

ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES
ANNUAL MEET AND NATIONAL SEMINAR OF VICE CHANCELLORS
ON
IMPLEMENTING NEP- 2020 TO TRANSFORM HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

CONCEPT NOTE

The 95th Annual Meet and National Seminar of Vice Chancellors of the Association of Indian Universities on the theme '**Implementing NEP- 2020 to Transform Higher Education in India**' is being held from 14th and 16th April 2021. The Conference is being hosted by **Babasaheb Ambedkar University, Ahmedabad.**

About the AIU Annual Meet

The Annual Meet is one of the mega annual events of the Association of Indian Universities which is aimed at providing a unique forum for its member Vice Chancellors and leaders of higher education system, national and international, to exchange ideas and to create consensus on collective policies and initiatives.

Apart from a grand Inaugural Ceremony and splendid valedictory function, events marking the occasion are AIU Governing Council Meet, AIU General Body Members Meet, Business Session, Interface Session with Indian Higher Education Functionaries and an Interface Session with Foreign Dignitaries. Captivating Speech of the chief guest, addresses of various dignitaries gracing the occasion and Release of Special Issue of the University News and other publications of AIU are the major happenings during the Inaugural Session.

The Interface Session is graced by the Senior Officials of concerned Ministries, particularly HRD and Sports and Youth Affairs, Head of the apex bodies, Councils and other agencies of Higher Education and Secondary Education. In the Meet a stocktaking of the prevailing condition of overall Higher Education of the Country will be done and vital issues will be discussed to arrive at amicable solutions.

The Meet is an occasion for AIU to showcase its past years achievements, present its Financial Statements and delineate the scheme of activities for the forthcoming years. It is also a platform to inform the Members about the Recommendations of Zonal Vice Chancellors Meets and other Meetings conducted throughout the year and to agree on collective course of action, policies and initiatives in the interest of Indian Higher Education System.

Rationale for the Seminar

The theme **Implementing NEP- 2020 to Transform Higher Education in India**' was specially chosen by the Association of Indian Universities, in the wake of the launch of the new National Education Policy 2020. Since the initiation of drafting the New Education Policy

by the MHRD, AIU has been continuously providing the inputs obtained from the academia of the country to MHRD. AIU has been seeking the opinions of academia through consultative Meets, Zonal Meets of Vice Chancellors, Special Publications and so on. This meet is a culmination of the five Zonal Vice Chancellors Meets and the several consultative meets organised on different dimensions of NEP-2020 with main theme.

The National Seminar aims to work out implementation strategies for recently launched National Education Policy, 2020 with a clear-cut action plan on how to effectively implement the policy in the interest of its primary stakeholders i.e. students.

The Meet would also have the AIU Foundation Day Lecture by Dr Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Ayog.

With the flux of comprehensive reforms that the Government has set to bring in, the landscape of Indian higher education is changing drastically ushering in new reforms required to meet the needs of 21st Century India. The launch of National Education Policy---2020 by the government provides the much need confidence and direction to the practitioners and stakeholders of higher education to steer these reforms to make India the most sought-after education destination not only for the youth in India but also for those seeking new frontiers of knowledge from across the globe. The policy will enable us to progress towards becoming a knowledge society, the *Vishwaguru* that can lead the world with its natural strengths of human capital, material resources and traditional knowledge systems.

After Independence three national education policies were brought out. The first one was the 1968 Policy, which was brought out after 21 years after independence. The second was brought out in 1986 and this is the third one brought out after 34 years. Thus, this new National Education Policy - 2020 has the compulsion to address the challenges that have affected the Indian Education System for the three crucial decades during which the world got revolutionized under the influence of ICT and many new world orders like Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation and most importantly the knowledge economy. Revolutionary alterations in the world's socio- political economy, fuelled by technological developments, have significantly increased the aspiration and hope among the people and have triggered a high demand for knowledge and specialised skills.

India's previous policy goals have been primarily focusing on expansion and equity with very little focus on skill and holistic development. The NEP-2020 could break from the past by including multidisciplinary programmes with strong skill base as one of 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.

