# Global Benchmarks, National Aspirations: A Comparative Analysis of India's National Education Policy 2020 and Global Higher Education Frameworks

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**Abstract**

This study compares India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to the higher education systems in the US, UK, Finland, and Australia. It talks about crucial topics including government, the curriculum, quality control, research, and globalization. The analysis shows that NEP 2020 is a big change for India, but its essential ideas, like being flexible and having regulations that are always the same, are in line with what is done in other areas of the world. The article contends that India's primary challenge is the execution of these reforms on an unprecedented scale. This study analyzes India's top-down policy in comparison to the market-oriented or trust-based systems of other countries. It learns a lot about how to reconcile independence and centralization, as well as national identity and global integration.

## 1. Introduction: India's National Education Policy 2020 - A Big Change in Higher Education:

### 1.1. Reasons and Background:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India is a big change. It replaces the policy from 1986 that has been in place for 34 years. On July 29, 2020, it was approved. It intends to make India's schools the best in the world by 2040. This would enable the country become a world leader and meet its "growing developmental imperatives." After a lot of talks, the policy was made, and it plans to completely change the education system so that it follows 21st century ideas.

### 1.2. The major goals are access, fairness, quality, affordability, and accountability.

The goal of NEP 2020 is to make India a "vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower." It is centered on five pillars: Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability. It is based on Indian customs and encourages people to study more than one language and combine Indian ways of learning. It also satisfies global criteria, such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 4. The fundamental purpose of the method is to help people become well-rounded by educating them to think critically, be creative, and do the right thing instead of just memorizing facts.

### 1.3. The Fundamentals

There are a lot of critical improvements in NEP 2020 that will help this goal come true. The automated Academic Bank of Credits lets students start and finish a four-year undergraduate program at different times. This makes for a wide, cross-disciplinary place to learn. The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is a new group that makes rules in a different way. It advocates forming a National Research Foundation (NRF) to encourage a research

culture. Finally, it proposes a daring strategy for India's globalization that will make it the "Vishwa Guru," or "global teacher." One of the main goals of the strategy is to make the country competitive with other countries while also making sure that people feel firmly linked to their own country. This is the problem that the next part will talk about.

**2. An Analysis of Diverse Governance and Regulatory Frameworks:**

How a higher education system is run influences how free, responsible, and creative it is. NEP 2020 offers a huge overhaul to India's messed-up system of rules and laws. This section compares India's intended approach to the systems in the US, UK, Australia, and Finland.

**A Look at Different Policies for Higher Education:**

The major quality assurance body or framework, the national research funding agency, and the main plan for internationalization are the main regulatory bodies or approaches in each country.

The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) believes that "light but tight" centralized regulation with graded autonomy is the best way to go. The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), the Multiple Entry/Exit National Accreditation Council (NAC), and the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) all want to be "Vishwa Guru" by encouraging students from other nations to come to their campuses.

In the US, the Department of Education (for funding), state governments, and accrediting organizations all work together in a decentralized way. It is based on the market, has its own institutions, and uses peer review. You can transfer credits and programs that aren't in the same field. The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are two private groups that provide schools and programs their seal of approval. The US wants to hire the best professionals from all over the world, but its policies make it hard to do so.

The Office for Students (OfS) is in charge of devolved systems, institutional autonomy, and student outcomes in the UK. There is also the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS), modularization, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and a national plan to increase education exports after Brexit.

Australia: The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) makes sure that schools follow the standards set by the government and only take risks when they have to. The Higher Education Standards Framework is run by the Australian Research Council (ARC). Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and industry co-creation are the national strategies for long-term growth and diversification.

Finland's Ministry of Education and Culture is in charge, and the schools in the country have a lot of independence. There are ways to get from VET to HE, and none of them lead to a dead end. FINEEC, or the Finnish Education Evaluation Center, undertakes audits to make things better. The Academy of Finland works with other nations and with European projects like Erasmus+.

