



Beyond The Classroom: Exploring the Role of Extracurricular Activities in Higher Education Transformation under National Education Policy (NEP 2020)

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Abstract: *In the Indian context, in most of the schools and colleges, it has been seen that the success of a student is measured only on the basis of academic achievement and the concept of the holistic development has been confined to the four walls of the classroom interaction since the ancient time. This is the traditional way of analyzing the growth of a student who usually does not get enough exposure for realizing his or her own potential. The extracurricular activities are regarded as the supplement to the academic activities and it can be used as a catalyst for enhancing the capabilities of a student. Teachers should extensively motivate the students to participate in the extracurricular activities like art, cultural activity, sports, technological advancement, social activity, debate, creative work, cultural clubs, NSS, NCC, Student council, organizational skills and team work and many more before the session or after the duration of school. These activities contribute to the social development, communicative skills, interpersonal development, academic progress, time management skills of the student. In NEP 1986, the emphasize was given on the vocational education (job specific), technical education, adult education, minority education, women empowerment, retention of the student, removal of social disparities, universalization of elementary education and the research process. In a word, this policy mainly focused on the structure of educational levels (secondary and higher secondary), the quality of the education and the curriculum. However, the examination centric approach is no longer enough in this rapidly changing world of technology and innovation. The practical skills, critical thinking, creative approach and innovative minds are required from a very young age in this 21st century. In this era of digitalization, use of AI, Data science and Robotics in the educational field necessitates the implementation of experimental learning. The NEP 2020 introduced on 29th July under the chairperson K. Kasturirangan brings radical reforms in the educational system. It is flexible and integrated approach which does not discriminate between arts and science, curricular and extra- curricular activities, academic and vocational streams. This paper would attempt to describe how the new educational policy makes transformation in the field of higher education system by exploring the role of the extracurricular activities and how it helps to achieve the goals of education. According to this new policy, these activities not only validate the cognitive development but also generate cultural awareness, identity and the flexibility of the curriculum in higher education provides the students a great opportunity to balance between scholastic and inventive path.*

Keywords: *Educational Policy, Development, Extracurricular Activity, Curriculum, Nep 1986, NEP- 2020, Digitalization.*

Introduction:

To ensure the holistic development of a child, the school curriculum should put emphasis on the role of extracurricular activities. The students should be given enough exposure so that they can realize their potentials. These activities include learning by doing, hands on experience and facing real life situations. If these activities are properly designed and implemented in the school education, it will be helpful for achieving comprehensive education. These activities are considered as a great outlet for students who suffer from academic pressure, confinement and stiffness. So, these activities create positive energy, motivation for the students and they do better performance in academia. If the teachers can inspire the child to concentrate on his passion and interest, they will excel in their own field of profession and life. The dedication and proper engagement on the part of the student makes his or her work easier in future. Extracurricular activities provide students challenging situation so that the students can come out of their comfort zone and make progress in their life. These activities help in achieving organization skill and task management skill. The new education policy focuses on three broad aspects- academic, vocational and extracurricular activities. NEP 2020 paves the way for creating more job opportunities in future and it prepares the students as a part of innovation and digitization . This policy is visionary to make our youth critical thinkers, creative and practical in their approach in career as well as in daily life.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To know about the types of Extracurricular Activities.
2. To illustrate the Role of Extracurricular activities in Higher Education.
3. To discuss about the impact of Extracurricular Activities in transforming the role of Higher Education.
4. To contextualize and relate the role of Extracurricular activities as stated in NEP 2020.

Methodology of the Study: This research work will apply qualitative approach to interpret the role of extracurricular activities in transforming higher education.

About The New National Education Policy (Nep) 2020: The New Education Policy (NEP) involves mainly three changes which focus on academic, vocational, and extracurricular activities. This is introduced so that students can have more focus on their area of interest, and developing personal skills at the same time.

