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Indian Education Policy: A Study with Special Reference to Higher Education

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Abstract: Higher education in India is crucial for advancing both individual and community well-being. It helps create sustainable livelihoods and boost the country's economy. Since India is a developing country, an increasing number of young people are motivated to pursue higher education. Through a variety of disciplines, including the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects, higher education in the twenty-first century allows an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest in depth and to develop character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, and service-mindedness.

The sustainable development goals "4" on the education also ensure that quality of education, inclusive education and equal opportunities for all by 2030. If we go over the condition of higher education in India at present, the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) world university rankings for 2023 indicate that there are no Indian universities among the top 100 universities in the world due to low student employment, national recognition and award records, research funding, and other factors. Though India is making significant effort by securing good ranking which can be seen through recent world ranking reports. Among the 1422 universities ranked worldwide, 41 Indian institutions secured their positions and this time, there are 7 new universities added from India. Also, Three Indian institutions, Indian institute of Science Bengaluru (Rank 155), Indian institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay (Rank 172), and IIT Delhi (Rank 174) secure a place in the top 200 in year 2023. The research paper covers Indian education policies with special reference to higher education. The research study is descriptive on the basis of the secondary data. The various government reports are referred to collect secondary data. The research paper will examine what progress India has made in higher education since independence.

Key words:*Higher Education,National EducationPolicy2020,Indian EducationSystem, Quacquarelli Symonds.*

Introduction- India has a distinctive educational system that is intended to preserve the culture, history, values, and traditions of the country. It was accessible in the early phases of human civilization, when the "Gurukul System" controlled education. Students got instruction from a "Guru" in a variety of philosophical, religious, and scientific subjects under this residential arrangement. Over the years, it had several transformations and advancements, moving from the British era to independent India. In terms of the number of students and educational institutions, the current Indian higher education system is among the biggest in the world and ranks third in terms of educational hubs, after China and the United States. In India top-notch higher education promotes personal growth and enlightenment, responsible civic involvement, and beneficial societal contribution. It also promotes economic independence while preparing students for more fulfilling and meaningful personal and professional life. The higher education in India serve as a foundation for knowledge, development and innovation to developed natio economy. Higher education helps individuals become more intelligent and talented so they can achieve their life goals, ambitions, and aspirations. It gives the person an opportunity to take advantage of the possibilities offered by his or her sociocultural environment and to contribute as much as possible. It develops a person's capacity to critically evaluate, review, and alter the prevalent social-cultural norms in his or her society. Furthermore, it develops a mindset to view how a person interacts with her culture, community, economy, and environment. It also instills the universal human values of peace, fraternity, and nonviolence. Higher education creates the human capital needed for the labor market by educating people and equipping them with necessary skills and abilities. The benefits of higher education are not limited to the individual, but they accrue to the society as well. There is also a positive correlation between higher education and economic growth, and poverty reduction. Educated people have access to better employment opportunities, earn higher wages and are in a better position to take control of their lives.

Objective of the Study- India now has the second-largest higher education system in the world, with about 38 million students enrolled in 50,000 academic institutions with a target of increasing gross enrolment rates from the current 26.3% to 50% by 2035 therefore, it is important to understand Indian higher educational policies. The research paper highlights the Indian education policies with special reference to higher education.

Research Methodology- The research study is descriptive on the basis of the secondary data. The various government reports, articles, journals and books are referred to collect secondary data. The analysis

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Vol.-20, No.- III, Issues-41, YEAR- July-Sept. 2026

of the study has been done on the basis of recommendation and implementation of various government reports and educational policies.

Education Policies in India with Regard to Higher Education- The existence of Indian higher education policies can be traced into two distinct time periods 1947–1989 and 1990 to at present. During this time, a number of recommendations for higher education policies were made by various committees and commissions and also in form of policies various initiatives taken by government.

Policy Efforts for Higher Education from 1947 to 1989- The period of 1947-1989 is marked by the spirit of reforms in higher education. Policies and policy recommendations suggest robust linkages between higher education in particular and the project of national development for an independent India. First time in India after independence government of India appointed the university education commission in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan to study the problems of Indian university education and to recommend remedial measures for the future requirements of the country. The commission was covered all aspects of university education in India. It emphasized the 10+2 structure at the pre-university stage and recognized importance of student's welfare. The commission was focused on three languages--regional, federal and English at the university level and English should be replaced by an Indian language. The commission was also in favor of setting up rural universities. As recommended by commission universities should be autonomous to meet the new responsibilities and university grants commission should be established for allocating grants and university education must place in the concurrent list. These recommendations were further reiterated by Dr Shrimali Committee (1954), National Committee on Women's Education (1958), Kothari Commission (1964) and several other committees. After that kothari commission were advice the government on the national pattern of education and policies for the development of education at all stages in all aspects. Kothari commission deal with problems of higher education which include establishment of major universities, programmes of qualitative improvement, enrolment and university governance. Further committee of the Members of Parliament (1967) highlighting the need for reforms across the system of higher education, laid down few important recommendations for the units within the system universities. The committee recommended, that the universities in the country should develop themselves into autonomous communities of teachers and students who are untiringly and devotedly engaged in the pursuit of learning and excellence. Furthermore, in 1968 first National Policy of Education (NPE)was drafted by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. The core recommendation of the NPE (1968) on higher education is to ensure all-round improvement in the institutions and expansion of facilities in the existing institutions. Taking into account some of the core recommendations of the NPE-1968 Ministry of Education constituted the committee on governance of universities and colleges in 1969 and the Gajendragadkar committee on governance of colleges and universities in 1971.

