

NEP 2020 AND EXCLUSION OF M.PHIL: A CRITICAL REVIEW

Nazmul Hussain Laskar

In early August, a kamikaze was dropped on the Indian Higher Education (HE) system bearing the name National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP). Infact, the devastation became clear months later when in February, 2023, Indian HE faced a blow with M.Phil discontinued across all Indian varsities. Despite ideas of internationalization & maximization of HE among more Indian youths with sweeping changes, little did our ignorance know about the discontinuation stated above. For long, M.Phil had been regarded as a second research-master's degree globally including India. M.Phil gave fillip to UG & PG students in conducting research & cultivating professional skills. This degree was to increase the employability of master's students with better placements. This umbilical intermediary between rigorous pedagogy of under-graduation and post-graduation on one hand & PhD on the other, has been severed with the central logic of making education "fast-track". An already ailing educational framework with meagre pecuniary endowments from Centre surely anticipated this Day of Reckoning. Research spaces nourish the economic & security backbone of any state. But our Centre divesting their idiosyncrasies at being harbingers of religious reconstruction, civilization & the past, slashes funding in Medicine, Pharmacology, Science, Liberal Arts & others. Research Councils timidly accepting these diktats are similarly to be blamed for not voicing concerns. They even stayed silent on demanding a minimum of 4% of GDP be invested in research education alone in face of the staggering present 2.9% of GDP/ ₹11 billion for entire Indian education.

This paper will ask some tough questions of the Centre & still provide policy solutions that can steer clear the Ministry of Education, UGC & Research Councils away from rampant lunacy & megalomania of Centre. The questions that shall find primacy in this article are: - (I) What is the M.Phil degree to India & reasons for its stay from 1960s until abrogation? (II) Why Centre hell-bent on removing this degree? (III) Is the Centre at all thinking about research driven learning in HE? & (IV) Imitation of Western universities is good but Centre's doing it at what cost?

Dr. Nazmul Hussain Laskar, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Government Model College, Katlicherra, Hailakandi, Assam, India. Email – mr.nazmulhussain@rediffmail.com

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