

# **Reworking the Dynamics of NEP and Social Sciences Research- An Overview**

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## **I. Introduction**

The Introduction of National Education Policy and the establishment of a new paradigm and vision opened up new vistas in the arena of social, economic educational and linguistic domains by spearheading a new revolution in the field of research and development. The emerging market driven needs and the onset of a digital revolution transformed learning in all domains of life and created a euphoria in how we need to incorporate this change in those areas of social sciences which is more aligned to the needs of mankind from an institutional point of view than in any other form. The domain of Sociology for example deals with man in society and in various institutional settings like family, marriage, education, culture, kinship organization, academic community etc as an organic being engaged in and engaging with people in same or similar institutional structures. The British system of education with all its merits and defects could address these things from a classroom point of view and could rarely address the human face or concern of the same as it was more intended and interested in creating uniformity and generalization than in organically linking education with the practical and specific vistas of life and daily activities.

The Introduction of NEP is a game changer in this context as it reassesses the process of education in and from the local and proactive contexts and tried to evaluate how education especially social science education can become more important in catering to the establishment of a community with a local understanding and sense than to make it so universal and generalized. Before examining NEP and its connection with social sciences education we must examine the ways and means in which social sciences are placed in pre independent and post independent India and the difference brought in by various educational policies especially that of the educational policy changes introduced after 2004 in the last 20 years or more. India after remaining under the colonial tutelage for long two centuries imbibed the colonial approach to education which placed language at the first seat or level and emphasized on learning english which gave them edge over others and supplied a class of babus who could help run the administration better and safeguard the British interests by creating a class of educated intelligentsia who were more 'British' than the actual foreign rulers. Science education was given secondary emphasis as it only helped the colonial administration in a limited manner by supplying some manpower in few sectors like chemical industries and other similar areas. Science education was always classroom based with almost no emphasis on laboratory research except few individual interests like the Zoological Survey of India and Botanical Survey and similar other endeavors which were numbered in just fingers. At the same time social sciences were neglected substantially and was ignored considerably with less or almost no emphasis on research potential and fieldwork paradigms. As a result of this the very idea of developing social science education was neglected and less or almost no effort was made to engage in field related study other than following moribund theorizing or armchair theory making. The concepts like sanskritization and westernization are good examples beyond which ground level studies were neglected and shunned as it never served colonial interests except for some individual attempts made by prominent social scientists and researchers.

### **Period after Independence- Silver lining with a dot**

The ensuing period post independence was an epoch that marked a constant and considerable drift and breakaway from colonial practices in all domains of education including social sciences. This period involved formation of a plethora of research institutions all over the country and renewed focus on field based study in social sciences. The establishment of International centers for social science research and the inauguration of ICSSR transformed the pedagogy of learning in disciplines like Sociology, Political science and more importantly in the field of economics. The focus on renewal of social sciences learning from school level and the inclusion of civics with special emphasis on history (not the British version, but NCERT based new version written by various eminent history faculty at DU) and the promotion of social science research at collegiate level

and the addition of more teaching opportunities in all universities including introduction of more chairs and adjunct faculty positions all contributed heavily for the development of social sciences in post independent era.

The educational policies framed during Nehru era and Rajiv years gave special attention for development of social sciences education and focused attention to field related study. At the same time there were areas of serious neglect like inclusion of local level knowledge and absence of stress on research utilization especially in innovative areas and the underlying problems in transforming social sciences as an interdisciplinary platform. This lacuna persists even now and remains unaddressed by the successive policy makers and created unnecessary vacillation in implementing many recommendations given by UGC and ICSSR from time to time.

### **Is NEP the Panacea in streamlining Social Science Education?**

The Introduction of National Education Policy in a new and altogether different mode raised hopes for many social scientists that this approach document will address the existing issues and shall plug the gaps in our understanding of social world especially in the local community context as well as in the background of globalization. The major proposals were the following

1. Rephrase Social Science learning in tune with local level knowledge and experience
2. Reassess and reformulate existing research potential and fieldwork paradigms
3. Visualize and analyse the need for interdisciplinary exchange
4. Use local language potential and enrich knowledge base
5. Enhance the quality of doctoral and post doctoral research and development

These focal points of NEP along with the establishment of cross disciplinary collaboration can become a path breaker in social sciences education and can augment and fuel the growth of disciplines in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the same time it must be borne in mind that any policy irrespective of its merits and advantages may have glitches especially when it takes into account the vast gamut of things in a country like India where education never had a unichromal growth across states and regions. Local needs, aspirations, research potential, social gaps, socio-cultural issues, communalism, fundamentalism, regional aspirations everything should be considered when we speak of reforming the educational policy especially in relation with social sciences. This change should accommodate the needs of all sections of the group and society like the marginalized and the vulnerable including women and children. NEP and its framework accommodates dynamics and incorporates parochialization of social sciences but need to be more adaptive to cross cutting issues and should overcome attempts to sideline research potential for other forms of articulation. The emerging markets should also be taken into consideration and there are needs to integrate innovative and path breaking ideas and programs into social sciences like value added programs and services to make it more market specific and more efficient. At the same time, traditional knowledge platforms should be conserved to harness them better and more effectively.

### **NEP Vision for Social Sciences Research**

NEP envisioned research as the axiom for social sciences whether Sociology, Education or Economics and tried to incorporate local level concerns into the same. This approach works unless there is a proper methodology to identify the local needs of a community and to integrate it with the practical uses of disciplines and to utilize the university infrastructure (educational apparatus) for the same. Another vital dimension is to shun and thwart unscientific and untested things into the domains of social sciences as such dubious and nefarious things will make them (history as an example) more unscientific and unscrupulous in character.

## **II. Conclusion**

Research can succeed only if a robust infrastructure is there to support the same and the absence of which shall never plug the gaps in knowledge building and academic development. Academics should be considered as an organic entity full of life and should be nurtured with utmost respect and care. The decade 2020 – 30 is a challenging one but at the same time has a lot more to teach us especially social scientists in the days to come.

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