Both committees addressed on issues related autonomy, accountability, selection of Vice-Chancellors and so on. After a gap of almost three decades National Policy of Education,1986 considered as an essential phase for the country when higher education constitutes the key component of further growth and sustainability. The NPE, 1986 explicitly states that the doors of academic institutions should be open to all and also provides special provisions for the weaker sections of the society. The 1986 policy aim was provided special access to colleges and universities to large sections of society through protective discrimination like reservation of seats in higher education, scholarship and special incentives. The policy indicates specific objectives for higher education are incorporating expansion of higher education; improvement of the quality of higher education, and increased relevance and job orientation in higher education. The NPE, 1986 called for special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity, especially for Indian women, scheduled tribes and the scheduled caste communities. The policy expanded the open university system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University, which had been created in 1985. Need for creating rural universities suggested by the committee. After that report of the expert committee on the minimum qualifications and workload are on librarians and directors of physical education in universities and colleges (1987) and report of the taskforce on code of professional ethics for university and college teachers (1989) also focused on higher education. This period was reforms period. Various reforms have taken by government through committee, commissions and education policies.

The situation changed after the 1990s wherein the nation strengthens the higher education by addressing changes in the patterns in enrolment and the overall public expenditure. In accordance with this,

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Vol.-20, No.- III, Issues-41, YEAR- July-Sept. 2026

the government established a number of committees and a programme for action 1992 to cope with the demands of rapid transformations in the higher education sector. For instance, the

Gnanam committee 1990 and the programme of action, 1992 and few others have been illustrated the prioritization and reprioritization of the core ideals of the education policies. Gnanam committee's report identified the need to revisit the linkages between the universities and their roles and examined the recommendations of the NPE-1986.As per the committee universities are the centers of excellence and play a significant part in regional and national growth so in this context, universities should review and redefine their goals and financing strategies as necessary. The committee had clearly suggested that no office in the university system should be held by ministers, lawmakers, or office holders of political parties. After that, the 1993 report of the Justice

Punnaiah Committee provided crucial insights into financial condition of higher education and universities and given advice on higher education funding. The committee also suggested a performance-based monitoring system for the university system and suggested that the ideal student-teacher ratio be 12:1. Similar proposals were shared by the Ramlal Parik Committee for reforms in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors in Indian universities to improve the governance structures in the universities. After a decade, the central advisory board of education recommended that the ministry of human resource development create central legislation in consultation with the UGC, AICTE, and other professional councils to simplify the establishment and governance of private universities, deemed-to-be universities, self-financing institutions, and establishment of foreign universities in India. The board advised the state governments to encourage and support self-financing programmes at public state institutions in order to raise resources on their own. These changes could be interpreted as a move towards a liberal and privately run higher education ecosystem.

After these changes, the government created the national knowledge commission, whose report was released in 2006 and included a recommendation to expand the higher education system by establishing 1500 universities across the nation. In line with this, the commission recommended creating an independent regulatory authority for higher education in order to make significant changes to the regulatory framework. Further Yashpal committee advise on renovation and rejuvenation of higher education was constituted in 2008 and recommended that to address the issue of privatization and its influence on higher education strong regulatory framework must be established. The Committee also suggested that higher education institutions place more emphasis on research in comparison to teaching and extension by establishing a comprehensive entity called the national council for higher education and research to oversee higher education in the nation.

