

Editorial

WEDNESDAY E-ESSAY SERIES

National Education Policy - 2020 Transforming Higher Education in India

The recently launched National Education Policy - 2020, a long time coming, has laid a clear path for transforming the education system of the country. With significant recommendations to shift the focus of the education towards quality and skill development, the Policy aims to revolutionise the Indian Higher Education space to catch-up with the global needs of the 21st century. All these years, India's policy goals have been primarily focusing on access, expansion, and specialization with very little focus on skill and holistic development. The National Education Policy — 2020 could break from the past by including quality, skill development and multidisciplinary approach as the critical levers for improving student learning outcomes. While deftly indicating that higher education is much beyond human resource development, the Policy takes a long-term view in terms of the emphasis on flexibility in entry and exit, and option to skill courses to ensure that our youth are equipped for a rapidly changing job scenario. The Policy is truly forward looking, innovative, democratic

and learner centric. Now, it is the turn of implementers to realise the Policy in letter and spirit.

On having the bird's eye view of the scenario of Indian higher education through the lens of its statistics, we get to see deep troughs which indicate severe crises that the system is facing in various dimensions ranging from Gross Enrolment Ratio to World Ranking of universities. There is no doubt that the system requires a major overhaul right from bottom to top. But the question is — how deep is the bottom? Even if we consider enrollment of students in undergraduate programmes as the bottom point, we find that standard of major chunk of students seeking admission is much below the expected minimum level. Obviously, the root of this crisis penetrates deep into the school level as well. If we can get this one thing right, i.e., find the missing links and bridge the gap of quality and standard between school and higher education levels, we can make tremendous impact on the overall higher education system. The policy, *inter alia*, aims to eliminate problems of quality, pedagogy, structural inequities, access asymmetries and rampant commercialization and varied other dimensions. This is high time that we break the silos and intervene every nook and corner of the higher education system to eliminate the systemic deficiencies to make best use of the opportunity presented in the form of NEP – 2020.

The great challenge with us now therefore, is the strategic implementation of the Policy. In this context, we need to prepare a robust action plan leading to ease of implementation. To gather innovative strategies for implementation of various recommendations of the Policy on Higher Education, Association of Indian Universities adopted multipronged approach. Bringing out this title on '**National Education Policy – 2020 Transforming Higher Education in India**' is one among them which is aimed at

gathering views and suggestions of experts and erudite scholars on implementation of the policy and to provide a well-structured input to the Government; and insights to practitioners of higher education on implementation strategies of NEP – 2020. This will also be a good reading for the future generations in their course of actions pertaining to higher education.

After the popularity of Friday E-Essay Series on AIU Website, we have decided to initiate Wednesday E-Essay Series where we shall release select the Essays of book '**National Education Policy – 2020 Transforming Higher Education in India**' one by one every Wednesday in the form of E-Advance Reading Copies (E-ARCs). The Essays in this series are contributed by eminent scholars and distinguished experts in a broad range of fields covering a variety of topics pertinent to implementation of NEP – 2020. Each essay is unique and comprises the views and opinions of the author(s). We've found these Essays inspirational and pathbreaking. Hope you too will cherish. We would be happy to seek your views also on these Essays. You may send your opinions or viewpoints to the email ids — sgoffice@aiu.ac.in and rama.pani2013@gmail.com.

The vision of NEP – 2020 is to develop truly global citizens with deep-rooted pride in being Indian. Let's realise this for creating New India.

The First Essay in the series is of Prof Bhushan Patwardhan coauthored with Prof K P Mohanan and Prof Tara Mohanan.

Here we go !

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