EVOLUTION OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN INDIA AND THE POSSIBLE EFFECT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY: AN ANALYSIS AND STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Abstract

This chapter aims to explore how the New Education Policy - 2020, will affect Media Education in the country, keeping in mind the current industry and academic trends. The chapter also aims to highlight and bring to notice some of the challenges that the media industry and faculty might encounter in the process of implementation of the New Education Policy. The researcher takes into account various factors including MOOCs and Industry exposure. The chapter also within itself maps the journey of Media Education in India and developments in the recent 100 years.

The chapter uses Content Analysis as a method to analyze the National Education Policy and exploratory research design is used.

Keywords: New Education Policy, Media Education, Media Industry, Global Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

The New Education Policy 2020 hopes to make the Indian Education System more flexible and student centric. The policy aims at empowering students to be able to choose between the subjects they want to pursue and also empowers them with the options of various exit points. The policy aims to make the education system more liberal and interdisciplinary in nature. It further emphasizes on building critical thinking and aptitude for research. Liberal Education is different from traditional education in some senses. Liberal Education focuses on holistic development and aims to "educate" the student not just teach. Its final aim isn't just to make students placement ready. It aims at harboring critical thinking, logic, systematic observation and scientific temper within the students. It is further aimed at accepting and exploring multiple aspects of real life contemporary problems and finding solutions of today and tomorrow. According to the draft National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 document, "A liberal arts education enables one to truly develop both sides of the brain—the creative and analytical side."

In an interview given to Forbes magazine, Dishan Kamdar, vice chancellor of the Flame University said, "Students are not taught what to think, but how to think, such a learning system helps students develop abilities to connect the dots, hone a creative mindset, and inculcate skills to think out of the ordinary". NEP 2020 envisions India's higher education in a similar model. It focuses on evolving students as a thinking and feeling professional. The recent pandemic has made the feeling part all the more important as we see and hope students become more empathetic, compassionate, resilient, ethical and productive so that the idea of a plural, diverse yet united society can be achieved. The students are groomed to be lifelong learners and not just graduates or post graduates. Further, when the discussion is surrounded specially on Media Education, the current system and curriculum stresses on bifurcating and dividing education, effectively creating echo chambers. Media today has become Glocal and professionals need to have a practice of the system. Even the specializations have to evolve to be multidisciplinary.

II. MEDIA EDUCATION IN INDIA

The new proposed Education Policy, takes in its ambit Higher education in India and encompasses all the subjects including Mass Communication and Media. Media education in India needs to provide quality "Industry-standard" education to students of both graduation and post graduation. Further, Media academics needs to integrate within itself, promote technological advancement and become as dynamic as the media industry.

Dr. Mahesh Chandra Guru commented, "In India, about 45,000 newspapers, journals, and periodicals are now brought out in 105 languages and dialects. There are over 4,000 daily newspapers and magazines. India also produces the largest number of feature films and newsreels in the world. All India Radio is known as the largest radio network in the world. It runs 195 radio stations (including 183 full-+edged stations) and has 302 transmitters (144 MW, 55 SW, and 103 FM channels). All India Radio covers 90% of the geographical area and 97.3% of the country's populace. Doordarshan, state supported television, has grown over the years as a promising broadcasting network. It has 83 HPTs, 600 LPTs, 19 VLPTs, and 18 Transposers. Doordarshan covers 72% of the geographical areas and 87% of the country's populace. India has become a global leader in the software industry. India has also

become one of the few advanced countries in the field of satellite communication. India has also achieved tremendous progress in the field of telecommunication. The media industry in India has grown enormously and earned global appreciation" (Guru & Veena, 2005)

The present requirement in media academics is to bridge the gap between industry and academics, assignments and curriculum need to be more practical, functional and application based. Students need to be exposed to real time industry simulations and situations. NEP further provisions for engagement of faculty from the industry which makes this process smooth. Further media education because of the nature of the field needs to become more glocal in order to match international standards, ethical practices, pedagogies.

The implementation and results of the New Education Policy depends upon the holistic approach of the dynamism of society and the global atmosphere. The changes that are made have to be built on the basis of research in accordance with the industry trends and demands. These in turn have to be followed up with policy implementation and structural change, both convergent with the changes in context, demographic and technology. Faculty and the universities have to sensitize all the major stakeholders including students, parents, alumni and industry experts and also take in their interactive opinion.