First, it includes modifying the pedagogical structure from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4. It focuses on starting education from 3 years onwards. Students of age 3 to 8 years will be involved in extracurricular activities to ease the pressure of books. This will help each to identify their personal skills and choose what is best for them as well as their career. For example, if a child has an interest in Apps and software, they can choose coding as an additional subject in class 6. This way, their skills will start enhancing from a very young age. A student should be taught in their mother language till 5 years as per personal choice if possible. This will help a student to grasp up things easily. Also, barriers to choosing streams have been reduced. School complexes are to be used for adult education courses after school hours. Below are the various options in the curricular area and what policies have been introduced for the betterment of each of these professions.

Growth of Research Professions:

The NEP 2020 directed the establishment of the National Research Foundation to inculcate the culture of research and scientific temperament in students. The policy also encouraged NRF to have competitive funding allowing researchers to solve new problems and come up with creative solutions. An attempt will be made to make PhDs multidisciplinary whereas areas like healthcare, law, and agriculture must be necessarily incorporated. And PhDs will require an essential Bachelor degree of 4 years or a Master's degree.

Careers in Medicine:

The new education policy lays focus on the structure, duration, and methodologies of medical education in India. An attempt will be made to blend the learning of modern medicine with traditional approaches. The policy also highlighted the required research and development in areas of vaccinology and diagnostics in the era of pandemics and epidemics. The plan saw mixed reactions, some cited the approach as multidisciplinary, while some questioned that this attempt to produce hybrid doctors will be detrimental in producing quality specialist doctors.

Nurturing Future Software Developers:

The new education policy introduced coding at a young age from Class 6 onwards. This is a step taken considering the 21st century needs where the professionals of artificial intelligence, Machine learning, and Data analytics require good command over mathematical and problem-solving skills. Also Creating apps and digital solutions by young minds will be encouraged as a part of the Digital India campaign.

Changes in Law Education:

With regards to the law, the NEP wants it to be competitive by exchanging ideas and technologies throughout the world. It will focus on ensuring undelayed justice while ensuring the future lawyers uphold India's constitutional values and fundamental integrity. The inclusion of ethical and moral values in the legal curriculum has been a salient feature of NEP. Instructing in multiple languages has been a prominent feature throughout the policy. India, being quite a varied nation, the policy directs that English and the state language be included in the state law school.

Becoming Part of the Indian Army:

The NEP has covered all spheres of education and all parts of society. The NEP document highlighted that the state government shall encourage the opening of NCCs in schools, nurturing the natural talent of students from rural areas helping them to be a part of defence forces in the future.

Encouraging the Teaching Profession:

The NEP laid strong importance to the teaching profession, intending to make it more lucrative and rigorous. As per the policy, the outstanding students must be encouraged in adopting the teaching profession and making continuous efforts to make it professionally valuable, with a good salary and good teaching conditions like housing, scholarships, and continuous development. The policy also suggests that teacher education will be a part of multidisciplinary colleges in near future, and also making a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree mandatory. The 2-year B.Ed. course will be available for those who have already completed their Bachelor's degree. Also, the mentoring culture will be encouraged for retired or senior teaching professionals to share their experience and support to university students.

Booster for Engineering:

The policy focuses on producing industry-ready engineers with a practical approach. The Indian IT engineers have been performing well on the global stage. But there is a huge scope of improvement when it comes down to the design of products and newer innovations. The NEP aims to bridge the gap between education and research by encouraging experimental learning and creative approaches. Focus on new technologies like IoT, AI, Data Science, and Robotics will be given in engineering universities and colleges.

Apart from the above options, the new policy highlights some new growth opportunities for students to explore. These include content writing, digital marketing, SEO experts, and so on. The new education policy introduced changes in schools as well as higher education to balance both curricular and non-curricular activities and the overall holistic development of the students.