**2.1. India's "Light but Tight" Model: The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)**

The Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will take the place of many other groups, such as the UGC and AICTE. NEP 2020 is the biggest change to how the government works. There will be four parts to the HECI that work together: the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) will be in charge of rules, the National Accreditation Council (NAC) will be in charge of accreditation, the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) will be in charge of funding, and the General Education Council (GEC) will be in charge of academic standards. The philosophy behind this structure is "light but tight," which means providing institutions freedom while making sure they are responsible for generating clear results.

**2.2. Similar Models of Governance**

In different places of the world, there exist different kinds of governments. The United States does not have a single government. But there is a decentralized framework that is based on the market. There are state laws and private certification that make up regulation.

The UK has devolved systems, and the Office for Students in England is in responsibility of what happens to students. Schools can still make their own choices, though.

The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) is Australia's only national regulator. It is comparable to India's. All schools have to follow TEQSA's rules.

Finland is a great example of a country that is quite confident because its institutions are very free. The government officially severed ties with them in 2009.

**2.3. Analysis: The Pursuit of Efficiency and the Conflict Between Centralization and Independence**

Every country has its own way of finding the right balance between freedom and control. India is working with the HECI to reform its flawed system by making it more centralized. This is similar to Australia's TEQSA program. The US system and the Finnish model are both decentralized, which lets people do what they want. NEP 2020 talks a lot about independence, but the HECI is a state-led project that is designed to help that independence grow in the future. It will work if it can keep things "light" in practice while being "tight" on the rules.

**3. Curriculum and Pedagogy: Being adaptable, collaborating with other disciplines, and preparing for employment:**

NEP 2020 wants to transform the way schools work since they haven't been flexible enough for a long time. It wants to make learning more flexible, add new subjects, and put the student at the center.

**3.1. The goals of NEP 2020 are to have different methods to get in and out, an academic bank of credits, and the liberal arts to be a part of everything.**

NEP 2020 says that undergraduate education should be broad and diverse, with no "hard separations" between the arts and sciences and the vocational and academic streams. It has a four-year bachelor's degree program with several methods to enroll and exit (certificate, diploma, or degree) to keep people from dropping out. It is possible to do this because of the

The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) is a national digital library that lets students send and get credits from other schools. You can learn "anytime, anywhere" using this.

**3.2. Standards and ways of doing things all throughout the world**

People from all over the world know about these beliefs. For a long time, American schools have taught liberal arts, and their curricula are very specific and cover a wide range of subjects. The The

The UK system uses the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS) and is made up of modules. But schools normally have to agree on things for credit transfer to operate successfully.

In Finland, the "no dead ends" policy makes it easier for people to go from vocational education and training (VET) to college.

The main goal of Australia is to help graduates find jobs. They do this by encouraging kids to do a lot of work in the field, like through Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and co-created curriculums.

### 3.3. Analysis: Challenges and Opportunities in Implementing Flexible Curricula

India's policy is distinct since it comes from the top down and is part of the system. The centralized ABC infrastructure is what makes things flexible. In some places, though, flexibility is more of an institutional thing that comes from the bottom up. For instance, in the US, it's based on what the market wants; in the UK, it's based on deals made between parties; and in Australia, it's based on partnerships that aren't centralized. India is trying to make a big technical jump without the years of building trust at the institutional level that have transpired in other countries. People call this a "implementation chasm." The success of its educational program depends on the willingness of thousands of schools and institutions to employ the same national framework.

## 4. Different Models for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, but Same Goals:

Quality assurance (QA) and accreditation are vital for maintaining high standards and gaining the public's trust. The NEP 2020 strategy indicates that India's quality assurance system needs to alter a lot to become more open and reliable.

### 4.1. The New NAAC Framework: Making Sure India's Quality Is Better

People say that India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) doesn't have enough members, hence they don't trust it. The new structure comprises two parts that function together. The first one is simpler.

