



Niti aayog in India and its major contribution in policy making 2022-2023

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Abstract

Over the years, NITI Aayog, a governmental policy think tank has helped in shaping India's policy. From introducing higher educational reforms that ultimately became a part of the National Education Policy to introducing the draft battery swapping policy that could help in mainstreaming electric mobility in India, NITI Aayog has made a significant contribution towards policy making. The article aims to give a brief on what is NITI Aayog, an insight into its workings and its role in policy making, and its major contribution in policy making 2022-2023 towards the end.

Keywords: NITI aayog, public policy, battery swapping, battery swapping policy

Introduction

NITI stands for National Institution for Transforming India. It is a premier policy think tank of the Government of India. It formulates long-term and strategic policies and programmes for the Indian Government^[1]. NITI Aayog, develops strategic and long-term policies and programmes for the country. It also assists the Centre, States, and Union Territories with technical assistance. NITI Aayog Governing Council, consists of Chief Ministers of all States and Union Territories with legislatures, Lieutenant Governors of other Union Territories and it is Chaired by our Hon'ble Prime Minister. To better serve the needs and ambitions of the people, the Indian government established the NITI Aayog to replace the Planning Commission. The fact that both the national and state governments participate as development partners is a key element of NITI Aayog. This is definitely a successful way to centralised planning in a huge and diverse country like India. Cooperative federalism^[2] and competitive federalism^[3] are two of NITI Aayog's founding principles^[4].

Niti Aayog's Role In Policy Making

By offering the requisite knowledge and skills, NITI Aayog assists the Centre and states in policymaking. It gives the government a strategic policy vision and assists it in dealing with unforeseen difficulties^[5]. Water conservation, quality of school education, public health care, and the state of the innovation eco-system are among the sectoral indices that NITI Aayog compiles and disseminates in the public arena. As a result, NITI Aayog is constantly giving new policy-related inputs for implementation by key central government departments^[6]. It was, for example, involved in the formulation of the National Medical Commission Bill, as well as Bills to reform the education system for Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy. It has also played a key role in the development and implementation of Ayushman Bharat^[7] and the POSHAN Abhiyaan scheme^[8]. Moreover, the higher education changes that it introduced got included in the National Education Policy.

Niti Aayog's Major Contribution In Policy Making 2022-2023

Nirmala Sitharaman, Finance Minister of India imparted in her budget speech for 2022-23 that a battery swapping policy and interoperability standards would be implemented by the Centre to improve the country's EV ecosystem while adopting electric vehicles at a speedy or faster pace^[9]. Following Sitharaman's public pronouncement in February 2022, in order to develop a thorough and comprehensive Battery Swapping policy framework, the government's policy think tank, the NITI Aayog, convened an inter-ministerial meeting. An extensive of stakeholders, including, battery manufacturers, financial institutions, battery swapping operators, CSOs, vehicle OEMs, and some other specialists, participated in a pre-draft stakeholder discussion at NITI Aayog. Finally, on 20th April 2022, the electric vehicle battery swapping draft policy was released by NITI Aayog^[10].

Features of the draft policy^[11]

- In order to provide potential EV owners with the benefit of lower purchasing costs, vehicles having swappable batteries are to be sold without batteries.
- Individuals or entities would be permitted to set up a station for swapping of batteries at any place with some conditions to be fulfilled- specified safety, performance & technical standards must have been used.
- According to the strategy-

- First phase- In this, every metropolitan cities having a population of more than 40,00,000 would be devised for the fabrication of a battery swapping networks.
- Second phase- In this, it will encompass cities with populations above 5 lakhs, considering the significance of the two-wheeler and three-wheeler vehicle categories in emerging cities.
- To assure a greater degree of security along with giving a wide berth to any kind of undesirable increase in temperature at the electrical interface, there is a suggestion for implementing a stringent testing methodology.
- Proposal to give swappable batteries an unique identification number (UIN) throughout the production process to make them easier to trace and monitor. Each battery changing station will also be granted a UIN number.
- It also urges an installing battery switching facilities in a variety of locations, including public parking lots, kirana shops, retail fuel stations, malls, and general stores, others.

Besides the battery swapping strategy, Niti Aayog has proposed that institutional lending for the purchase of electric vehicles would be considered as the top priority, which certainly means that bank financing for electric vehicle purchases may become more affordable. Currently, the loans are granted under the auto retail category, which is one of India's highest interest categories ^[12]. It is to be noted that the draft policy on EV battery swapping is currently open for public comment and until June 5, Niti Aayog is accepting those public comments ^[13].

Conclusion

The government is making a great effort to put electric mobility at utmost priority by establishing battery swapping policies, expanding charging infrastructure, special mobility zones for EVs, and also ratifying building bylaws, incorporation of clean tech into public transportation, and other initiatives. The government's drive for electric vehicles is also part of a bigger plan to reduce carbon emissions ^[14]. This vision could not have been given shape without the major contribution of the NITI Aayog's draft policy. The key objectives of this policy and features as discussed in the article clearly indicates the significant contribution of the think tank- NITI Aayog, especially in the policy making 2022-2023.

References

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