



Impact of New Education Policy on Media Industry

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ABSTRACT: The New Education Policy has completely reset the existing system and has outlined the new structure of schooling; autonomy to colleges and independent institutions based on their performance. It will help mainstreaming of creative education and performing arts. Eventually, in the next three to five years, it will provide some level playing field along with sciences and commerce streams. Today, when people talk about arts, their focus is mainly on economics, literature, life skills, psychology, emotional intelligence and philosophy, while creative arts, performing arts or design always take a backseat because these subjects never found a space they deserved in the curriculums of schools or universities. The multi-disciplinary system to be set up under the New Education Policy will give an opportunity to the students to combine their Engineering studies with theater, music, drawing, dancing or even sports. As of now, many parents encourage their kids to pursue performing or creative arts as part of their hobbies. But when the grades of these subjects will be counted in their overall performance, the complete outlook is set to change.

KEYWORDS: new education policy, media, industry, curriculums, studies, psychology, performance

I. INTRODUCTION

In the school level education, the new policy allows optional subjects to be pursued from the sixth grade onwards. And I think that's where we have the biggest opportunity because when kids start learning creative arts, performing arts, design thinking or sports, their chances of enhancing their skills in these subjects is likely to be very high. It is evident from many singing and dance reality shows on TV. When kids between the ages of 7 and 15 start live performances and are able to get a good exposure, they actually grow to become great professionals. And that's how many legends are born. Take for example, Sachin Tendulkar. If he had not started playing as at 9 or years of age and continued to do what he wanted to do, he wouldn't have become a legendary cricketer.¹ It would have been a difficult proposition if Sachin had to go back to school and struggle with the curriculum. However, I see few challenges for most of the schools and universities in the country, including investing into hiring the right faculty and creating the right curriculums. Many of these challenges can be addressed by involving industry experts. I think investment into faculty, building labs, experience centers, art & craft centers and additional infrastructure is something that all the institutions, right from schools to universities, will have to do moving forward. And that's where I think we will start seeing a true level playing field emerging among sciences, commerce and arts streams.²

I think that's a big opportunity and I am extremely positive. The Indian media and entertainment industry has in the last 25 years hired people based on their skill sets. It didn't matter to us whether they completed their university, college or school education or they were school dropouts. It was always about what skill they have. Those with skills for sculpting, painting, mimicry, dancing, drawing or singing and music composition are the guys who are likely to lead a studio. But I think it's an amazing thing if there is a formalization of their education. If the multimedia, animation, and gaming sectors want to push this agenda, they will have to educate the universities and schools as to what they want kids to do so that they can have a better future in the ever evolving digital content industry³.

A digital content economy is getting built world over, if we don't place our content in that ecosystem, we will be losing out big time. And I think this framework has given us probably a great opportunity to fill the existing gaps. We should take initiative and start interacting with academic institutions at various levels. And we should provide them guidance & know how as to what the industry is going to need in future. We have to actually prepare kids for the next 25 to 50 years. And that's why the industry should work very closely with academia. We will have to walk the talk. The sooner it is done, the better. Those who have already taken initiatives have not waited for the policy. We already have had interventions in 30 to 40 universities teaching animation, VFX & film making. So, we have already initiated the creative education and design education push in the last two decades and I think it has started bearing fruits. Many



people today don't mind pursuing a career in design, film-making, animation, Visual Effects, gaming or even becoming composer or musician.⁴

Parents who were apprehensive about these career choices are now opening up to the idea of their kids pursuing a career in creative arts, performing arts and design as well. We also feel happy when we get to meet kids of 14 or 15 years of age, who say they want to become an animator, storyteller, director or an actor. With a structured curriculum in place, the learning foundation of most of such kids would be much stronger.

I think the new policy will build a work force, which will combine the traditional skills like language with formal education of creating films or telling stories, or doing animation, gaming or visual effects, along with some entrepreneurial skills.

