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Gaining Momentum with Change : Policy Analysis

**GRADED AUTONOMY IN NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 AND ITS
IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN MUMBAI**

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Abstract:

Autonomy in higher education is a functional status granted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to colleges in order to offer them more flexibility in terms of academic development and improving academic standards and quality. Institutional autonomy not only allows colleges to experiment with new ideas to improve the quality and relevance of higher education, but also allows for statutory changes to the institutions as a whole. In this paper, an attempt was made to analyse the concept of autonomy, the principles of institutional autonomy in higher education, and the recommendations on Institutional Autonomy in *India's National Education Policy-2020*. The major problems of implementing the National Education Policy-2020 on Institutional Autonomy were discussed.

Keywords:

NEP 2020, Graded Autonomy, Higher Education

Introduction:

UNESCO defines institutional autonomy as, “a degree of self-governance, necessary for effective decision making by institutes of higher education regarding their academic work standards, management, and related activities.” One of the fundamental characteristics of NEP 2020 is the concept of "empowerment and autonomy to innovate," which supports a "phasing out" plan from Affiliated Colleges to Autonomous Institutions. Curriculum enrichment is also

possible thanks to the extra flexibility afforded to independent institutions. It further claims that, with the right accreditations, Autonomous degree-granting Colleges could become Research-intensive or Teaching-intensive Universities if they so desire. The idea of university autonomy has been contested in India for nearly four decades.

Autonomy is associated with dynamism and freedom, and an institution may be required to adapt its course structure and content to meet market demands. However, the debate over autonomy in Indian higher education cannot be limited to intellectual circles. The concept of '*university autonomy*' is defined as an institution's ability to operate its operations without interference or direction from any level of government.

Background:

The idea of university autonomy has been contested in India for nearly four decades. "The idea of university autonomy is commonly misinterpreted," according to the *Gajendragadkar Committee Report* (UGC, 1971). It is neither a 'legal idea' nor a 'political concept.' Neither is it a 'constitutional idea.' It is both an ethical and a scholarly idea. The approach does not address how legislatures function in a democratic society like ours. Teacher and institutional autonomy are discussed in the *Draft National Education Policy* (DNEP) (MHRD, 2018). The committee recognised the importance of individual autonomy and concluded that a lack of faculty autonomy leads to poor performance. Motivation is low, and there is less room for innovation. DNEP considers institutional autonomy to be necessary for both research and pedagogy.

Problems:

The recent developments in India's education system necessitate a reconsideration of the concept of autonomy, which must take into account the diversity of universities. To begin with, present regulatory-based autonomous systems have overlooked recent demographic shifts. Educational compositional adjustments and the number of private institutions is currently increasing with about twice that of government agencies. Nonetheless, the governing model has changed. It's taken a long time for things to change. Second, wherever the federal government has jurisdiction, Although small measures have been taken, their implementation

at the state level has been slow or non-existent, one characterised by inaction. In short, *institutions of higher education* (IHEs) in India need to be looked at through a different lens to conceive the reality of autonomy. These apprehensions about autonomy came to be used by successive governments to build a case for the model of graded autonomy.

Objective :

The primary goal of this study is to see how the New Education Policy 2020 will affect higher education. The research also looks into how they impact the current educational system. The emphasis is on how autonomy contributes to the development of the whole curriculum and its practical application. It also aims to see if autonomy helps students develop their practical skills and knowledge. The purpose of the study is to also look at whether autonomy adds value to their degree, allowing them to find better jobs and have the confidence to stand out in a global market.

Methodology:

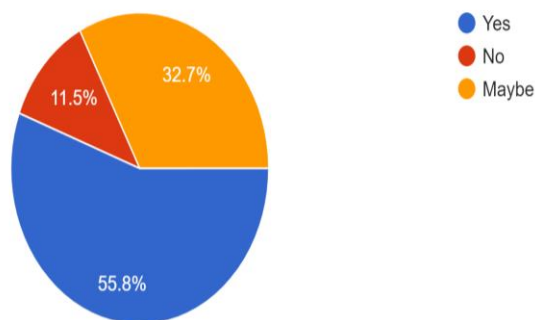
A survey of students residing in Mumbai was carried out with the help of a 'structured non-disguised' questionnaire google form. The final study was conducted in the Mumbai City where the questionnaire was personally administered to them in the month of February 2022. This research is a descriptive study. The necessary secondary data was collected from various websites including those of Government of India, magazines, journals, other publications, etc. This data was then analysed and reviewed to arrive at the inferences and conclusions.

Impact:

The NEP 2020 paves the way towards less regulation and more autonomy for institutions through an effective self-regulatory framework. Over-regulation has always been practised in Indian educational institutes unlike the western institutes which practise self-regulation. Through NEP 2020 gradual autonomy and accreditations will be granted to all higher education institutions.

