

Research and Innovations: NAAC and NEP 2020

Prof Rashmi Salpekar

Professor and Dean, Vivekananda School of Law and Legal Studies, VIPS, New Delhi

I. INTRODUCTION

The main function of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), an autonomous body funded by the University Grants Commission (UGC), is to assess and accredits Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in India. NAAC was created considering the widespread concern on the quality and relevance of higher education. Thus, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) and the Programme of Action (PoA 1992) spelt out strategic plans for the policies, advocated the establishment of an independent national accreditation agency. Thus, NAAC was established to assess and accredit the Higher Education Institutions based on their performance.

The assessment and accreditation process of performance evaluation is objective in nature. Therefore, the HEIs irrespective of the location get proper recognition for their performance. The entire process of NAAC accreditation proves that “work speaks rather an individual”. NAAC – SSR has given a total of seven criteria for the evaluation. It may be seen that a faculty or a teacher is having a scope to highlight his or her best practices pertaining to the teaching and research skills in criterion 2 and 3 out of 7 criteria of SSR. The remaining criterion is relating to the system including curriculum, governance and best practices of the Institute. The Criterion 5 deals majorly with the students’ progress. Criterion 3 is about Research and Innovation. It has a total 120 marks/points out of 1000 marks/points.

In the present article, the author would like to deal with criterion 3 in the background of New Education Policy 2020. The author would like to find out if at present the parameters involved in criterion 3 are in tune with NEP 2020 aspirations about the research and innovations. Before going into details of criterion 3, let’s see first, in brief, the Research and Innovations in National Education Policy 2020.

II. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO RESEARCH AND INNOVATIONS

Objectives of the NEP 2020

On the eve of 74th Independence Day, Hon’ble President Shri Ram Nath Kovind said National Education Policy 2020 “will transform future challenges into opportunities by developing a quality education system.” The main focus of the NEP is to strengthen the culture of inclusion, innovation and institution and thus “making India a global knowledge superpower.” The National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India centred education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all.

The Preamble of the NEP mention about the full development of the human personality as also learning “to know”, “to do”, “to live together” and learning “to be”.

Research and Innovations under NEP 2020

NEP has covered many aspects. Of those, the author would like focuss on the research and innovations covered under NEP.

Indian civilization is one of the oldest living civilizations. Indian civilization has a rich culture of science and technology. It has given great contribution in the knowledge in the field Medicine (Ayurveda, Siddha and Yoga), Astrology, Astronomy, Sculpture, Engineering, Mathematics, Economics and many other disciplines.

Once upon a time, India was an internationally acclaimed centre of education. To reclaim the historical role as a global leader in the field of education, the National Education Policy 2020 focuses on strategies needed to promote research and innovation across all disciplines, promote inter-disciplinary research and make India a global hub of R&D. Under Guru shishya parampara and gurukul method, the pupil used to learn from various gurus for various skills. The great known personalities were known not only for authoritative work in one field but some other fields also. Like Kautilya, was a great economist, administrator and jurist also. Aaryabhatta was an expert in mathematics, astronomy and physics also.

To address 'lack of research at most universities and colleges, and transparent and competitive peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines' the NEP brings significant focus on the multidisciplinary approach to education. It provides greater leverage and academic freedom to researchers in higher institutions at different levels of research, including Masters and PhD. These institutions would work to build strong educational communities, providing teachers and researchers the freedom to choose across all disciplines

and fields. This is a very significant step considering the existing system which restricted choices both for the researchers and faculty and forced them to work in a closed-centric academic space.

In Ancient Indian Universities model, for example, in Takshashila university students were having the liberty to choose any subject once enrolled. Veda, Vedanta, physics, politics, dentistry, surgery, military education etc.

The policy comes with three different types of research institutions in place –

- Type 1 : world-class research and high-quality teaching across all disciplines;
- Type 2: high-quality teaching across disciplines with significant contribution to research;
- Type 3: high quality teaching across disciplines at the undergraduate level.

All the above institutions will be known as research-intensive universities (RUs), teaching universities (TUs), and autonomous degree-granting colleges (ACs).

The National Education Policy 2020 envisions a new entity called the ‘National Research Foundation’. The objective of this body will be to promote and expand research and innovation along with funding and seeding research in universities and colleges across the country.

Furthermore, the NEP also talks about developing active research communities across disciplines to increase resource efficiency, both material and human. This National Research Foundation (NRF) will be established by an Act of Parliament, providing it greater credibility and legal authority to promote research within the country. The institution would be given an annual grant of Rs 20,000 crores, which is approximately 0.1 per cent of the GDP and is expected to be increased progressively over the years considering the level of development in research.

Thus, NEP brings in ambitious changes that could transform the education system, with the help of good implementation and execution.

NAAC: Criterion 3 -Research and Innovations

In NAAC- SSR research and innovations is mentioned under criterion 3. The major difference between expectations seen under NEP 2020 and criterion 3 is about the approach. NEP 2020 has given institutionalised approach however SSR Criterion 3 has emphasized an individual faculty approach towards research and innovations. NEP 2020 speaks about strengthening the institutes for research and innovations, while Criterion 3 speaks about strengthening about the faculty.

Conducting research projects is as difficult and important as framing its proposal. Faculty members from whom research is expected are required to be trained. NEP 2020 has covered the training part throughout from framing research proposal while in criterion 3 points are awarded if research projects have been received by a faculty member as also for organising a research methodology workshop/event marks/points are awarded. Thus, in this, the aim of both NEP 2020 and Criterion 3 seem to be similar. However, the approach is different.

Further, NEP 2020 speaks about institution categorisation more rather than faculty categorisation. This will be done based on the contribution given by the institutes to the research and innovations. These categories will change as per the contribution and development of the institute in the research and innovations.

III. CONCLUSION

In all, the aim and objective of NEP 2020 and NAAC SSR is similar with each other mainly relating to research and innovations. NEP 2020 has given list of reforms to be done to enhance research and innovations capacity. Now we need to see how we will set the accreditations parameters to assess the same. We also need to see if institutionalisation approach will empower the researchers and research institutions to conduct research and innovations.