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**CONCEPT NOTE**

**AIU East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet**
**on**
**hosted by**
**The ICFAI University, Gangtok**
**Sikkim**
**on**
**December 13--14, 2022**

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The Association of Indian Universities (AIU), one of the premier higher education institutions in India, was established in 1925. It plays a vital role in shaping Indian higher education by being a research-based policy advice institution to the Government of India in the field of Higher Education, Sports, and Culture.  One of the key activities of the AIU is to convene the Vice Chancellors' Meets at the Zonal and National levels to discuss various issues related to higher education. India is a country with a large geographical area, for ease of reaching out, AIU has grouped the member HEIs into 5 zones—East, West, North, South, and Central.  Each zone is constituted of HEIs located in 5-6 States grouped in that Zone. Thus, 5 Zonal Meets and one National Vice Chancellors' Meet are organized annually. These Meets are important platforms not only to discuss the significant issues of higher education but also to play a catalytic role in finding solutions for different problems of higher education through collective wisdom. Further, AIU carries forward the voice of the participating leaders of higher education to appropriate agencies and authorities for their dispensation.   Every year in the Annual Vice Chancellors' Meet, a specific theme which is of topical significance for the higher education community is taken up for discussion. As a run-up, subthemes related to the main theme are discussed in the Zonal Vice Chancellors' Meets.

**THEMES FOR THE AIU VICE CHANCELLORS MEET –2022-23**

Indian Higher Education is going through the most interesting revolutions in the centuries, and that too at a very rapid pace. These revolutions are being reinvigorated and accelerated through both natural and manmade happenings. The most important happenings among others are the launch of the National Education Policy –2020 and the global Pandemic COVID-19. The National Education Policy geared the academia of the country to build an education system rooted in Indian ethos taking the best from global education practices which contribute directly to transforming India by providing high-quality education to all. Simultaneously, COVID-19 compelled us to undergo massive disruptions and shifts in education processes and practices. The need of the hour is to adopt Transformative Education and Transformative Pedagogies. Transformative education equips learners with the core knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills needed to address pressing local and global challenges in addition to preparing them to contribute to a more just, inclusive, diverse, equitable, secure, and sustainable future for all.

In order to guide and support the Indian HEIs in imparting state-of-the-art Transformative Education to the students, AIU as a representative body of HEIs in India has set out to organize all the Zonal and National Vice Chancellors Conferences in 2022-23 on the theme: ***Transformative Higher Education for Atmanirbhar Bharat.***

In Zonal Vice Chancellors Meets, themes on different essential aspects of teaching-learning in the light of Transformative Higher Education will be discussed exclusively.

a. *North Zone* : Internationalization for Transformative Higher Education
b. *East Zone*: Pedagogies and Use of Technologies for Transformative Higher Education
c. *Central Zone*: Transformative Curriculum for a holistic and Multidisciplinary Higher Education
d. *South Zone*: Research and Excellence for Transformative Higher Education
e. *West Zone* : Evaluation Reforms for Transformative Higher Education

## THE PRESENT MEET

The present Meet is the East Zone Vice Chancellors' Meet. The theme for this Meet is '***Pedagogies and Use of Technologies for Transformative Higher Education'.***

Pedagogy can be described as the study of how knowledge and skills are imparted in an educational context and the approaches that can be adopted to make teaching impactful. The pedagogy adopted by teachers shapes their actions, judgments, and teaching strategies by taking into consideration, theories of teaching, understanding of students and their needs, and the backgrounds and interests of individual students. It involves the theory and practice of teaching-learning and how this process influences, and is influenced by, the social, political and psychological development of learners.

Pedagogy for Transformative Higher Education combines the elements of constructivist and critical pedagogy, involving social and technical processes from a systemic viewpoint that empowers students to examine critically their beliefs, values, and knowledge with the goal of developing a reflective knowledge base, an appreciation for multiple perspectives, and a sense of critical consciousness. In this, the teachers become facilitators with the disposition, knowledge, technology, skills, and commitment to supporting students to develop their full potential.