In the context of Media Education New Education Policy 2020 is a welcome step. The policy will lead to special provisions for media education. Further, provisions can be drawn specially for media education. Borrowing a term from the cannon, "Developing countries like India where more than one kind of inequality exist in the same ecosystem with possibilities and opportunities of growth, can make it difficult to maintain and prosper a democracy healthily". The Indian population needs to better understand the evolving media ecosystem of the country and harness the creativity and the intelligence of the Indian youth. It is important for students to understand industry before they jump in the practice of it. The curriculum also needs to be built on the premise that it is these students of today who will build and decide what the audience of tomorrow will watch, observe and reflect upon.

In India Punjab University is credited with the starting of the first dedicated journalism course in India. Anne Basant is considered to be the pioneer of Media Education in India. Recently, media education in India has completed 100 years but the subject is still evolving. Mass Communication was recognised as a proper discipline in India in the late 70s. Prof. Partha Chatterjee, former dean in his book writes, "After completion of my study on mass communication in the East West Center of Hawaii University, I came back to India and tried to start a mass communication center in Calcutta. With the inspiration of the great communicationist Dr. Wilbur Schramm and with the cooperation of Dr Manmohan Desai, the then-Director of Indian Institute of Mass Communication, I initiated to establish a mass communication study center in Calcutta in the year 1975. The main objective of the center was to pursue some research on the scenario of mass communication in eastern India. But the journalists were not familiar with the word 'mass communication' at that time. The emergency was started. A few journalists went to the government officials, complained against me and said that mass communication practice is foreign-blessed activity and against the greater interest of the nation. Police tried to harass the management of the institute and "nally they asked me to close down the institute." (Chatterjee, 2008)

In the South of India, University of Madras started the first Mass Communication and Journalism Department in 1947, one of the firsts in the Asian region. In 1948, a department was also set up Calcutta University. One important thing to note here as we map the journey of Media Education in India is that Media and Journalism were not just professions instead it was a tool in the fight for independence. Many freedom fighters including Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi ran their own newspapers making the craft a means to liberation.

This was followed by the opening of the Journalism department at Maharaja's college in Mysore in 1951. Here journalism was offered as an optional subject. Dr Nadig Krishna Murthy was one of the founding heads of the department. Later, under the leadership of Dr Murthy and Mr Syed Iqbal Khadri, Department of Post Graduate studies and research in journalism was established. The classes began in the year 1972. This department is credited with the opening of a research based post graduate programme in the university.

Though we see the starting and development Rashtrabt Tukadoji University was the first university to start and instil a formal education system of Mass Communication in India. They offered a well structured course, with pre defined learning outcomes post independence in 1952-53. Dr D.G. Moss is credited with the establishment. Prof. K E Eapen was the first academician to be the Head of the Department. The department started by offering a diploma course in Journalism and then in 1960s introduced a degree system. It was set up as a faculty of Social Science. This points out that from the very beginning education of journalism has been multi-disciplinary and required analytical, cognitive facilities of the students and faculty alike.
In 1954 D'Forest O'Dell started Department of Communication and Journalism in Osmania University. They too were started with diploma and later upgraded to a under-graduation degree programme in 1962.

UNESCO and the Ford Foundation under the guidance of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting set up the reputed Indian Institute of Mass Communication in 1965.
While we have mapped the growth of the subject being offered in the formal education system throughout the country, in north east the subject reached Gauhati University. The department of Journalism. was established in 1973in (BHU).

The initiative SITE is considered as one of the most important landmarks in the history of Mass Communication in India and witnessed an increased interest and scope of Mass Communication research. A new chapter was added to the history of Mass Communication as a field of study with this initiative. UGC, as a result of this constituted a curriculum development committee in Mass Communication to formalize and revamp Mass Communication programmes across the country. The nodal member of this committee was Prof. M R Dua. This model curriculum was launched in 2001. UNESCO also developed a model curriculum for journalism education.Today, there are about 900 colleges in the country that offer Mass Communication and Journalism as a programme. The hub of this is in Delhi NCR. Media is considered the fourth pillar in democracy and with the ever changing time the curriculum also needs to be updated and National Education Policy provides one such platform.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

National Education Policy (2020) hopes to bring in not just changes in the curriculum but also make students into thinking journalists. The policy envisions to make students ready for both national and international industry. Eapen (1970) emphasized on creating a group of people having industry and academic orientation to write literature according to Indian context. Singh (1971) highlighted the importance of trained teachers and the support of the government required to better the media education and industry alike in the country. Eapen, Thakur and Sanjay (1991) pointed towards the dearth of text and literature from the Indian context and highlighted that students in our country graduate reading and learning about the western perspective. It can also be noted here that the text that students refer to is often not up to date and is static in nature. The text being referred to in education institutes and syllabus is often not geo-political or sociologically specific to India. Belavadi (2002) pointed towards the lack of literature and professional infrastructure. He also pointed towards the layered policies in place and the lack of proper implementation leading to a gap between the requirements of the industry and what educational institutions provide.