Our industry works on entrepreneurial mechanics. Because everybody is a freelancer, they come together with their skill sets to make a film, television show, an animation show or ad film. So I think formalization of such an education system that helps students become better professional is going to take India in a very different paradigm, which I think is the need of the hour. Many countries have still not been able to achieve this. And then, we have millions of people of Indian origin who are spread all over the world consuming content in multiple Indian languages⁵.

Besides, the new policy will go a long way to help people pursuing folk art or craft, or other traditional Indian art forms. Many people who have been doing it until now have never gone to school. It allows them to go to school and still pursue their passion that could fetch grades. We would be most happy to see over 10,000+ schools and 200+ universities in India include creative arts, performing arts, design & sports as part of mainstream education over the next five years. It would sow the seeds of a new media & content ecosystem in the country. Also, a lot of new technology is developed while you're creating the new age content. So, the making of every movie or show itself is a part of the learning process, and that's where you learn from the masters and take things forward. So I think the presence of good foreign institutions is definitely good for India. If such institutes form a partnership with formal universities it would help them a lot. Even if they're part of individual institutions or Indian studios, it is still a win-win partnership.⁶

The new structure allows universities to grant a certificate to students if they complete their first two semesters in a year. If they complete two years of formal education, they get a diploma. And after completing another two years, they get a degree. I think it is a great model. Some of the kids who are very sharp with their skills, even with a certificate or a diploma will make it to the studios in India. I'm very confident about that.

If the new policy transforms the assessment system of students—which was earlier based on written exams at the end of the semester—to the one based on what they can deliver with the skills that they possess at that point in time, it would be an extremely good benchmark.

I think under the current system, when fresh graduates join a studio they have to undergo a huge amount of unlearning. And then we have to orient them to the project or to the environment of the studio. It takes almost six months to one year before they really start contributing to the show, or a film. I think that gap would definitely get reduced and the industry would benefit immensely from it.⁷

II. DISCUSSION

There are two ways of looking at it. When the universities are not teaching the subjects of filmmaking, design, animation or visual effects, many studios or big production houses open their own outfits for training so that they can have an access to talent. But with the new policy in place, it gives you an opportunity to partner with a university and formalize it.

I think they need to work with the closest university and establish a partnership with them. You also need to structure it in a way that students can have a choice to go to the university to study the subjects that are covered in the campus and still able to spend most of their time in the studio where they can actually have a practical learning, a kind of hub and spoke model. In this way curriculums can be developed, and by the time the students pass out, they will definitely be ready to join the industry. I think there is an opportunity for our industry to formalize education, because although, you



know, the film industry is 105 years old now, most of the professionals have learnt on job. We definitely need a National Centre for Excellence for AVGC. In addition, we also need to add Immersive technology & Immersive content creation to this list. Unfortunately, even after nearly a decade and a half long demand such a center has not taken shape. But there is a connection between this and the New Education Policy & I still believe it will now happen.⁸

I think that when something futuristic is suggested, it always takes a long time to shape up. In 2005, we recommended the government that we should have a National Center of Excellence for Animation, Gaming, Visual Effects, and Comics. In 2009, we had a private universities bill. Subsequently, the industry started working closely with the private universities who had a little more autonomy. And today, we have around 30 to 40 universities who have created these curriculums in the last 10 years and have started implementing them. So, it makes great sense to create such Centers of Excellence, much like IITs for animation, gaming, visual effects, comics, AR/VR etc. We should not dilute that agenda because there is a huge scope of creating entrepreneurs and research in the space of media and entertainment. It allows us not only to create software, but also to create technology for media and entertainment. We are still hopeful that it would come up in the best possible way, which would benefit India at large.

