

## CHALLENGES FOR THE RURAL HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020

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### Abstract

The New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which emphasises multidisciplinary, holistic, and skill-based learning, seeks to transform the Indian educational system. However, the implementation of this policy presents several challenges for rural higher educational institutions. Some of the significant challenges are Infrastructure, Faculty shortage, Student readiness, financial constraints, Language barrier and Limited industry exposure. Rural higher educational institutions often lack adequate infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories and technology infrastructure, which are essential for implementing the NEP 2020. They often face a shortage of qualified faculty. Implementing the NEP 2020 requires trained faculty who can teach in an interdisciplinary and skill-based manner, which may be difficult to find in rural areas. Many students in rural areas may not be prepared for the new educational paradigm of the NEP 2020. This can be due to the lack of exposure to new teaching methodologies, lack of awareness on higher education, limited access to technology, limited exposure to interdisciplinary and skill-based learning. The institutions may face financial constraints in implementing the NEP 2020, as the policy requires significant investment in infrastructure, faculty development, and technology. Rural students may struggle with the medium of instruction under the NEP 2020, due to the policy's emphasis on using native or regional languages as the instruction's medium. Many students may not be proficient in their mother tongue or regional language. These institutions may not have easy access to industry collaborations or industry exposure, which is an essential component of the NEP 2020.

**Keywords:** Rural Higher Education, Education Awareness, NEP 2020, Holistic learning, Infrastructure, Industry collaboration, Implementation

### INTRODUCTION

According to the United Nations, On November 15, 2022, there will be more than 8 billion people in the world. Approximately 46% of the world's population lives in rural areas. India population in September 2021 was over 1.366 billion; more than 909 million people live in the rural areas, an increase compared to 2018. According to the census conducted in 2011, approximately 69% of India's population lived in rural areas because of its vast rural and agricultural landscapes.

After China and the United States, India has the third-largest student body in the world's higher education system. The administration of the nation's educational system has undergone a radical transformation as a result of the "Right to Education Act," which mandates free, public education for all kids between the ages of six and fourteen. Statistics show that enrolment in schools has grown dramatically during the last four years. India still has a lot of formidable obstacles to overcome. Only 15% of Indian students graduate from high school, and despite increased investment in education, 25% of the population still lacks literacy (Sheikh, 2017). The proportion of people in India between the ages of 15 and 35 is rising, and by 2019 they will make up more than 65% of the population. More than 70% of people in India live in rural areas. This enormous population of young people has to be properly educated and given skill-based training in order to be turned into productive human resources. According to the All India Survey on Higher Education 2015–16 (AISHE), there are 799 universities in India, 277 of which are privately run, and 307 of them are found in rural areas. In India, there are 39071 colleges and 11923 Stand Alone Institutions, with 60% of the colleges being found in rural areas. We discovered a significant gap between the global educational landscape and Indian Educational Institutes (HEI's) (Sonone, 2018). In this paper we have discussed the various challenges for the rural higher educational institutions, remedial measures for rural development and also the implementation of New Educational Policy 2020 in rural areas.

## **CHALLENGES FOR THE RURAL HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS**

### **Infrastructure**

Rural higher educational institutions often lack adequate infrastructure such as libraries, laboratories, building, administrative office, playground, well equipped seminar halls, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment for college which are essential for implementing the NEP 2020. Overcrowded classes due to lack of class rooms and have limited choice of courses or subjects are left to them. Students are consequently compelled to enrol in courses like humanities and the arts, which provide relatively few work options and cause educated unemployment (Aneja, 2015).

### **Faculty shortage**

Faculty shortages and the state's inability to attract and retain them have long been obstacles to the availability of outstanding teachers. Many NETT, SET, and PhD students are unemployed even though there are several available posts in higher education. As a result, these qualified students are submitting applications for jobs elsewhere, which is a serious setback for the higher education system (Sheikh, 2017). Meanwhile, 63% of colleges are unassisted and unable to provide sufficient salaries (Kaur, 2017), so qualified teachers avoid working there. Approximately 40% of college teachers who do not have a NET/SET/PhD work on a temporary basis (Sonone, 2018).