Some of the major issues in the field of higher education identified by the NEP include: less emphasis on skill development including life skills, employability and entrepreneurial skills; rigid separation of disciplines and therefore leading to want of holistic learning in students, with early specialization and streaming of students into narrow areas of study; limited teacher and institutional autonomy; less emphasis on research and publication; lack of competitive

peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines; severe fragmentation in higher educational ecosystem; ignorance of learning outcomes; ineffective regulatory system; affiliation system; low standards of education; want of sufficient funding; vast deviation from the proven traditional knowledge system and lack of pride for the system. In view of this the policy attempts a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system to overcome to deliver high-quality futuristic higher education. The Policy therefore has dedicated almost 11 chapters to core higher education; 5 chapters to other key areas relevant to higher education like Professional Education, Adult Education and Life Long Learning, Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture, Technology Use and Integration, Online and Digital Education: Ensuring Equitable Use of Technology; and three chapters for making it happen which include strengthening Central Advisory Board of Education; bringing the focus back on education and learning by rechristening Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as the Ministry of Education (MoE).

Some of the key recommendations of the Policy on higher education are:

- Increase GER to 50 % by 2035
- Moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education;
- Moving towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages;
- Establishment of a National Research Foundation to fund outstanding peer-reviewed research and to actively seed research in universities and colleges;
- ‘Light but tight’ regulation by a single regulator for higher education.
- Creating Academic Bank of Credits
- Setting up Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)
- Setting up the National Research Foundation.

The policy, *inter alia*, aims to eliminate problems involved in quality, pedagogy, structural inequities, access asymmetries, rampant commercialization and varied other dimensions. 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.

Association of Indian Universities (AIU) as an apex representative body of higher education plays a significant role in providing policy inputs in the field of higher education to the Government and has immensely contributed to the major policy decisions since its inception. On receiving the present draft policy document, AIU, while appreciating the initiative of the Government for revisiting the National Policy on Education which was due for a long time, thought it appropriate to deliberate on various aspects of the document and provide concrete inputs on it. AIU is working on the project with a multipronged approach like organizing webinars and interaction sessions; bringing out publications etc. Most vital step taken in this regard was to conduct Annual Zonal Vice Chancellors’ Meets on different recommendations of NEP-- 2020 theme. The present Seminar of Vice Chancellors is the culmination of the VC

Meets on NEP. Main aim of these Zonal Meets and National Seminar is to gather views, suggestions and innovative strategies of experts and erudite scholars for implementation of various recommendations of the Policy on Higher Education and provide a well-structured input to the Government; and insights to practitioners of higher education on implementation strategies of NEP-2020.

Various Sessions of the Seminar

Technical Session--1 : Implementation Strategies for NEP--2020 Recommendations on Access, Equity, Skills, Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education, and Promotion of Languages

Access and Equity

Access and equity are key challenges for creating an inclusive and high quality higher education in India, and the institutions are obliged to address these issues through inclusive processes. India is a country known for Unity in Diversity. The idea of pluralism is deeply embedded in India's rich cultural heritage. Therefore, all HEIs inherently need to be as representative as possible of the communities they are located within, in order to thrive. It is also the responsibility of the Government as well as Higher Education Institutions to provide the eligible with good quality higher education at reasonable cost. Given the mission and purpose, and the broad societal goals, Higher Education Institutions have even greater obligation to ensure access and equity. The Policy envisions ensuring equitable access to quality education to all students, with a special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs). For this purpose, the NEP has delineated the additional actions that are specific to higher education shall be adopted by all Governments and HEIs: steps to be taken by Governments and Higher Education Institutions.

Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes holistic and multidisciplinary education with an aim to provide 21st century skills to learners. NEP 2020 states that such education would be aimed at developing all capacities of human beings – intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner. The Policy emphasizes the importance of multidisciplinary education through both disciplinary and professional programmes for developing competencies of critical thinking, adaptability and self-management amongst learners. India has a long tradition of holistic and multidisciplinary learning, from universities such as Takshashila and Nalanda, to the extensive literatures of India combining subjects across fields. A holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.

Promotion of Languages

The preservation and promotion of India 's cultural wealth must be considered a high priority for the country, as it is truly important for the nation 's identity as well as for its economy. Unfortunately, Indian languages have not received their due attention and care, with the country losing over 220 languages in the last 50 years alone. UNESCO has declared 197 Indian languages as 'endangered'. India has remained quite slow in producing such learning and print materials and dictionaries to help keep its languages optimally vibrant and current with integrity.