The Binary Accreditation process makes it easier for Indian schools and universities to be tested and recognized. It doesn't give students a lot of letter grades. Instead, it places them in two groups: accredited and not accredited.

The Maturity-Based Graded Levels test offers levels 1–5 that show you how to keep becoming better. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India has a system for giving out accreditation that has many stages and is always growing better.

### 4.2. 4.2. Different parts of the world use different QA approaches.

Instead of looking for bugs in the finished product, global QA approaches now strive to stop them from happening in the first place. The first is an old-fashioned way that looks at the product, while the second is a new one that looks at the process. There are a few different global QA models. Students in the US must go through a peer-review process backed by private accrediting agencies in order to get federal funding.

The UK Quality Code is the main idea underlying the UK. The independent Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) makes sure it stays up to date.

To assist schools and universities grow, the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC) keeps an eye on their internal quality assurance systems. Finland's style of doing things is built on improving things.

Australia's way of following the rules is based on standards. The Tertiary Education Quality and requirements Agency (TEQSA) makes ensuring that all providers meet the requirements outlined by the Higher Education Standards Framework.

### 4.3. The key to success is finding the perfect mix between holding people accountable, making things better, and without placing too much burden on the institution.

The two major reasons for QA systems are to make sure that minimum standards are met and to help things get better by encouraging people to perform their best. India's new structure splits these two jobs up in a new way. The binary system is supposed to keep people from going to big events and bring a lot of groups together under a formal quality umbrella. The voluntary, graded levels system helps schools do well by providing them something to work

toward. This two-tiered approach is a good technique to deal with the scale and variety of India's higher education system.

**5. A Comparative Analysis of Funding Ecosystems to Foster Research and Innovation:**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a big goal to make India a place where people perform a lot of different kinds of research. This section compares the proposed National Research Foundation to financing programs that are already in place in the US, UK, Finland, and Australia.

**5.1. The National Research Foundation (NRF) is in charge of starting research in India.**

The Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF) is a big part of NEP 2020. It is the highest authority that is supposed to "seed, grow, and facilitate research" in all areas and organizations. One essential component is that it aims to help public colleges and institutions undertake better research, which they haven't done much of in the past. The ANRF would cooperate with other groups and give out grants that were vetted by peers and were competitive. The government is thinking about spending ₹50,000 crores over five years to aid with this.

**5.2. Global Models for Research Funding**

Countries that perform a lot of research have a hard time getting money. The National Science Foundation (NSF) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are two of the main parts of the US government that operate much of the country. They have a precise method for reviewing work by peers. The The

The UK has a "dual-support" system that gives projects money based on how well they have done in the past and competitive project monies from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

The Academy of Finland and the Australian Research Council (ARC) in Australia grant money to some initiatives. The ARC's Linkage Program, for example, enables businesses and schools work together.

**5.3. An Analysis on How to Make Research Culture a Part of Everything**

The US and UK normally pay for the "best" research by transferring money to the top institutions. India's ANRF, on the other hand, is supposed to help the country grow. Its major goal is not only to pay for existing excellence, but also to make the research environment more fair and open by commencing research in schools who don't have enough money. The ANRF is different from other groups around the world since its purpose is to build capacity, which is a powerful instrument for making things fair in society and in regions. Not only will high-quality journals look at how effectively it operates, but they will also look at how successfully it draws new institutions and professionals into the mainstream of the country.

**6. How to Get Involved Around the World to Make Higher Education More Global:**

The plan's goals are to improve education and have a wider effect on the world. NEP 2020 has a big strategy to turn India into a great location to go to school.

**6.1. India's Global Goals: To become a "Vishwa Guru"**

NEP 2020 wants to turn India's schools into places where people from all over the world may study again. This will make India a "Vishwa Guru," or global teacher. Some of the key goals are to make it easier for students from other countries to come to India, to promote Indian knowledge systems like Ayurveda and Yoga, to get Indian universities to build campuses in other countries, and to allow the best foreign universities run in India.