The inputs are a flexible curriculum focusing on interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary abilities. Apart from development of soft abilities, professional abilities, technical and vocational abilities, information communication technology abilities, environmental, ethical abilities, creative and innovative abilities, critical thinking abilities, and the like. The curriculum must incorporate all aspects of education envisioned in NEP 2020 such as domain specific outcomes, inter and cross disciplinary outcomes, vocationalization and entrepreneurship, values and professional ethics. Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities are equally important to develop other abilities stated in NEP 2020. NEP 2020 is crucial in developing other talents.

- To what extent will autonomy impact the curriculum?

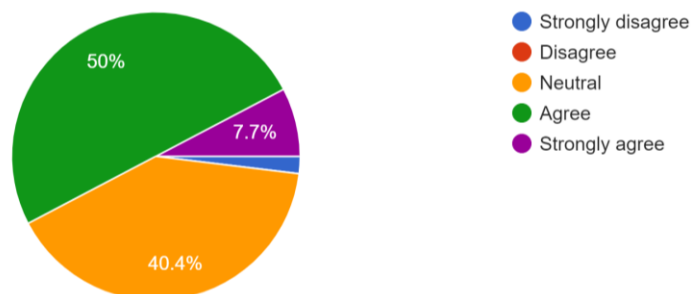


The pie chart alongside shows the responses of the survey

conducted. The HEIs will design the outcome-based curriculum for all programmes to offer in consultation with the industry, using educational research approach. It is used for improving the next cycle of curriculum revision, implementation and evaluation. Curriculum implementation using learner centric approaches, blended learning, project and problem-based methods, internship and industrial training and like. Autonomy will result in taking corrective and preventive actions immediately to bring continuous improvement. Impact of curriculum design and implementation is evaluated in the form of competency development and reaction of the industry, alumni and passing out graduates.

The industry is intensifying its transition to Industry 4.0. HEIs have the option to offer continuing education programmes to improve the capability and capacity of industry professionals. These types of programmes bolster the organisation's key strengths. At the same time, the institute develops a strategic partnership with the industry.

- Does autonomy help in improving academic performance and enhancing productivity which in turn would lead to overall development?



Because of its impact on university productivity in teaching and research, university policy relating to legislative autonomy and public finance has an impact on economic growth. The link between (university) education, research, and labour productivity is complicated, especially when considering the impact of technology on physical capital investment. It is commonly understood that technical advancement does not happen in a vacuum, but rather as a result of advances in human or physical capital combined with increased productivity. Changes in productivity levels, in turn, are likely to be the result of factors such as the engagement of well-trained people in the manufacturing process, as well as advances in public and private research and development. This in turn will help in increasing overall GDP.

Some suggestions for improvements:

Under NEP 2020 reform, the autonomy is granted to only colleges receiving scores of 3.51 or higher on a scale of 0 to 4 from the *National Assessment and Accreditation Council* (NAAC) or accredited by the *National Accreditation Board* (NAB) in 3 or more programmes with scores of 750 or more in each programme. This will encourage the colleges to do their best and reach the optimum level, which will act as a benefit for the students.

- Curriculum Transformation: The curriculum must be progressive in order to instil dynamism. Students should be able to choose from a variety of courses in the first year, with the option to study whatever they want after the first year or semester. The emphasis of the course should be on projects rather than tests. To avoid stagnation, there must be innovation.
- To make the procedure go through some hoops of interviews and applications in order to determine whether or not the college or institution is ready for it.
- Teachers can award grades and provide feedback to students in order to assist them develop in other areas. Students and parents should be notified of the findings by email and SMS alerts as soon as possible. It instils a great deal of trust in the ability to deliver interactive digital content.
- To appoint a committee to keep a check on the substantial burden on universities which have to regulate admissions, set curriculum and conduct examinations for a large number of undergraduate colleges.
- Two lines of action seems essential that must be done if India's higher education system is to be proactive: To begin, make *autonomy synonymous with transparency* and accountability with the participation of all stakeholders; second, in the methodical elimination of many of whom are viewed as breeding grounds, with laws and regulatory organisations corruption and nepotism.
- Last but not least, actively seek the help of others and participation of high-quality private-sector institutions to expand their horizons, improve school quality and, as a result, *increase economic and social opportunities* and India's knowledge development.

Conclusion:

The traditional classification of autonomy is useful for governing and managing institutions, but the core and associated dimensions of autonomy enable higher education institutions to innovate their systems and processes, reengineer their core and associated businesses, and add value to inputs, processes, and outcomes. The institute will be able to adjust to external and internal changes if it has autonomy in these areas. Internal forces have an impact on the economy and society. It will create a spiral effect in the room. The performance of the institute in achieving quality, certification, and the highest level of excellence. The HEI will acquire

excellence over time. Institutional autonomy not only provides ample opportunity for colleges to take up innovations to bring quality and relevance in higher education but also brings statutory changes to the institutions as a whole. Hence, the NEP targeting all affiliated colleges becoming either an autonomous college or constituent college of the University in the coming fifteen years is a very big challenge that needs to be strategized effectively.

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