



SEMINAR

India's Higher Education Sector – Vision 2030

Background:

India's National Education Policy (NEP) was announced in July 2020 after a gap of 24 years since the last National Policy of 1986 was introduced. NEP 2020 aims to structurally transform the education sector in the next two decades. Thus the decade 2020 to 2030 becomes crucial in implementing the NEP.

In this direction AIP hosted a knowledge sharing session on the topic "Education 4.0. A challenge for School Leaders' during July 2021. Going forward, AIP proposes to hold a second Seminar in the series, this time on Higher Education sometime in Nov-Dec 2021.

About AIP:

AIP is a non-profit organization providing a platform to Education leaders and other stake holders to facilitate knowledge sharing, empower education leaders and instill leadership in the education sector.

AIP intends to engage and impart over 10, 0000 education leaders and stakeholders during this decade alone. This is to be achieved by organizing studies, providing fora for education and skill development missions, in and out-bound delegations for cooperation and collaborations, holding summits, conferences, seminars and facilitating training opportunities.

Subsequent to this seminar on Higher Education, AIP plans to schedule an International Collaboration seminar, Education Investment Attraction Summit and hosting Trade Delegations in the coming months.

ISSUES OF HIGHER EDUCATION:

Some of the priority areas set out in NEP 2020 for Higher Education are:

- Introduction of a modular 4 year multidisciplinary bachelor's degree courses with flexibility of exit and re-entry.
- Replacing of the University Grant Commission (which had a dual role of funding and a regulatory body) with an umbrella authority namely Higher Education Council of India (HECI) with four separate verticals, each to address Regulatory, Funding, Accreditation and Learning Outcome functions.
- Bring all testing under one Testing Agency.
- Creation of a National Education Technology Forum (NETF) to facilitate technology transfer to improve learning and its reach.
- Internationalization of Higher Education, to enhance standards in line with global best practices. As a first step allow select foreign Universities to set up campuses in India, in eligible Indian Universities.
- Fixation of fees for private and public Universities.

THEMES FOR THE SEMINAR:

Based on these issues, some of the topics which emerge for discussion during the Seminar are as follows:

1. Liberal Arts Education for Holistic Development:

If the aim of education is to 'develop intellectual, ethical, aesthetic and a socially aware and sensitive citizenry', then liberal arts education should take centre stage in our Universities. Education planners should ensure that in fields other than general education, curriculum in Medicine, Technology, Legal studies should have requisite elements of Liberal Arts Education inbuilt in them to ensure holistic development of the students. In coming years, liberal arts education needs encouragement from all stake holders.

2. Organisational Structure - Higher Education Council to replace University Grant Commission – How best to make the change work:

To ensure that it does not remain old wine in new bottles, a different approach - one of a facilitator rather than a regulator - will need to be encouraged. A conscious effort by Ministry of Education (MoE) the new 'Avatar' of Ministry of Human Resource Development, to allow the Higher Education Council (HECI) to function autonomously by the Ministry, would be a key to its success. Internally, the HECI shall have to create a think - tank frame work for its four verticals, namely Regulatory Function by National Higher Education Council, accreditation work by the existing National Accreditation Council, NAAC, the funding function by HECI and General Education Policy by GEC including work on Graduate Attributes for expected Learning outcomes, to work in a mission mode.

Lastly, as a matter of policy, is there a case for creating large multi - disciplinary Universities and do away with the affiliated college system?

3. Blended Learning – The way forward to extend the reach and enhance the learning experience:

The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of use of online tools for remote learning, but students at the same time have missed the spontaneity of in - person learning. However, it also threw up the gap in accessibility of online learning in rural areas due to lack of suitable devices. Moreover, if the current Gross Enrolment ratio of 27% is to be increased to an ambitious 50% by 2035 as per NEP, drastic measures will be required to improve the numbers, ensuring quality as well. All this requires a mission – mode approach with a CEO at the head of a Task force to achieve this vast outreach digitally.

4. Internationalization of Higher Education:

Beyond the two dimensions-one of credible foreign Universities setting up campuses in select and accredited Indian Universities, and secondly of encouraging foreign students to study in India; the larger motive should be create an higher education eco system which encourages global thinking, developing critical and analytical skills, emphasize on original and creative thinking and the ability to collaborate cross culturally across the globe. This is the more important dimension of Internationalization and should be benchmarked by leading Indian Universities if they wish to be ranked amongst the best. Quality of research would however, remain the most important element in this endeavor.

5. Education Services as an Industry?

While this may sound far-fetched and even undesirable to some, yet we have to think of financial viability without government financial support by introducing different financial models, in order to achieve the goals of accessibility, equity and quality education. Today education is possibly, the only sector where 'public good' is the basis for not allowing investment in the not-for-profit mode. Even the socially important health sector is not governed purely by this altruistic motive. To expect the prohibitive land and building infrastructure investments to come up on a not-for-profit basis alone, limits the expansion on quality education. Currently, the Higher Education sector is substantially served by the private sector – more than 78%. Can such heavy investments for quality education - which implies hiring faculty and research investments be made by the private sector without a reasonable expectation of returns? The Honorable Supreme Court in its Judgments in 1993 and 2002 for Islamic Academy and TMA Pai cases have, of course, ruled for 'not-for-profit, but allow a reasonable profit', to be ploughed back into the University.

Legislation to provide tax rebate incentive, if introduced in private Universities, can get substantial investment in education sector far more than the loss to Government of revenue due to tax rebates. This may will be one way to encourage private investment in Higher Education. The discussion can bring out many others possibilities.

Confirmed So Far:

1. About AIP

Mr. Dalip Sharma
Executive Chairman
Association of Indian Principals

2. Moderator for the Seminar:

Mr. Arindam Bhattacharya
Associate Mentor AIP
Education consultant

3. Liberal Arts Education for holistic development (or any related topic of his choice)

Key Note Speaker
Dr. DharamVir, IAS (Retd)
Former Chief Secretary, Haryana
President, SPSTI.org