**6.2. How to make things more international**

People from all over the world have always wanted to work in the US, but strict immigration restrictions make it impossible for them to get here. The

Australia and the UK both have their own national goals, such making education abroad a major export and setting specific hiring goals. The Turing Scheme in the UK encourages people to travel throughout the world after Brexit.

Finland's goal is focused on the European setting and is more about working together on projects like Erasmus+ than selling education.

**6.3. Analysis: employing the right people, promoting teamwork, and establishing a brand that works around the world**

India's plans to become more global are well-timed because the US's ambiguous policies provide other countries an opportunity. The UK and Australia are fighting over who can sell more commodities to other countries, but India's "Vishwa Guru" goal is different. India can use its unique cultural and intellectual background to build a "soft power" brand that goes well with its primary STEM and other products. This dual value proposition puts India in a unique position that doesn't directly compete with the Anglo-American model. You need to do a fantastic job of promoting this identity and make sure that the infrastructure is solid and the quality is great if you want to be successful.

**7. Synthesis and Critical Analysis: Perspectives on the Reform of Higher Education in India:**

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the objective of NEP 2020 aligns with global trends; nonetheless, the primary challenge lies in its implementation inside India's vast and intricate system.

**7.1. Similarities and Differences in Policies for Higher Education Around the World**

There is a strong need for more flexible curricula, more collaboration across areas, and better career prospects for graduates in all of the countries that were looked at. But India conducts things in a totally different way. It intends to make a dramatic change from the top down, with aid from national groups like the HECI and ANRF. In the UK, US, and Finland, on the other hand, change has been slower, more decentralized, or driven by the market.

**7.2. The NEP 2020 Framework: What Works and What Doesn't**

NEP 2020 is great because it is a big, all-encompassing goal that fearlessly addresses deep-seated structural issues with a strong focus on fairness and access. But the largest risk is also the biggest goal: the changes are so big that they might not be able to be put into reality. The idea of "light but tight" could become "heavy-handed," and it's still a significant question whether it can be done economically. For things to proceed well, a lot of work needs to be done to build up the capacity of institutions.

**7.3. Finding the greatest ways to change and examples of how to do it**

The comparison investigation yields substantial information. India could learn a lot from Finland's success in combining vocational and higher education, Australia's strong partnership between universities and businesses, the UK's dual-support system for research funding to improve state universities, and the different roles of Australia's TEQSA and Finland's FINEEC in making sure that quality is maintained.

**8.Final Thoughts and Suggestions for Policy:**

**8.1. Summary of Key Findings**

NEP 2020 is an essential policy that follows trends all across the world, but it is different since it is top-down and centralized. India's largest difficulty is getting things done while trying to find a balance between centralization and

autonomy, as well as between quality and justice. The policy has the best chance of becoming a world leader if it makes research fair and builds a unique "soft power" brand.

**8.2. How to get the most out of NEP 2020**

• **Governance:** Put the HECI's growth at the top of your list of things to do, and engage with the state to support cooperative federalism. Also, develop rules that are as simple to follow as possible and are based on what works**.**

• **Curriculum:** Start a national mission to make teachers better and add bottom-up institutional cooperation to the top-down ABC.

• **Quality Assurance:** The binary accrediting system should be easy for everyone to use, and the levels of grading should be dependent on how much better things are getting.

• **Research:** Use a lot of the ANRF money to help state colleges and universities develop their research skills so that more people may use them.

• **Internationalization:** Set up a single-window digital platform so that people from other nations can easily get involved. To show off its unique dual value proposition, give the "Study in India" campaign a new moniker.

**8.3. What will happen next: Getting India ready for the 21st century's global knowledge economy**

NEP 2020 has a full plan for making higher education better in India. It will be hard and take a long time to turn policy into practice. It will also cost a lot of money and require political will. But if the plan is followed honestly and with a focus on its primary themes, it might enable India's young people attain their full potential, build a strong knowledge society, and achieve its objective of being a major player in the 21st century's global information economy.

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