russia has increased its spending from 2017. India has seen increased spending on education sector as a percentage of GDP since 2015 but from 2012 to 2014 there

is a slight decrease in India's spending on education. Among the BRICS countries Brazil and South Africa are spending more on education compared to Russia, India, and China.



Evolution of National Education Policy in India

In India's pre-independence education system, students were exposed to the Upanishads, Buddhists, medieval, and modern times. In 1871, the Madrasas of Calcutta established the foundations of modern organized education, which ended in 1944 with the Sergeant Report. As early as 1854, Wood's Dispatch on Education (1854), Lord Macaulay's Minute (1882), The Indian Education Commission (1882), The Indian Universities Act (1904), and the Government of India Resolution (1913) were all in progress (Sime & Latchanna, 2018).

The Education Commission strongly influenced Indian education policies after Independence (Patel, Manjunatha, & Indira, 2012). The University Education Commission was the first to be established in 1948. The Commission aimed to establish universities that provide knowledge and wisdom for long-term development. The Secondary Education Commission was established in 1952 to provide a broader perspective on Indian educational problems and to propose ways to increase production efficiency. The Commission's report urged the diversification of high school curricula and the formation of technical institutions based on a standardized model followed throughout India (Patel, Manjunatha, & Indira, 2012). Indian education needs a fundamental reconstruction, virtually a revolution, with three primary components: an internal transformation, a quality improvement, and an extension of educational facilities.

Recommendations made by the Education Commission (1964-1966) formed the basis for NPE, which was adopted in 1968. According to a proposal, all children should have access to free and obligatory education through the age of 14. Teachers with specific training teach secondary education in English, Hindi, and

a regional language. Increasing national spending on education to 6% of GDP The 10+2+3 or 10+2+4 structure of the national compulsory education system "Child-centred Approach," "Operation Blackboard," and the construction of the "rural university" model were all part of a new National Policy on Education established in 1986 that emphasized eliminating educational gaps and equalizing educational opportunity (Indian Era, 2020). New policies in 1992 called for a common entrance exam for professional and technical programs in India, and the National Education Policy (NEP) of 1986 was amended in 1992. As a result of this policy, the Indian educational system is being urged to undergo more radical changes, including a focus on student moral development and the integration of education into daily life (Ranganathan, 2007). 2005 saw the introduction of a new "Common Minimum Program" policy. As India's socio-economic landscape changed dramatically following 1986, it became clear that its educational system must evolve to keep pace. The previous National Education Policy of 1986 will be overhauled by the third National Education Policy 2020, which will take effect in July 2020.

Reform in the Regulatory Structure

The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will supervise all higher education in India, except for medical and legal education (National Education Policy, 2020). The Higher Education Commission of India plans to create four separate verticals to ensure the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard-setting are all met. The following are the primary policies and regulations for each of the four regulatory tiers:

- 1) The regulatory structure, which consists of the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), is implemented as a single regulator for the higher education sector, except for medical and legal education. It will regulate financial integrity, good governance, and the complete online and offline self-disclosure of all funds, audits, procedures, infrastructure, staff, courses, and educational outcomes.
- 2) The National Accreditation Council (NAC) is the second vertical of HECI; a robust system of graded accreditation will be implemented as benchmarks for all Higher Education Institutions to achieve quality, self-governance, and autonomy.
- 3) The third vertical is the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), which will deal with higher education funding and financing based on transparent criteria, such as Institutional Development Plans (IDP) prepared by institutions and performance progress. Higher Education Grants Council will oversee awarding scholarships, developing funds for new focus areas, and expanding quality program offerings in higher education institutions across disciplines and fields.
- 4) The General Education Council (GEC) will define "graduate characteristics," which are the anticipated learning outcomes for higher education programs. Both the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) and the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) will be developed and linked. In terms of these learning outcomes, the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) will characterize higher education qualifications leading to a degree/diploma/certificate. The General

Education Council will also define facilitative standards for credit transfer, equivalency, and other issues through the National Higher Education Qualification Framework. Professional standard-setting organizations (PSSOs), including ICAR, VCI, and NCTE, will be urged to join the General Education Council.