### **Student readiness**

Student readiness refers to a student's knowledge and ability to learn confidently. Students lack the ability to complete a specific assignment based on their current level of understanding. The technique of teaching is essential. Teachers that are highly qualified and committed to their profession are important for the quality of higher education institutions but the majority of

teachers in rural colleges lack advanced training to deal with the changing environment. They are just dictating the notes in the classroom. Students frequently memorise what is spoken in class, and instruction has been limited to passing the exam exclusively (Aneja, 2015).

### **Financial constraints**

Funding is required for the salary of teaching and non-teaching staff, for daily academic and development activities, for office supplies, for water and sanitation, and for other costs. All of these items are challenging to construct and maintain without funding. The majority of rural HEIs lack sufficient financing sources, and state and federal support is scarce. Since students from rural areas typically come from lower-income families, they frequently cannot afford the minimum tuition. Because they come from farming families and landless labourer households, especially in rural areas, more than 50% of students used to skip class during the sowing season in the fields and again during the harvesting season. The teachers' annual lesson plans are not very helpful when it comes to actually carrying out the teaching and evaluation procedure. To provide educational services with a minimal budget is a significant problem for rural HEIs (Sonone, 2018).

### **Language barrier**

One of the main issues facing students in rural locations is their choice of study medium. Recently, teaching and learning have exclusively been conducted in regional languages at the majority of colleges. Most rural kids in primary school study in regional languages. They struggle greatly when trying to study in English. In rural places, foreign languages are nearly nonexistent. There are numerous examples showing that the majority of rural students failed to impress the interviewers when they were chosen for a job (Aneja, 2015). The majority of rural students struggle to succeed in competitive exams like the IAS, NETT, SLET, CET, banking, staff selection, and others. Only primary and secondary educations are covered by the majority of the questions on these exams (Aneja, 2015).

### **Limited industry exposure**

The majority of HEIs lack connections to the competitive industries in their disciplines, making it difficult for them to obtain the most recent data on the needed human resources. We discovered that there are numerous engineering, D.Ed., and B.Ed. institutions in India that were only recently founded and are now in poor shape as a result of insufficient enrolment. The economic law of supply and demand is to blame. The supply of teachers and engineers expanded more quickly than the need following a sudden expansion in institutions, and the supply is now meeting the demand. Thus, these industries are experiencing a recession and oversupply (Sonone, 2018). A course must include internships, apprenticeships, understudies, case studies, projects, etc., but in rural regions, students did not receive this training due to a lack of industry exposure and cooperation (Sonone, 2018).

### **Rural Girl students in Higher Education**

Many people still aspire to attend college. There are many excellent educational institutions in India, but there are very few that offer higher education in rural areas. The real challenges are already in place for rural females students who choose to remain in their home communities.

Family issues and societal limitations from the outside world have made it difficult for rural girls students to pursue higher education. In some rural communities, women still get married early and stop going to school, or they stop going to school soon after graduating because they are so focused on raising their families. There is still a gender bias in rural communities that boys should receive more education than girls. Additionally, there are financial obstacles to higher education, such as the tuition fees imposed by the schools and the admissions exams that rural girls students must take because they have limited access to tutoring for such exams. Public transportation has its drawbacks, including low frequency and difficulty in locating a bus at the correct time for the right route. The price of personal transportation is too costly, and taking personal transportation is unsafe for rural girl students (S, 2018).

### **INCREASE THE QUALITY OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION**

Education at the primary and secondary levels serves as a person's knowledge base. Children's performance will decline at higher levels if they are not given sophisticated knowledge and instruction at the primary level. Rural Indian school systems are of very low quality. They encounter numerous challenges while they pursue higher education. The majority of students find it challenging to pass the final exams, such as NETT, SET, etc. (Kaur, 2017). In rural India, 96.5% of children aged 6 to 14 are enrolled in school; 71.1% attend government schools, and 24.3% attend private schools. The percentage of girls aged 11 to 14 who are still not in school has decreased from 6.8% in 2009 to 5.9% in 2010 (EducationinRuralAreas-Paper9, n.d.).

