

Report of the Meeting on NEP2020: Overview and Implementation Strategy

[Annexure to ARISE , August 2021 issue]

Presenter: Prof. Prem Vrat, AICTE Distinguished Chair Professor

Date: 23 July 2021, Time: 10.00 am-1.00 pm

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Prof Vrat is a Professor of Eminence, Management Development Institute, Gurgaon, is the former Vice-Chancellor of Uttar Pradesh Technical University and Founder-Director of IIT-Roorkee. He is an IIT Kharagpur and IIT Delhi alumni and has more than 41 years of teaching, research and consultancy experience to his credit. Professor Vrat has worked extensively with the AICTE, HRD and is an expert on Technical Education in India.

He conducted the session on an overview of the National Education Policy 2020 and the implementation strategies which are aimed at reforming the education sector, creating educated citizens who can contribute to the nation-building process. Professor KT Selvan, the Programme Coordinator introduced Professor Prem Vrat to the audience. The event was moderated by Dr S Sureshkumar.

History of National Education Policy

Professor Vrat started with an overview of the background of the National Education Policy, reviewing the first two education policies of the Government of India. The first National Policy on Education announced in 1968 was based on the report by the National Education Commission chaired by D.S Kothari, the then Chairman of the University Grants Commission. The NEP 1968 recommended many guidelines such as the revision of the pay scale for teachers; increasing the spending on education to six per cent of the GDP.

The National Policy on Education of 1986 was responsible for encouraging the privatization of technical and management education. It also gave AICTE regulatory powers to accredit engineering and technical institutions. While the increased number of technical institutions improved access to technical education in the country, the exponential growth resulted in inconsistencies in maintaining the quality of technical education and higher education in general.

Professor Vrat explained that NEP 2020 was formulated with extensive discussions and consultations with the stakeholders; reviewing the major challenges in the higher education sector in India and suggesting solutions to solve some of the problems from the past. Dr Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan led the drafting committee on NEP 2020.

Professor Vrat reviewed some of the aspects of the Indian education system that required reform through the NEP 2020:

- A fragmented higher education system that lacked the seamless interlinking between the primary, secondary and tertiary education system and was segregated with too many administrative boundaries.
- Lack of autonomy of private educational institutions due to the importance given to regulations.
- A need for emphasis on research at universities that could contribute to the development of society.
- Lack of adequate allotment of financial resources or funding that mainly focused on central government and major state government universities and not private universities.
- The need to make curriculum reforms and exam reforms more quickly and efficiently.
- Multiple regulatory bodies in the higher education sector with a primary focus on inspection and regulation than nurture and support that require better integration.

The National Education Policy 2020 aim to achieve a faculty-driven and student-centric education system. He highlighted the significance of the “FOUR Fs” that could make a university into a place of excellence and make it instrumental in building the nation:

Faculty - Invite and encourage outstanding faculty

Funding- Provide adequate resources for research and development

Freedom- To evolve an independent identity and style

Flexibility- To grow and develop

The Government of India has diligently tried to implement the National Education Policy 2020 and make the Indian education system internationally competitive. One of its goals is to bring back the ideals of renowned universities from the past such as Taxila and Nalanda, which upheld the highest standards of education of the time.

Key Features of NEP 2020

- **Bring about transformational reforms in education to make higher education more holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary.**

-Holistic in terms of attitude, knowledge and skill.

-Flexibility to choose what a person wishes to study

-Multidisciplinary universities that do not focus only on Management programmes, or only Engineering programmes.

- **Provide both formal and informal learning modes to facilitate multiple pathways to learning**

- No demarcation between vocational and general education by bringing in commonalities in learning outcomes at different levels

- Allowing complete migration from ITI to diploma to degree

- **Go beyond creating employability and develop holistic individuals who can contribute to society**

-To move beyond a focus on placement opportunities and salary packages when considering learning.

-To introduce components from the Liberal Arts into the engineering curriculum. (For example, the IITs offer courses from the humanities and sciences every semester to its students giving them a better understanding of subjects outside the engineering stream).

- **End fragmentation of higher education and transform institutions into “large multidisciplinary hubs of learning”**

- Bring vertical and horizontal integration in the education sector; to be transformed as seamless academic supply chain- vertical and horizontal integration.

- Improve interaction and integration between private and government and private education institutions

- Vertical integration: “From ITI to IIT” to enable students to start with a diploma to a degree and PhD.

- Horizontal integration- from primary to secondary to tertiary education.

- Branch wise integration – integrate a wider range of courses [For example, IIT Kharagpur has Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law offering Law Programmes for engineering students].

Some of the Proposed Transformations

1. Modular and flexible entry and exit points for students

[Students can take a break year, shift to diploma course or degree course based on credits earned etc.]