Below Are The Changes Introduced At several Levels To Strengthen The Curriculum:

Changes in the Schooling system: The NEP has mandated the schooling to start from the age of 3, the age gap 3-6 being a part of pre-schooling. Also, the 10+2 structure will be replaced by the the-5334-education-system/" 5+3+3+4 structure. An attempt to mainstream the Sanskrit language is seen by including it in a three-language structure. An internship is considered from Class 6 of around 10 days, which will give students exposure to real industry practices and help them in becoming compatible professionals in the future.

A greater emphasis on experimental learning and practical approaches will be given over rote learning. An attempt to inculcate learning habits across the nation will be there, by increasing the access of libraries and EBooks that provide insights on various domains. An interesting aspect of the NEP was the introduction of coding from Class 6 onwards which helps in developing problem-solving skills using technology and digital expertise among young minds. It's well known that a child learns faster in their mother tongue, thus the policy has encouraged the medium of instruction to be the home language as much as possible till Class 5. The strict separation between curricular and extra-curricular, art and science is eliminated by allowing students to prefer their area of interest which they want to pursue.

Changes In Higher Education:

The focus will be of multi-disciplinary nature with multiple exit options, allowing students to learn as per their interest and pace. There will be substantial efforts to enhance the gross ratio in enrollment to higher institutions, which will further make students.

1. This policy will encourage 100 top Indian Universities to operate in foreign countries.
2. This policy will allow 100 top Foreign Universities to operate in India.
3. Latest educational technology must be there in every classroom for better learning experiences.
4. Curriculum and pedagogy freedom will got within an approved framework by Faculty members.
5. Academic and research performance will be the fixed basis of Faculty development.
6. Faculty fast-track promotion system will be offered. It will For high impact research contributions.
7. The Institutional development plan will clearly define the API policy.
8. The Focus will be on sustainable Education Development Goal to achieve it & GER of 50% by 2035.
9. One subject related to teaching/curriculum development will be taken by All Ph.D. registered students and the will accept teaching Assistantship for enhancing teaching skills.
10. All students should take SWAYAM online courses at least two courses per semester.
11. For reaching at least 50% of the student population Vocational education will be strengthened.
12. There will be Plan to give B.Voc. as dual degree programme in Online Distance Learning mode. 2 hours evening programme will be given through Skill labs & partnership with industry & NGOs.
13. Research and internships are essential component. It will be Included in the undergraduate curriculum.
14. Four functions (a) regulation (NHERC), (b) accreditation (NAC), (c) funding/ grants (HEGC), and (d) academic standard setting (GEC) will be controlled by Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).
15. GEC decides the 21st century skills to be learned by students.

16. Fees will be decided for programmes, within the laid out norm by the Empower private HEIs .
17. To increase the employability among youths, basis should be made at undergraduate education. Therefore Information Communication and Computation Technology (ICCT) & Nontechnology (NT) will be introduced at this level education.
18. NRF will support AI Research Centers, Nanotechnology Research centers.
19. To support MOOC education, Virtual Labs will be created along with SWAYAM and Diksha .
20. Annual education expenditure of India is 4.43% of GDP. It has to be increase to 6% of GDP.
21. Education should emphasize on continuous and comprehensive evaluation.
22. Choice based Credit system will be improved and Competency based credit system is going to be adopted.
23. Focus is on the building of digital infrastructure, digital content, and capacity building to keep pace with Tech-generation expectations.
24. Other innovations like stress on networking with industries and other higher education institutions for research and collaborations, focus on creating IPR, and improving stakeholders 'perception are also suggested.

Conclusion:

Extracurricular activities provide a channel for reinforcing the lessons learned in the classroom, offering students the opportunity to apply academic skills in a real-world context, and are thus considered part of a well-rounded education. The New Education Policy (NEP) involves mainly three changes which focus on academic, vocational, and extracurricular activities. This is introduced so that students can have more focus on their area of interest, and developing personal skills at the same time. The policy paves a way for creating more jobs and exciting opportunities in the future. The new education policy has been quite comprehensive in all aspects, responsible for the overall development of students and making them industry ready, and also making them a part of innovation and digitization driving the nation's development.

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