The curriculum for rural education can be modified and should go along with instruction in farming, gardening, and other relevant fields. To draw in more pupils and pique their interest in studying, teachers can present some instructive movies using visual aids like projectors, televisions, and other devices. When teaching in a rural or isolated place, teachers should be encouraged to feel proud of their contribution to the local economy. To help parents understand the value of education for their children, some special sessions or classes can be held. If students who perform well in class receive some sort of award, such as books or presents, this will draw in more pupils and spark their interest in studying (Prabakaran, 2019).

### **COMPARITION OF RURAL AND URBAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Rural high school students in most states graduate at rates comparable to their urban and suburban areas, but their college enrolment rates are significantly lower. Many rural communities lack adequate broadband internet infrastructure, which has become particularly more crucial as the pandemic has progressed. It might be expensive in locations where internet access is available. Furthermore, pupils may lack the necessary technologies to be successful in online learning (Innovation, 2020).

**As per the census 2011, the following table shows difference between rural and urban areas (India's Rural Education: An Outline, n.d.), (Amaravati, n.d.):**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Urban (%)</b>	<b>Rural (%)</b>
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Literacy	84	68
Literacy women	80	59
Literacy >5 years	86	71
5-9 years never enrolled	Male: 33, Female: 30 due to Financial constraints	Male: 33, Female: 27 were not interested
Possessed computer	29	6
14-29 years were able to operate computer	49	18
Adult operate computer	75	63
Universities	57	43
Colleges	58.6	61.4
Degree holders	41	28
Graduated GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio)	Males: 15, Female: 8	Male: 3.7, Female: 1.6

### REMEDIAL MEASURES

Sincere efforts should be undertaken to increase the quantity and quality of higher education in rural areas in order to address the issues with higher education in these areas. Higher educational institutions should:

1. Enhance the infrastructure for education, particularly access to computers, the internet, and science labs, as well as more traditional infrastructure like classrooms and libraries at both the primary and higher school levels.
2. Develop the specialised talents of an expanding number of students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, because specialists are increasingly in demand across all sectors of the global economy.
3. Hire educators who are qualified and of the highest calibre, and ensure that they receive fair compensation. HEIs must place more emphasis on student quality than student quantity.
4. Strengthen the pupils' ability to interact with other students and create daring and bold attitudes by holding group discussions and debates.
5. English language and communication abilities should receive twice as much attention.
6. The hiring, retaining, inspiring, and long-term growth of qualified faculty.

7. Create ties with various businesses. The industries in the relevant disciplines must be connected to the courses. The course must include internships, apprenticeships, understudies, case studies, projects, etc.
8. Raise awareness among people in rural areas of the benefits of higher education. It might take the shape of village-level awareness campaigns or tying eligibility for government programmes to a higher level of education.
9. Advising and aiding research scholars in their development as educators.
10. Educate socioeconomically disadvantaged groups about scholarships and higher education prospects.

### **NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 (NEP 2020)**

Following a lengthy break, India launched its first NEP in 1968, its second in 1986, and its most recent in 2020, all under the direction of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) was approved on July 29, 2020 (Kumar, 2021). The NEP 2020 was developed using more than 2 lakh recommendations from various local self-government entities, including 2.5 lakh gramme panchayat, 6,600 blocks, 6,000 ULBs, and 676 districts. This was done to enhance overall effectiveness and citizenship and to establish a society that is inclusive, diverse, and egalitarian with a higher Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50% by 2035 (smile foundation, n.d.).

**Holistic Development:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for holistic development of individuals, irrespective of their location. It recognizes the potential of rural areas and aims to provide equal opportunities for quality higher education in rural regions, ensuring that students have access to a comprehensive and well-rounded education.

**Multidisciplinary Education:** The NEP 2020 promotes a multidisciplinary approach to higher education, encouraging institutions to offer diverse and interdisciplinary courses. This approach can be particularly beneficial in rural areas, where individuals may have diverse interests and aspirations. It allows students to explore a wide range of subjects and develop skills that align with local needs and opportunities.

**Technology and Digital Education:** The NEP 2020 acknowledges the transformative role of technology in education. It advocates for the integration of technology in teaching and learning, which can be particularly useful in reaching students in rural areas. By leveraging digital platforms, online resources, and virtual classrooms, higher education institutions can extend their reach to remote areas, offering quality education and bridging the urban-rural divide.