*Thus,* Transformative Higher Education *can be construed as higher education that empowers learners to be reflective and critical thinkers, and committed tech-savvy individuals who are able to contribute meaningfully to the local and global communities.*

In this context, the HEIs in India have demonstrated their readiness towards adopting transformative higher education during the COVID-19 lockdown by shifting towards online technology and pedagogy to ensure that students' academic interests are protected in all aspects, including teaching, research, examination, internship, etc. This shift towards online methodology and pedagogy was considered a stopgap arrangement by some, but many have taken it as a permanent solution in view of its many advantages. Mostly so, because they have created the infrastructure for it. However, experts and educationists, and educational leaders are of the view that shifting to online learning in toto is not in the interest of the overall development of the students so it is better to integrate the best of both the methods, online and physical to devise hybrid or blended methods of learning. The COVID-19 lockdown has also compelled us to have the components of Social and Emotional, Spiritual, Philosophical, Global Citizenship Education, and Futuristic Education as an integral part of curricula to prepare the students for the new world order. In view of all this, HEIs need to fully adopt pedagogies and technologies that lead to *Transformative Higher Education.* In this Meet, there will be deliberations on the pedagogies

and technologies that can accelerate transformative higher education in India.

The discussions will primarily focus on: fundamental principles, themes, and concepts of transformative pedagogies and technologies towards fostering and advancing Transformative Higher Education to tackle local and global challenges; articulate and address key issues to advancing transformative education in the current and emerging challenges posed as an outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic; professional skills to design, implement, and monitor contextualized and localized educational pedagogies and technologies; share relevant innovative and best practices, case studies, and lessons in the field of transformative higher education; ways to enable educational leaders, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders to unlock and utilize the potential of transformative pedagogies and technologies to promote Transformative Higher Education.

The two-day event will include the following 3 Technical Sessions to discuss the concerned topics:

**Technical Session--1:** Innovative Pedagogy and Lifelong Learning
**Technical Session-2:** Blended Learning
**Technical Session-3:** Personalized Learning through Edu-Technology

## FORMAT AND APPROACH

The Sessions will be of 1 Hour and 30 Minutes each. In each Session, there will be experts from Government, HEIs, and ICT. Presentations will be followed by interaction and Q and A. On the basis of deliberations, a commitment statement will be framed for the universities to further the cause of Higher Education in India. In addition to academic deliberations, capacity development initiatives will be taken by forming a group of Vice Chancellors who will work on various dimensions of Transformative Higher Education.

## SESSION DETAILS

### Technical Session-1: Innovative Pedagogy and Lifelong Learning

There is growing recognition around the world that it is not just enough to impart education through prevalent methods. There should be a strong readiness for innovation. NEP-2020 also envisions nurturing innovation in all domains of education and recommends the need to innovate in all fields of education. The vision of the policy is to improve the quality of education by giving equal space to creativity and innovation and transforming India into a vibrant knowledge society. Therefore, creating a conducive and enabling environment for innovation and not merely sticking to the traditional method of teaching and testing is the need of the hour. Unlike earlier years, these are not the days when people study at a particular age. Learning is unavoidable and happens all the time, so these are the days of Lifelong Learning. Whether pursuing personal interests and passions or chasing professional ambitions, lifelong learning can help us to achieve personal fulfillment and satisfaction. Lifelong learning does not necessarily have to restrict itself to informal learning.

In order to facilitate formal lifelong learning, NEP 2020 has recommended Multiple Entry and Exit System and Academic Bank of Credit. Through Multiple Entry and Exit System, NEP 2020 seeks to pave the way for flexible and lifelong learning and encourage students to choose their academic path leading to the award of a certificate, diploma, and degree. The system allows students to drop their course and resume it at a later stage as and when they desire or deem it worth pursuing. This arrangement will prove to be a boon for those students who cannot continue their studies due to financial, social or any other reason and desire to resume their studies when the conditions become favourable in due course of time.

To facilitate Multiple Entry and Exit System; mobility of students; and multidisciplinary and holistic education, NEP 2020 recommended the creation of an Academic Bank of Credits. Academic Bank of Credit is envisaged as a digital bank that holds the credit earned by a student in any course. Students will be academic account holders to whom the Academic Bank of Credits will provide a variety of services including credit verification, credit accumulation, credit transfer or redemption and authentication of academic awards.

The Academic Bank of Credits has been launched recently by Hon'ble Prime Minister. It has been developed by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under the DigiLocker framework, with the facility and functionality of opening academic accounts by the students and on-boarding of higher educational institutions. This virtual storehouse will ensure the opening, closure, and validation of the Academic Bank of Accounts, verification, accumulation, and transfer or redemption for students. It facilitates students to choose their own learning path to attain a degree/diploma/certificate working on the principle of multiple entry-multiple exits and anytime, anywhere and at any level of learning. However, there are several impeding issues in implementing them.