The Policy recognizes that the knowledge of the rich diversity of India should be imbibed first hand by learners. Towards this direction under 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat', 100 tourist destinations in the country will be identified where educational institutions will send students to study these destinations and their history, scientific contributions, traditions, indigenous literature and knowledge, etc., as a part of augmenting their knowledge about these areas. India will also urgently expand its translation and interpretation efforts in order to make high quality learning materials and other important written and spoken material available to the public in various Indian and foreign languages. For this, an Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. The IITI could naturally grow with time, and be housed in multiple locations including in HEIs to facilitate collaborations with other research departments as demand and the number of qualified candidates grows.

Skill Development

The most crucial component that is missing in our education system so far is the culture of skill development. Due to this the youth has been grappling with the challenges of employability or self-employment for a long time. Out of 8 million students that graduate every year, nearly 6 million students do not find employment, even when there are jobs available in the market. This gap exists due to lack of employable and entrepreneurial skills amongst the youth. Thus, there is a need to inculcate the skills in students that will be responsive to the changing demands of the market. The Policy strongly recommends skill component in higher education to make higher education more useful for students as well as country's economy. This policy aims to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education and requires integration of vocational education programmes into mainstream education in all education institutions in a phased manner. This is in alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 4.4 and will help to realize the full potential of India 's demographic dividend.

Policy recommended the detailing of National Skills Qualifications Framework for each discipline vocation and profession and aligning with the International Standard Classification of Occupations maintained by the International Labour Organization. The credit-based Framework will also facilitate mobility across 'general' and vocational education.

In this Session, there will be deliberations on the implementation strategy for implementing the recommendations of NEP ---2020 on Access, Equity, Skills, Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education, and Promotion of Languages with a view to gather consensus on effective implementation strategies.

Session—II : Implementation Strategies for NEP 2020 Recommendations on Quality and Excellence, Research and Internationalisation

Quality and Excellence

Indian higher education system which is the third largest higher education system in the world receives criticism for its low quality in international scenario. Not only does the quality vary from type of institutions, between regions, but also, there is a wide range of variations between various institutions. It needs to be ensured that every student who is a part of the higher education system shall have a minimum acceptable standard of education. This calls for the adopting all the measures which can enhance quality of higher education. The Policy recognises that at the societal level, higher education must enable the development of an enlightened, socially conscious, knowledgeable, and skilled nation that can find and implement robust solutions to its own problems. Higher education must form the basis for knowledge creation and innovation thereby contributing to a growing national economy. The purpose of quality higher education is, therefore, more than the creation of greater opportunities for individual employment. It represents the key to more vibrant, socially engaged, cooperative communities and a happier, cohesive, cultured, productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation. This policy envisions a complete overhaul and re-energising of the higher education system to overcome these challenges and thereby deliver high-quality higher education, with equity and inclusion.

Research

NEP—2020 acknowledges that knowledge creation and research are critical in growing and sustaining a large and vibrant economy, uplifting society, and continuously inspiring a nation to achieve even greater heights. A robust ecosystem of research is perhaps more important than ever with the rapid changes occurring in the world today in the realm of the economic, intellectual, societal, environmental, and technological health and progress of a nation. Research is one of the inevitable dimensions of higher education. The principle of indivisibility of research and teaching is also well established. But the universities in India have lagged behind in carrying forward the research culture and consequently, the country is facing repercussions both socially as well as economically. None of India's Institution is amongst the top 100 research and innovation institutions in the world. Whereas the universities are responsible for low research output, a smaller number of patents and publications, citation impact, the Government is responsible for research and innovation investment in India which is at present only 0.69% of GDP as compared to 2.8% in the United States of America, 4.3% in Israel and 4.2% in South Korea. The Policy therefore, envisions a comprehensive approach to transforming the quality and quantity of research in India. Most importantly, to build on these various elements in a synergistic manner, and to thereby truly grow and catalyse quality research in the nation, the policy envisions the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF). The NRF will competitively fund research in all disciplines. Successful research will be recognized, and where relevant, implemented through close linkages with governmental agencies as well as with industry and private/philanthropic organizations.

