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Beyond NEP 2020: Listening to Whispers

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The NEP as the Road Map for NAAC: A Brief Study

Dr. Kaustav Chakrabarti

The Antecedents to the NEP

The education policy of India underwent a sea change in the post-independence era as the newly independent country had to face a plethora of problems besetting the economy and the society at large. Mass illiteracy among both men and women was a critical factor standing in the way of the country's growth and development. The freedom fighters and builders of the nation were well aware of this bottle-neck. Starting from 1937, stalwarts like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose harped upon the concept of an alternative model that would meet the moral, material and spiritual requirements of India. The Basic Education based on the *Nai Talim* (Literally, New Education) of Mahatma Gandhi stressed the necessity of development of the heart, mind and the hand and self-reliance. Apart from the emphasis on the revamping of primary and secondary education, there was equal stress on the development of higher education as the key to the cultivation of knowledge and universal values, which was duly reflected in the Report of the *Radhakrishnan Commission* (1948-1949), named after India's eminent Philosopher and the First Vice-President of independent India Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. This was the most comprehensive of all the education commissions constituted in India till date. It not only spoke of the necessity of higher education but also the inculcation of higher knowledge systems and universal values. It also served as a guide book for university education in India during the post-colonial times. It emphasised on research as pre-requisite for teaching and learning as well as for the establishment of a central regulatory authority to control and finance higher education in India. The *Kothari Commission* of 1964-66 created under the aegis