**Skill Development and Vocational Training:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of skill development and vocational training. It encourages higher education institutions to collaborate with local industries and communities to provide practical and job-oriented programs. This focus on skills and vocational training can be particularly relevant for rural areas, where there may be specific local industries and entrepreneurship opportunities.

**Promoting Local Languages and Cultures:** The NEP 2020 emphasizes the preservation and promotion of local languages and cultures. In rural areas, where regional languages are prevalent, this focus can help create an inclusive and culturally sensitive higher education environment. It recognizes the importance of local knowledge and indigenous practices, ensuring their integration into the curriculum.

**Strengthening Infrastructure and Access:** The NEP 2020 highlights the need to strengthen infrastructure and expand access to higher education in rural areas. It encourages the establishment of new institutions, satellite campuses, and study centres in underserved regions. Additionally, efforts are underway to enhance physical infrastructure, such as classrooms, libraries, and laboratories, to create a comfortable learning environment in rural areas.

### **PRINCIPLES OF NEP 2020**

The purpose of education is to generate exceptional individuals who can think critically and take appropriate action, who are brave and resilient, who have a scientific mindset and a creative imagination, and who uphold high moral standards. Our Constitution aims to produce engaged, effective, and contributing citizens in order to build the equitable, inclusive, and pluralistic society it envisions. A good educational environment is one where each student feels valued and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a variety of learning opportunities are offered, and where all students have access to the proper physical facilities and resources that are beneficial to learning. These qualities must be pursued by all educational institutions. However, there must also be seamless coordination and integration between institutions and across all levels of education. (Development, 2020).

### **ACCORDING TO NEP 2020, MANY EDUCATIONAL STAGES WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.**

1. Activity-based learning for children aged 3 to 8 years old during the foundation stage (five-year length).
2. Activity-based and discovery-based learning for 9 to 11 years throughout the preparatory stage, which lasts three years.
3. Experimental learning with two semester-based class level assessments is part of the middle school education stage (three years).
4. Multidisciplinary subjects with semester and common board exams in grades 10 and 12 are covered in the secondary education stage (four-year duration).
5. Undergraduate education stage (three to four years in length): after one year, a certificate, after two years, a diploma, after three years, a bachelor's degree, and after four years, an honours degree with possibilities for a major, a minor, and research projects.
6. Post-graduate education stage (one to two years): a one-year course for students with a four-year honours bachelor's degree; a two-year programme for individuals with a three-year bachelor's degree; and a five-year integrated degree programme for students with a 12th-grade pass. The master's degree will emphasise high-quality research in the last year to get students ready for the next research degree, with the goal of enhancing competency in a professional field.

7. Research stage (three to four-year duration) - While research is an integral part of the final year of the undergraduate and postgraduate stages, research scholars at the stage of the research degree can pursue high-quality research leading to a Ph.D. in any core, multidisciplinary, or interdisciplinary areas for a minimum of three years at a time at full-time and four years at a pace that suits them. During their doctoral programme, they should take at least 8 credits in pedagogy, education, and teaching related to their selected Ph.D. topic. No M.Phil. Curricula will be offered as research degrees.

8. Lifelong learning - In order to prevent human obsolescence in terms of knowledge, skills, and experience and to promote a confident and fulfilling living, the NEP 2020 recommends lifelong learning and research. Every person in society must pursue lifelong learning. At every stage of life, education and research are believed to improve maturity for life satisfaction and enlightenment (Development, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Education is the strongest instrument for reducing poverty in rural areas which is essential for the progress of the country. Higher education improves healthy lifestyles, gender equality, peace and self-advocacy. Creating village level awareness activity about value of higher education in rural areas is the key for parents to guide their children to success. So Rural higher educational institutions may require additional support from the government and private sector such as funding for infrastructure and technology, support for faculty development and collaborations with industry. Additionally, the institutions may need to focus on improving student readiness by providing language, technology training, and holistic, interdisciplinary and skill-based learning. The NEP 2020 recognizes the significance of higher education in rural areas and outlines strategies to address the challenges and provide equitable access to quality education. By implementing the policy's recommendations, there is potential to empower individuals with new knowledge & new skills, promote local development make radical changes in higher education between rural and urban areas in India. By addressing these challenges, higher education in rural areas can empower individuals, bridge educational gaps and contribute to the overall development of rural communities.

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