Internationalisation

The NEP—2020 envisions to promote India as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs thereby restoring its role as a *Vishwa Guru*. For this the Policy has recommended setting up International Students Office at each HEI hosting foreign students to coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad. Research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated, and relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries will be signed. High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India. A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India. Furthermore, research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian institutions and global institutions will be promoted through special efforts. Credits acquired in foreign universities will be permitted, where appropriate as per the requirements of each HEI, to be counted for the award of a degree.

In this session there will be deliberations on implementing NEP 2020 Recommendations on Quality and Excellence, Research and Internationalization with a view to devise an Implementation Strategy.

Technical Session III: Implementation Strategies for NEP 2020 Recommendations on Governance, Financing of Higher Education, Autonomy and Technology Integration

Governance is a central issue in higher education because it determines the way universities function or dysfunction and defines the relationship with the government. Governance at the higher education system is a complex interplay of the internal and external environment. The governance of higher education may be viewed from a complex interplay of macro and micro perspectives in the larger context in which it thrives. Regulatory agencies in large numbers is one of the prime reasons for India's problems in governance of higher education institutions. Regulation of higher education has been too heavy-handed for decades; too much has been attempted to be regulated with too little effect. To address these issues, the NEP-2020 recommends a gradual but effective shift from input-centric approach to outcome-based approach aligned to the 'light but tight' approach. The Policy envisions Setting-up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), carrying out distinct functions of Regulation, Accreditation, Funding, and Academic through with following autonomous verticals:

- ✓ National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) - A single point regulatory agency (Excluding Medical and Law).

- ✓ National Accreditation Council (NAC) - Meta Accreditation agency
- ✓ Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) - To ensure mechanisms and models for financing including fellowships and scholarships.
- ✓ General Education Council (GEC) - To formulate National Higher Education Qualification Framework and expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes.

At Institutional level, the policy recommends granting complete autonomy to the Higher Education Institutions including constitution of Board of Governors in the accredited institutions.

Technology Integration

India proved its mettle as a global leader in information and communication technology and in other cutting-edge domains. But the use of technology for the purpose of education has not been exploited fully. While education will play a critical role in this transformation, technology itself will play an important role in the improvement of educational processes and outcomes; thus, the relationship between technology and education at all levels is bidirectional. However, the COVID-19 Lockdown had given a thrust to this factor. The Digital initiatives of the Government of India facilitating the transformation of the entire nation into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. Strong advocacy of the policy for use and integration of technology to improve multiple aspects of education has come as opportunity to the country. The Policy recommended setting up of an autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration, and so on, both for school and higher education. The aim of the NETF will be to facilitate decision making on the induction, deployment, and use of technology, by providing to the leadership of education institutions, State and Central governments, and other stakeholders, the latest knowledge and research as well as the opportunity to consult and share best practices. These recommendations of the policy if implemented in right way will elevate the higher education system of the country to much higher level in the global arena.

Financing

The Policy commits to significantly raising educational investment, as there is no better investment towards a society 's future than the high-quality education of our young people. Unfortunately, public expenditure on education in India has not come close to the recommended level of 6% of GDP, as envisaged by the 1968 Policy, reiterated in the Policy of 1986, and which was further reaffirmed in the 1992 review of the Policy. The current public (Government - Centre and States) expenditure on education in India has been around 4.43% of GDP (Analysis of Budgeted Expenditure 2017-18) and only around 10% of the total Government spending towards education (Economic Survey 2017-18). These numbers are far smaller than most developed and developing countries. In order to attain the goal of education with excellence and the corresponding multitude of benefits to this Nation and its economy,

this Policy unequivocally endorses and envisions a substantial increase in public investment in education by both the Central government and all State Governments. The Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest. This is considered extremely critical for achieving the high-quality and equitable public education system that is truly needed for India's future economic, social, cultural, intellectual, and technological progress and growth.

In this session, there will be discussions on implementing NEP 2020 recommendations on Governance Reforms, Financing of Higher Education, Autonomy and Technology Integration.

Participants

Around 800 Member University Vice Chancellors, apart from International delegates, Officers from various Ministries and apex bodies of higher education and school education will participate in the Seminar.