At some point in time there was probably a direction from the government which said that all the Master programs should be taught by the PhDs. But when the industry is nascent and does not even have undergrads, how can we have PhDs teaching. I think with this new policy there will be universities now that will open up to create PhD scholars in the space of media and entertainment, creative arts, performing arts, design, and sports. We are waiting for some of these things to happen because research in our industry is something which is truly lagging. If the Media & Entertainment research can add value to our industry – India will emerge amongst the top three Media and Entertainment exports nations. More over the Media and Entertainment exports in the next 10 years will be amongst the top 5 sectors contributing to the Indian GDP. There has been almost non or very little research even on the kind of music ‘gharanas’, composers and lyrics writers we had in the last 50, 100 or 200+ years. The film music in the era between 1950s and 1980s is mind boggling. In fact, every Indian will always be connected to the music of that era. 1980s to 2000 was a different era and 2000 onwards, it’s a different era. I think we have a lot to offer but somebody needs to put the research and analytics together to see how it’s impacting our society and strengthen the image and brand India. In many other countries, India is known for its films. They definitely know about Indian film content and great actor from India. IIFA has done a good job in promoting and positioning this Indian soft power.⁹

I think that’s where we need to really see us heading. If you see countries like the US, Canada, UK, France, Japan, and South Korea, media and entertainment is probably amongst the top five or six industries contributing to the economy through export. We have 105 years of history. We are great storytellers but still very inward looking. I think the time has come that we actually take steps towards creating original intellectual property, and while creating IP export to bring in more business to India. Currently India is more focused and known for providing creative services and software services. I think the cluster formation for media and entertainment in our industry is very important because a group of skills together can create what needs to be delivered. M&E is unlike other production pipelines like car manufacturing, vaccine manufacturing or FMCG manufacturing where you have a manufacturing pipeline, machines and people and people manage those machines to deliver the same thing again and again. In the media and entertainment space every single scene is different – every frame created in a scene is different, which is delivered with a different composition of ideas, technologies and skills.

As we move forward, the complete process will have to actually be at the places where the clusters are. And luckily in India, the clusters are in Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Cochin, Trivandrum, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Patna some parts of Lucknow and North East. We have some films produced in Odisha and in Chattisgarh films are now being created in Raipur. We also have a Punjabi film industry in Chandigarh and NCR is very strong in terms of news networks. So, the complete ecosystem of media and entertainment along with the news delivery happens out of these places. Hence the clusters at these places with a proper infrastructure will boost the industry in many ways.¹⁰

When it comes to developing academic facilities, there are certain things that would go as per the curriculum, but there are many things that people do have to learn from ideation to script and script to screen and all the other nuances by being associated with the live projects. I give you an example of Whistling Woods International, because I was involved with the institute right from the beginning. The way Subhash Ghai and the team set it up was right in the middle of the industry. And not a single week passes there when a person who has created film, written film or acted in a film is not visiting the campus. Most of the learning comes from these live examples.



III. RESULTS

It's a very pertinent question. I think meritorious people should actually join a career in academics because they're so good with their subjects that they can teach extremely well. I think we should encourage them to become professors or teachers because they can deliver that subject in the best possible way. I also think the profession of teaching needs to be given its due respect. The status, dignity and recognition to the teaching professional must be enhanced and highlighted.¹¹

I think more young people need to make teaching as a career choice especially in media and entertainment sector. Even though I run studios, I send my core team members to become faculty for four or five years in universities and education institutions where I help setup Media and entertainment verticals. They are given a choice to go back and forth to have industry as well as academic exposure. This formula works the best for our Media and Entertainment industry. Whatever I have read in the new policy so far, it seems to be fairly open. It talks about graded autonomy. With this kind of autonomy and the academic-industry connect, one should be able to solve any problem. I think it's time for India that we should be able to find solutions through research, innovation, collaborations and partnerships between industry – academia for our problems within India. At the end of the day we Indians are great story tellers, our stories exist for over 5000 and 7000 years. We are known for creating best IT solutions. The right foundation – making use of the New Education Policy 2020, we can aim for the best and work together to achieve the same.