The Government launched RUSA in 2013, which was once more a turning point for higher education. The most significant issues raised by RUSA are : the need to increase funding for state institutions; reforming the affiliation system; enhancing equity in higher education for marginalized communities; addressing issues related to regional imbalance in the availability and access to higher education institutions; revisiting the role and effectiveness of institutional structures; and finally, imp roving access to higher education for underrepresented communities. After more than three decades of recommendations from various committees and commissions reflecting on the difficulties and opportunities in higher education, the MHRD created the TSR Subramanian Committee. On the behalf of committee report the government released a draft document on National Education Policy 2016 and following that, in 2020, the Indian government announced its National Education Policy 2020 to overcome all obstacles and provide high-quality of higher education with equity and inclusion. The National Education Policy 2020 makes the significant systemic changes in higher education consisting large multidisciplinary universities and colleges independent with at least one in or near every district, and that offer medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages, more multidisciplinary undergraduate education, more faculty and institutional autonomy, revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support for enhanced student experiences, reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions through merit-appointments and career progression based on teaching, research, and service, establishment of a national research foundation to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges, governance of higher education by high qualified independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy, "light but tight" regulation by a single regulator for higher education and increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures, including greater opportunities for outstanding public education, scholarships by private/philanthropic universities for disadvantaged and

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underprivileged students, online education, and open distance learning and all infrastructure and learning materials accessible and available to learners with disabilities.

Findings of the Study- The research paper revealed a number of commission recommendations on higher education as well as educational policy, with a focus on higher education since independence to the present. The spirit of reforms in higher education can be seen throughout the years 1947 to 1989. Strong links between higher education in particular and the idea of national development for an independent .India are suggested by policies and policy recommendations. First time in 1948, the University Education Commission raised concerns about Indian university education and made recommendations for corrective action and after that with the government of India's full support, the University Grants Commission was eventually established to handle grant distribution, and education was finally placed on the concurrent list. In a concurrent list education was the subject of both state and center government. Further in 1964, the government received suggestions from the Kothari Commission "on the national pattern of education. The national pattern of education includes establishment of major universities, programmes of qualitative improvement, enrolment and university governance. In 1967 the committee of the members of parliament said that the nation's universities develop themselves into autonomous communities of teachers and students who are actively engaged in the learning and excellence." When higher education became the foundation for further expansion and sustainability, the National Policy of Education of 1986 was seen as a crucial period for the nation. According to the policy, specific goals for higher education include: expanding access to higher education; enhancing its quality and enhancing its relevance and focus on employment. In 1990s, the situation changed and the country strengthened higher education by addressing changes in enrolment patterns and Justice Punnaiah Committee provided their assessment of the financial health of higher education and institutions in its 1993 report, along with financing recommendations.

The central advisory board of education recommended that the Ministry of Human Resource Development create centralized legislation to make it easier to establish and manage private universities, deemed-to-be universities, self-financing institutions, and foreign universities in India. In line with this, to develop research in higher education Yashpal Committee suggested that National Council for Higher Education and Research to oversee higher education in the nation. The Government launched RUSA in 2013, which was once more a turning point for higher education. In order to overcome all barriers and deliver high-quality higher education with equity and inclusion, the Indian government recently announced its National Education Policy 2020, which calls for a complete overhaul and revitalization of the higher education system. The research paper highlight that In India, the higher education sector continuously on the path of the development. It has covered a wide range of issues related to higher education, including funding, rules, recruiting senior administrators at universities, establishing new colleges and institutions, and many more. With the changing pattern of education to increase the people's capacity and competitiveness, the Indian government has adopted a variety of diverse educational approaches from primary to higher education. At present skill-based education is first priority of the government to fulfill the employment needs of the individual. With these all initiatives at present higher education is accessible to all. It is continuously in priority of government. The National Education Policy 2020 help the government to achieve the goals of higher education through encouraging the study of multidisciplinary subjects and skill-based education that will increase our knowledge in a variety of disciplines and open the path of employment. The NEP 2020 allowing educational institutions to have a greater degree of autonomy for their sustainability and development. Through the establishment of National Research Fund, research is encouraged and create new fields of study and contribute in the growth of the nation. Of course, with all of these efforts, educational equality and inclusion can be sustained. Government carry the National Education Policy 2020 in their fingers like a precious stone, and the Indian higher educational system will undoubtedly sign on the global educational platform.

Conclusion- Particularly in the years after independence, India's higher education system has grown significantly to become one of the biggest in the world. However, there are currently a number of issues with the system, such as how it is funded and managed, including access, equity, and relevance; how its programs are reoriented to emphasize health consciousness, values, and ethics; how high-quality higher education is; and how institutions are evaluated and accredited. These concerns are essential for the nation because it is currently working to create a knowledge-based information society fit for the 21st century using higher education as a potential tool. Recognizing the aforementioned issues, universities must play multiple roles in order to balance the need and the demand, including generating new knowledge, acquiring new

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Vol.-20, No.- III, Issues-41, YEAR- July-Sept. 2026

skills, and producing a pool of intelligent human resources through demanding teaching, research, and extension activities. India must act quickly to change the direction of its higher education system so that it is vibrant, competitive, meaningful, and purposeful.

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