

AIPSN Higher Education Desk

Dialogue paper 3 on Higher Education:

I. Accessibility under threat:

1. **NTA and CUET:** The centralized Common University Entrance Test (CUET) proposed and conducted by National Testing Agency for admission to HEIs will definitely affect the accessibility. It is an additional burden on students to study regular course on one hand and prepare for entrance exam on the other hand. Those who are affordable for coaching would capture the better courses and better institutions and even who are affordable to pay may get desired courses in desired private institutions by mere attending CUET.
2. **MOOC:** NEP proposes to increase the present GER (26%) to 50% by 2040. It does not allow new stand alone and affiliating HEIs. Instead it proposes increased enrolment in existing institutions and promotes Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). This will prevent the student community to study in institution based higher education institutions.
3. **Merger of HEIs:** NEP -proposes larger Multidisciplinary Higher Education and Research Institutes (MERUs) with a minimum of 3000 students and to a maximum of 25000. It proposes merger of standalone institutes into cluster institutes. This will lead to closure of colleges which are decentralized in rural sides by various states to increase GER. This will defeat the very purpose of increasing GER in Higher Education.

II. Quality under threat:

1. **Holistic Multidisciplinary Education:** For quality education NEP proposes a multidisciplinary education with a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects. It proposes four year degree course and dual degree courses with multiple entry/exit options with exits in I year with certificate, II year with Diploma, third year with degree and IV the year with Honours Degree. Multiple entry and exit will degrade the quality of education. It will lead to dropouts of first generation students.

2. **Blended mode of teaching and learning:** It is proposed to have a blended method of learning with regular institutional learning and on line mode of learning with a proportion of 60:40. The hybrid mode of learning will definitely affect the quality of education.
3. **Academic Bank of Credit (ABC):** NEP proposes credit based higher education from institution as well as from outside on line courses with a proportion of 60:40. For promoting on line courses Dept of Education has established educational portals such as SWAYAM and to provide internet connectivity at panchayat level .For which they have established a collaborative arrangement called MEITY with Ministry of Electronics and IT. The proposal of multidisciplinary approach will push the students to join on line courses sometimes may be irrelevant and to spend money for this on line courses. Quality assessment by ABC will display a greater disparity between rural and urban.
4. **Autonomy to HEIs:**NEP proposes all HEIs should become autonomous multidisciplinary institutions with multidisciplinary courses by 2035. They can develop their own courses and can issue degrees. The quality of degree will be in question from institution to institution.
5. **Vocationalisation and Skill Development:** The proposal of vocationisation and skill based education for employment sake will definitely meet with failure. They could not compete with fully qualified professional and technical graduates. The introduction of vocationalisation will either produce skilled labourer and without the depth and quality of higher education.

III. Constitutional obligations under threat: NEP speaks high of Constitutional values, such as intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service etc. On the other hand it operates diametrically opposite by promoting Indian Traditional knowledge (ITK) based courses such as Vastu Sastra, Astrology, Vedic Mathematics in academic and technical courses and researches.

IV. Conclusion: Over all recommendations of NEP indirectly promote privatisation, commercialisation and indianisation of Hr.education which will no way helpful for increased GER, quality higher education and creation of knowledgeable society for the 21st century.