

Chapter-V

Preparedness to implement National Education Policy 2020

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Audit Objective 4: Whether the Department is prepared for implementation of National Education Policy 2020?

The National Education Policy (NEP-2020) was introduced (July 2020) with the aim to align with the global education development agenda reflected in the SDG4. The GoP adopted the UN SDG No. 4- (Quality Education) in their decision (December 2018) and subsequently reflected in the report of the committee consisting of seven Vice Chancellors of universities in Punjab, constituted (October 2020) by Hon'ble Governor of Punjab to examine the challenges while implementing NEP-2020.

5.1 Issues addressed in National Education Policy

The major audit findings on preparedness of the State Government/ Department of Higher Education and their action plan/vision as discussed in previous chapters were also analysed with reference to provisions of NEP which are discussed in succeeding paragraphs:

- Para 9.2-h of NEP highlights 'suboptimal governance and leadership of HEIs' as one of the major problems faced by the Higher Education system. In Punjab, the Punjab State Higher Education Council¹ Act 2018 was enacted (October 2018) but SHEC as per Section 3 of the Act 2018 was not fully functional as nomination of 15 non-official members of SHEC was still in process.
- Para 9.2-i of NEP discusses the ineffective regulatory system which was required to be strengthened. The SLQAC was established in 2005 to ensure the quality higher education in HEIs by monitoring the function of IQAC established in HEIs and preparation of State level action plan. The SLQAC was not functioning properly.
- Para 10.8 of NEP envisages to achieve GER of 50 *per cent* by 2035. In Punjab there was downward trend in GER. The Department fixed its goal to achieve 30.5 *per cent* GER in 2020 against which the GER of 28.20 *per cent* was achieved.
- Para 13.3 of NEP envisages that the teaching duties will not be excessive and STR not too high. The STR in PU, Patiala; GNDU, Amritsar; and RGNUL, Patiala was 26:1, 23:1 and 27:1 respectively. The STR in government colleges was 47:1 during 2019-20.

¹ To be created for planning, monitoring and co-ordination for development of Higher Education.

- Para 9.3-c of NEP emphasises upon moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy. No Government college adopted the policy of Autonomous College Regulations, 2018. Audit also noticed that five colleges (one *per cent*) out of 361 General Stream colleges have been granted autonomous status as of February 2021.
- Para 12.4 of NEP provides to set up high-quality support centres and to give adequate funds & academic resources to encourage the students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds to make a successful transition to Higher Education.

Audit noticed that:

- The scheme of EWS for Higher Education was not implemented in the State.
- To ensure implementation of various schemes of UGC/GoI/State Government, GNDU, Amritsar had not constituted any SC/ST Cell to ensure implementation of scholarship schemes, etc. for welfare of the reserved categories and minorities. No cell was constituted in 36 test-checked affiliated colleges due to paucity of funds.
- The GER of SC students declined in 2019-20.
- Para 23.5 of NEP stipulates that the thrust of technological interventions will be for improving teaching learning and evaluation process.
- In selected universities, percentage of ICT enabled classrooms were ranging between 41 and 82 *per cent* whereas only 4 to 68 *per cent* classrooms/seminar halls were ICT enabled in test-checked colleges.
- In selected universities, the SCR ranged between 8:1 and 12:1 whereas in 33 selected colleges it was between 3:1 and 79:1, and in five colleges, no computer was available.
- NEP (12.4) provides that there is need to provide professional, academic and career counselling as well as counsellors were required to ensure physical, psychological and emotional well-being. Though, Career Counselling Cells were established in all the selected universities and some colleges yet due to their inadequate functioning and lack of monitoring by the educational institutions, the objective of providing crucial guidance to students could not be achieved.

During Exit Conference (August 2021), the Department stated that a State level committee had already been constituted by the Government of Punjab to implement the NEP-2020. It was added that Central Government had also

constituted some committees for preparing guidelines for implementation of NEP-2020 which were awaited in the State. The Department assured to take into account all the points mentioned in the Audit Report. The Department also assured to provide the detailed information and relevant documents to Audit in this regard.


5.2 Conclusion

Considering the current situation of Higher Education in Punjab as observed from above audit findings, it appears that the system was still far from ready to adopt the NEP-2020. Despite the initiatives of the GoP across several areas in Higher Education, the gaps highlighted above represent possible risks for the achievement of key objectives of the NEP-2020 agenda.

5.3 Recommendation


Timely and well-coordinated action should be taken by all key stakeholders existing at State and Institutions level, for ensuring time-bound and effective implementation of the NEP-2020 in accordance with envisaged priorities.

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Countersigned

New Delhi
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