- 5) Every higher education institution will have a Board of Governors (BoG). This board will have the authority to make all nominations, including the appointment of the school's president, and to make all governance decisions without the intervention of politics or the outside world.
- 6) An "Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)" focusing on a multidisciplinary approach to education will be implemented, with the ability to digitally store academic credits earned from various approved Higher Education Institutions. This will enable degrees from Higher Education Institutions to be awarded based on credits earned in many developed countries.
- 7) The National Research Foundation (NRF) would oversee funding, mentoring, and the development of 'the quality of research in India. The National Research Foundation will enable and promote a thriving culture of research and innovation, as well as research labs and other research institutions. Its objective is to provide funding for Indian scholars working in various fields, including some unrelated to science. Virtual labs, e-courses, and the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) were established in eight regional languages.
- 8) There will be a nationwide Common Entrance Exam for university admissions administered by the National Testing Agency (NTA). The school has sole authority over whether to employ the National Testing Agency's evaluations in the admissions process. Increasing quality and equity in education is one of its many potential benefits. A common aptitude test and related tests will be given at least twice a year.

Reforms in the Higher Education in India

India's National Education Policy aims to consolidate the country's numerous universities, colleges, and other educational institutions into large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges. This will make India's higher education system less disjointed. According to the policy, single-stream Higher Education Institutions would be phased out over time. The undergraduate degree will take three or four years, and those who drop out at a certain time will have several options and certifications. Higher education institutions can offer different master's degree programs depending on the student's bachelor's degree. There will be some freedom in how many master's Programs are offered: There is a two-year option for students who have already completed a three-year graduate degree program. The second year is devoted to research. One-year and five-year bachelor's programs are available to students who complete a four-year graduate degree with research. Master's For the Ph.D. program, you will require a master's degree or a four-year bachelor's degree with research experience. Students pursuing a doctorate can obtain the required teaching experience through teaching assistantships (National Education Policy, 2020). As a result, Ph.D. programs will shift their concentration. Professional and technical education will be part of the system of higher education.

Higher Education Institutions should have access to essential infrastructure and amenities, such as potable water, clean restrooms, blackboards, offices, instructional materials, libraries, laboratories, and comfortable classrooms. Every classroom will access the most advanced educational technology, facilitating enhanced learning experiences. The world's leading universities would be permitted to establish campuses in India and be accorded the same regulatory, governance, and content standards as India's other autonomous institutions.

The following fundamental alterations to the current educational system are included in the National Education Policy 2020:

- 1) Ensure at least one large, interdisciplinary university and college in or near each district and more HEIs across India that offer regional/Indian language programs.
- 2) Transitioning from a fixed undergraduate curriculum to diverse courses.
- 3) Recognizing the independence of both the faculty and the institution.
- 4) Changing the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student help would provide students a better experience and ensure that post-graduates have the knowledge, skills, self-confidence, and entrepreneurship training they need to assist society and the country become more productive.
- 5) Reaffirming the university's honesty in academic and leadership positions by making appointments based on merit and letting people move up in their careers based on teaching, research, and service.
- 6) Establish a National Research Foundation with the goals of funding research that has been evaluated by professionals and promoting research at educational institutions like universities and colleges.
- 7) Improving the way that higher education institutions are managed by providing them with highly qualified, independent boards that have academic and administrative flexibility and that are supervised by a single higher education authority.
- 8) Increasing access, equity, and inclusion via a variety of strategies, such as private/philanthropic colleges granting scholarships to disadvantaged students
- 9) Make infrastructure and instructional materials accessible to students with special needs.
- 10) Internet-based instruction and Open Distance Learning (ODL)
- 11) Programs to help new faculty get started, programs to help faculty grow, and seniors who help out new faculty.
- 12) When evaluating faculty, supervisors, peers, and students can give feedback on how they contribute to teaching, research, and practice.
- 13) Teachers are free to make changes to the curriculum and decide how to evaluate students.
- 14) The marks each student gets for each topic are based on ongoing evaluations by the relevant faculty members of the department, so each student's performance mark is based on how well they do.
- 15) Digitizing libraries gives students and staff online access to information on any subject and helps the liberal education paradigm.
- 16) Students can choose classes from a wide range of specialized and cross-disciplinary subjects.
- 17) During an undergraduate degree, each student must do at least one full semester's worth of social engagement helps each student learn about the problems of the poor and prepares them for a life of social responsibility.