The new NEP has been introduced with an aim to formalize changes in the system from K-12 level to college/university level. Keeping in mind the developing scenario, education content henceforth, will focus on key-concepts, ideas, applications and problem-solving angles. Let's take a look at some of the innovative policies introduced for the primary and secondary level education.¹²

- National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework to be developed by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT):

A national Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education for children up to the age of 8 will be developed by NCERT.²⁸

- Coding to be introduced from class 6:

Mathematical thinking and scientific temper will be a part of school curriculum. Students will be allowed to take up coding from class 6.

- Board exams:

Board exams will be conducted in two parts – Objective and Descriptive. These examinations should be designed to promote knowledge application rather than rote learning. Going forward, boards may also develop viable models of the main exams such as annual/semester/modular.²⁷

- No hard separation of streams for students:

There will be no hard separation of learning areas like science and humanities in terms of curricular. There will not be any separation between co-curricular and extra-curricular areas and all subjects, including arts, music, crafts, sports, yoga, etc. will be a part of the overall curriculum.¹³

NEP's focus on higher education

Similarly, there are a lot of reforms and new developments which have been introduced by NEP in the higher education sector.

Let's take a look at some of the important ones which are well-poised to create a positive difference in the sector.

- Single regulatory body for higher education: The NEP aims to establish Higher Education Commission of India which will be the single regulatory body except for legal and medical education.²⁶



- Multiple entry and exit programme: There will be multiple entry and exit options for those who wish to leave the course in the middle. Their credits will be transferred through Academic Bank of Credits.
- Tech-based option for adult learning through apps, TV channels: Quality technology-based options for adult learning such as apps, online courses/modules, satellite-based TV channels, online books, and ICT-equipped libraries and Adult Education Centres, etc. will be developed.¹⁴
- E-courses to be available in regional languages: Technology will be part of education planning, teaching, learning, assessment, teacher, school, and student training. The e-content to be available in regional languages, starting with 8 major languages – Kannada, Odia, Bengali among others to join the e-courses available in Hindi and English.²⁵
- Foreign universities to set-up campuses in India: World's top 100 foreign universities will be facilitated to operate in India through a new law. According to the HRD Ministry document, "such (foreign) universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India." Whether you aspire to study at these universities in your home country or study abroad, please remember that an education loan in India can help finance your higher studies independently.²⁴
- Common entrance exam for all colleges: The common Entrance exam for all higher education institutes to be held by National Testing Agency (NTA). The exam will be optional.¹⁵

The National Education Policy is expected to bring positive and long-lasting impact on the higher education system of the country.²³ The fact that foreign universities will be allowed to open campuses in India is a commendable initiative by the government. This will help the students experience the global quality of education in their very own country. The policy of introducing multi-disciplinary institutes will lead to a renewed focus on every field such as arts, humanities and this form of education will help students to learn and grow holistically. Thus, students will be equipped with stronger knowledge base.¹⁶

The introduction of single common entrance test is another positive step which will reduce the stress of multiple competitive exams and ease off the pressure of preparing for so many of them. It will also ensure a level playing ground for all student applicants going forward.²² Establishing Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is definitely a robust idea to store the academic credits that students earn by taking courses from various recognized higher education institutions. A student can earn scores by completing a course and these will be credited to the ABC account. One can then transfer these credits if he/she decides to switch colleges. If a student ever drops out for some reasons, these credits will remain intact which means he/she can come back years later and pick up from where the student had left.¹⁷

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The new NEP is focused on increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education space which is currently around 26%. This is much lesser than other countries such as China, Brazil and North American nations.²¹ The Indian government needs to introduce stronger policies for educational infrastructure development. It has to promote foreign direct investments (FDI) and open up the External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) route to strengthen the capital pool for the sector. As rightly mentioned by Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman during the 2019-22 Budget speech, the country needs greater inflow of finance to attract talented teachers, build better infrastructures and formalize measures which will enable sourcing ECBs and FDI.¹⁸

The new National Education Policy looks picture perfect currently. But the key to its success is its implementation within the set deadline. Now, we have to patiently wait and see how things turn out in the future and how we can reap the massive benefits that will be brought into the system with its successful execution.²⁰



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