In this session, the deliberations will be on developing a conducive environment and infrastructure for Innovative Pedagogy for enabling Transformative Higher Education and Life Long Learning. There will be discussions on the feasibility of implementing multiple entry and exit system and academic bank credits and strategies to effectively implement them.

**Technical Session-2: Blended Learning**

Of late, technology has had a profound impact on how teaching and learning work. COVID-19 lockdown had accelerated the use of online learning and one of the phenomena that have come to play an increasingly important role in education is blended learning. Blended Learning gives the facility to the students for doing part of their learning in a digital environment, and part of it face to face. The hallmark of blended learning is that the strengths of these two teaching/learning modalities are intentionally combined, resulting in a customised educational experience.

The most popular form of blended learning is the flipped classroom. It incorporates both face-to-face class time and web-based learning. Flipped learning is defined as a "pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter," (Flipped Learning Network, 2014).

New material – in the form of lectures and videos on specific topic areas – is offered online, which allows the student the flexibility to access the content when it is convenient for them. The knowledge gained outside of the classroom is then applied in the classroom, as students participate in group work, problem-solving exercises, and discussions. A flipped classroom shifts the learning from teacher-driven to more student-centred as the class time is repurposed to include active learning and student engagement.

Nevertheless, blended learning should be used sensibly and thoughtfully, to avoid any gaps in learning and with an eye toward enriching student learning.

In this session, there will be deliberations on how to make the best use of Blended Learning in HEIs; most appropriate pedagogy and technology for blended learning; the best practices of blended learning adopted by HEIs, etc.

**Technical Session -3: Personalized Learning through Edu-Technology**

Learning can happen in different places, activities, methods, and time frames. There are so many formats in which learning can take place ranging from classrooms stuffed with more than a hundred students; to one-on-one mentorship programmes, interactive online games, and complex technical textbooks. Similarly, there are a variety of students with different learning conveniences. Technology has always played an important role in education, but its current use is more prevalent than ever due to the increased availability of smart devices and web-based curricula. With the rise of Artificial Intelligence in education, there are many ways in which students get support. Personalised learning is one among them which involves customization and adaptation of educational methods and techniques so that the learning process is better suited for each individual learner with their own unique learning style, background, needs, and previous experiences. In a personalized learning approach, the learner's personal experience, knowledge, and habits are connected with learning methods, so that they can learn faster, understand new concepts more easily, and improve their learning performance. If we want to increase the GER and improve the learning outcomes, personalized learning is essential.

NEP 2020 has recommended that the teachers be trained in AI, Design Thinking, and other subjects through AI-enabled Digital Infrastructure for knowledge sharing (DIKSHA) Portal. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi recently announced the launching of several initiatives undertaken under the National Education Policy-2020 including the Artificial Intelligence programme to make the youth future-oriented and open the way for an AI-driven economy. The need of the hour is to make concerted and prudent efforts to make the best use of AI for Indian HEIs.

AI educational solutions can fill needs gaps in learning and teaching and allow HEIs to do more than ever before. AI can drive efficiency, personalization and streamline academics and administration tasks to allow the time and freedom to provide understanding and adaptability. By leveraging the best attributes of machines and teachers, the vision for AI in education is one where they work together for the best outcome for students. Since the students of today will need to work in a future where AI is the reality, it's important that our educational institutions expose students to use the technology. A few technologies with AI that are already affecting education in every way are Chatbots, Virtual Reality (VR), Learning Management System (LMS), Robotics, etc. These tools can be used for a variety of purposes,

most importantly to assign coursework, communicate with students and parents, track student progress, generate reports on student performance, etc.

However, there are several disadvantages also which warrants prudence in utilizing AI for educational purpose. Adopting AI can be daunting for institutions lacking the time, expertise and resources to explore its many uses. These issues need to be discussed threadbare in the Meet to come out with tangible solutions.

Thus, in this session, there will be deliberations on methodologies and technologies required to impart personalised learning in Indian HEIs; measures and strategies to optimize the use of AI in higher education.

## Participation and Organization

Vice Chancellors of Indian Universities, Experts from the Government of India, Apex Bodies of Higher Education, and Academia will be speakers and Session Chairs. Experts from international organizations will also be invited to contribute. Discussions will be conducted in English. Sessions will be in a blended mode. The speakers, chairs and participants need to inform in advance about the mode through which they would like to attend the Meet.