Melkote (2006) pointed towards the lack of multidisciplinary approach, teaching-learning space and research are some of the major challenges faced by the discipline. Dua (2009) highlighted the government negligence and lack of funding towards the subject. He also highlighted the lack of industry-academic interface amongst the challenges faced by media academics and curriculum in India. National Education Policy (2020) addresses these issues and puts forth comprehensive solutions to the common challenges.

IV. OBJECTIVES

1. To explore how Media Education will be impacted from the National Education Policy.
2. To explore the new Pedagogical tools evolved as a part of the National Education Policy.
3. To explore the students' perspectives on the suggestions and the challenges they face.

V. METHODOLOGY

Exploratory Research method is chosen for the study. Content analysis of the National Education Policy is done keeping in mind its provisions for Media Education. To gain the perspectives of students, interviews were conducted.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

1. **Media education: liberal education, research and multiple exit points:** With the aim of developing Media Education to be both vocational and academic, NEP 2020, aims at building an active academic-industry interface and an aptitude for research. Students will be exposed to subjects like Political Science, Sociology, Public Policy amongst others so that a basic understanding of the socio-economic reality of the Indian countries can be inculcated within them. The policy also emphasizes on building cognitive and affective capacities of these students. The multiple exit opportunity will also help the student in entering the industry at multiple points. It is also a welcome step for students who aren't able to complete a degree or want to explore options at various points during the academic course. Media Education will also include and evolve around STEM - Science,

Technology, Engineering and Mathematics while also focusing on native languages hence building identity and developing a specialization for budding journalists. This teaching and curriculum matrix will not just be more flexible but will also provide students with a variety of choices to choose and build an umbrella of expertise.

2. **Academic bank of MOOCs:** Academic Bank of Credits (ABCs) can be earned in an online mode from Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) across the country and this gives students the opportunity to understand and choose courses from the variety being offered. Further, students also get a chance to develop under the supervision of experts irrespective of their physical locations or enrollment in a college.

Similarly, MOOCs open a chance for students to experience global education and learn evolving skills from Ivy League universities and other global giants. Students can also enroll in guided workshops and projects where they can learn hands-on skills and software.

These initiatives don't just work on skills of the students but also bring down the drop out ratio in Media Education.

3. **National research foundation:** According to a research conducted by Murthy in 2011, the media education and academic ecosystem in India lacks research with very few publications in International Journals. National Research Foundation and its funding opportunity for excellent peer reviewed research is motivation for researchers and academicians. This funding will lead to more innovation in social sciences and other multidisciplinary research. Be SITE or other experiments Media Education in India can bloom further if academicians are focused on research.

4. **Observations – students' perspectives**

- 69% media students feel that increased industrial interphase will help in making the curriculum more practical.
- 71.5% students feel inclusion of academic bank of credits will help in choosing varied courses.
- 90.5% students believe engaging in MOOCs is a welcome step and helps students build an umbrella of skills
- 85.7% students believe the new policy will help in gaining policy.
- 66.7% students believe multiple exit points will help them have better control of their future.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

New Education Policy will help in transfer of learning. Transfer of Learning occurs when people apply information, strategies and skills they have learned to a new situation or context. Transfer is not a discrete activity but is rather an integral part of the learning process. Further, standardization in Media Education will be achieved and it will become more democratic with respect to subjects. More interdisciplinary subjects will be added to the bouquet of subjects being offered in Media Education.

New Education Policy 2020 will help in establishing a bright future of media academics, in terms of both industry and research. The impact of the addition of liberal education and multi-disciplinary subjects in media academics will develop journalists in a holistic manner and open the worldview. Further budding media practitioners will be able to understand the 360 degree view of events. The multiple exit point will also make a bridge between industry and academics. This will lead to addition of more practical aspects in the curriculum.

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