2. Setting an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)

- Students will be able to take courses by teachers in other institutions on their subject of interest.
- 50% of courses can be studied from the institution student are enrolled in and the remaining credits can be taken from other institutions based on a framework and MoUs formed etc.
- The National Credit Transfer Framework will facilitate the implementation of ABC, which is in its planning stage now.
- The Framework will suggest ways and means to equivalence letter grades, credits etc. from different institutions as students transfer credits from different institutions.

3. Formation of the Higher Education Council of India with four verticals

- National Higher Education Regulatory Council – **NEHRC** (a common single point regulator)
- National Accreditation Council -**NAC** (accreditation with improved credibility)
- Higher Education Grants Council -**HEGC** (for funding both public and private institutions)
- General Education Council – **GEC** (setting standards and quality in curriculum, evaluation etc.)

4. **Formation of National Research Foundation (NRF)** to strengthen research in universities both private and public. Earlier, government institutions had an advantage over private institutions in receiving funding from the government. This policy will change. Draft Committee has proposed to allocate Rs.70,000/- crores for research funding.

Professor Vrat explained how at the primary and higher secondary level, private institutions are more popular whereas at the tertiary level, people prefer government institutions. His spectrum of experience in working with IITs, and private universities have convinced him that research funding criteria have to be revisited.

NEP 2020 proposes several steps for that, such as considering the qualification of the principal researcher as equally important, which will enable private universities with excellent or renowned faculty to acquire funding.

5. **All Under Graduate Programmes will be of four-year duration** henceforth to make higher education in India globally-oriented by changing the undergraduate courses from the current 10+2+3 format.

M.Phil is to be discontinued.

Brilliant B.Tech students will have the opportunity to start doctoral research directly after their B.Tech.

6. **NEP 2020 aims to orient the education policies in India towards a more flexible, modular, blended learning, single regulatory, value-based and societal needs-based.** It requires the growth of Research Universities, Teaching Universities and Autonomous Colleges. The goal is to discontinue the affiliating system gradually through the next fifty years. However, he emphasized that autonomy should come with accountability. Institutions have to learn to self-regulate in the absence of larger regulatory rules and bodies.

7. **AICTE has introduced a voluntary option for the institution to start engineering education in students' first language** to enable learners with limited proficiency in the English language, who are often from rural areas to achieve professional education. AICTE has formed a National Task Force for this purpose and also incentivized this policy. It has taken initiatives to produce high-quality teaching materials in mother tongues for those mother tongue medium courses. Currently, fourteen institutions have been selected for the mother tongue medium programme.

8. **To revitalize objectives and focus of research on socially relevant topics and solving real-life problems in the industry.** NEP 2020 also recommends appointing persons of eminence with industry experience without the requirement of a PhD as Professors and Associate Professors of Practice.

9. Make the Indian education system more welcoming to international students and faculty.

The final part of the presentation included some of the implementation strategies and highlights of NEP 2020 such as the following:

- Core subjects to include foundation courses (50-60%) from the same institute or institutes with equal ranking and rating
- Option to choose programme electives and open electives.
- Deemed to be universities to be discontinued and given full university status
- First-year to be common for all students with the allocation of a discipline from second year onwards based on his/her aptitude, performance.
- Range in the allocation of seats and no fixed number of seats.
- GER- Increased interaction between schools and colleges -Open House concept where school students will come and camp at the college for 15 days.
- Ranking parameters to be revised – two categories of ranking: for teaching institutes and research institutes.
- Owner's profile and financial transparency -important category for ranking.
- Department of Education and Technology to be established in all institutions.
- AICTE introducing online approval for self-disclosure
- Each institution to have Institutional Educational Technology Forum (IETF)
- Establish an Institutional Development Plan (IDP)
- Higher education institutions to compulsorily offer internship of school students.

Implementing NEP 2020 through the following:

- ✓ Multidisciplinary and holistic education
- ✓ Equity and inclusion in higher education
- ✓ Research, innovation and rankings
- ✓ Global outreach of Higher Education
- ✓ Motivated, energized and capable faculty
- ✓ Integrated higher education system
- ✓ Governance and regulation
- ✓ Promotion of Indian languages, arts and culture
- ✓ Technology use and integration

The presentation ended with an interactive session with the participants where Professor Vrat clarified different aspects of NEP 2020. The overview encompassed the salient points of the Education Policy and consisted of essential information that all higher education professionals must know and learn to implement in the coming years. The session was concluded by Dr Sureshkumar who thanked Professor Prem Vrat for his presentation and time.



Taking down notes at the speed of speech, is an art.

Thanks to Dr.C.Lakshmi, who could capture all these from Prof Prem Vrat's talk.- VEA