- 18) Encourage Indian higher education institutions to collaborate with foreign educational establishments on twining programs, dual degree programs, student exchange programs, faculty exchange programs, international research collaborations, the establishment of offshore campuses by Indian educational institutions, and the establishment of the world's top 100 institutes in India.

Reforms in Teaching

The national education policy encourages using clearly defined, independent, and transparent processes and criteria for hiring faculty and a fast-track promotion system to recognize high-impact research and contributions. There will be new questions on the tests to see if someone is qualified to be a teacher, and the results will be used to hire people. Faculty positions at different schools usually can't be moved to other schools. This makes them feel like they have a real stake in, connection to, and commitment to their school and community. Within the approved framework, faculty can come up with their own textbook and material choices, assignments, and ways to test and grade students. Giving faculty the freedom to teach and guide new ways will be a key motivator and show their creativity. Early on, the best faculty members with good academic and service records will be found and trained to move up the leadership ladder. Leadership positions should never be empty. Instead, there should be a period of overlap when new leaders take over so that institutions can keep running smoothly.

Education needs to focus on training and growth to keep up with new technology and other changes in today's competitive world. The Policy's goal was to improve teachers' skills, who play a key role in education, by strengthening and significantly expanding existing institutional arrangements and ongoing initiatives to meet the needs of enriched teaching-learning processes for quality education. Local, regional, state, national, and international workshops and online modules for teacher development can help teachers learn new things and improve their skills. Each year, they will have to participate in at least 50 hours of professional development activities. There will be a National Mentoring Mission with a large group of outstanding senior or retired faculty willing to help new faculty members with their careers in the short and long term.

One of the best ways to improve teaching is to put teacher training in multidisciplinary colleges and universities with integrated four-year programs and strict changes to the curriculum and the way teachers teach. By 2030, all teachers will have to have a B.Ed. Degree, which takes four years to complete. All applications to programs that train teachers will be taken care of by the National Testing Agency. Focusing on the quality of teaching and how well it works will improve the quality of education as a whole.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy is an ambitious and forward-looking plan that requires teachers, students, and management to be motivated to make a difference for a better future. Putting policies into action is a problem in every field. A few things still need to be done to give the best education possible. India

has privatized higher education more than any other developed country. It is time for the government to intervene with new education policies on a larger scale that can truly generate human capital (Sharma, 2018). The higher education system must now put research and innovation at the top of its list of priorities by setting up centers for start-ups, technology development, frontier research, and cross-disciplinary research, including research in the social sciences (Sheikh, 2017). There is a need for closer collaborations between industry and every higher education institution, i.e., greater industry-academic linkages, so students do not have to worry about placement, as it is difficult to find a job that matches their qualifications today's competitive market. The issues related to higher education institution location with high noise pollution, less area where it is difficult to accommodate basic facilities should be taken into account as it is also a major reason for declining education quality. Different models of success in developed countries can also be used to make changes to the education system (Aithal & Aithal, 2019) and can be changed to fit the needs of a country. It also depends on the regions or states, which have different amounts of people and things to offer (Sime & Latchanna, 2018). Everyone who has a stake in the higher education system must be committed and have a way to put any strategy designed by national policy into action.

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