

Essay No. 08. June 09, 2021

**REALISTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY–2020**  
**A ROADMAP**

**SHAKILA T. SHAMSU**  
Formerly Officer on Special Duty,  
Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education,  
Government of India, New Delhi



**ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES  
NEW DELHI (INDIA)**

Scholarly Essay from the Book, '**National Education Policy–2020 :  
Transforming Higher Education in India**', Editors: Pankaj Mittal  
and Sistla Rama Devi Pani, Publisher: Association of Indian Universities,  
New Delhi (India), 2021. ISBN No. 81-7520-162-2

## PROFILE OF THE AUTHOR

### Shakila T. Shamsu

Dr. Shakila T Shamsu is a well-known Academic, Educational Thinker and Academic Administrator. She was Officer on Special Duty to the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education (erstwhile Ministry of Human Resource Development), Government of India. She was the Secretary to the Drafting Committee of National Education Policy-2020. She was the Nodal Officer of the flagship Government of India Scheme of National Mission on Teachers and Teaching and during her tenure 95 centres were approved; new initiatives - Leadership for Academicians Programme, Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching and Faculty Induction Programmes were implemented and over 5 lakh faculty trained.

She held the position of Joint Adviser (Education) in Planning Commission and Officer on Special Duty (XII Plan) in Ministry of Education. Her career spans over 39 years in teaching / academics in the University of Mumbai, IGNOU and 14 years in the GOI.

A Ph.D in Education, Gold Medalist for Masters, PG Diploma in Distance Education, and a Degree in Law; she has articles in international journals, book contributions and prepared XI, XII Plan and Government Reports. She has been a member of various Committees of the Government of India, State Governments, University Grants Commission (UGC), United States -India Education Foundation (USIEF) National Selection Committees and has addressed several national and international conferences.

# REALISTIC IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY-2020 A ROADMAP

**Shakila T. Shamsu**

*NEP-2020 looks at school and higher education as a single organic continuum, and is rooted in the Indian ethos and constitutional values with equal emphasis on the imbining 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The task of implementing national policies, while at the same time respecting and incorporating regional aspirations and an inclusive agenda of growth, is indeed challenging. Education is a subject in the Concurrent List and it is logically imperative that a participatory approach in which all stakeholders, be it Central Government, State/ UT Governments, regulatory bodies, academics, autonomous bodies and institutions, private sector and all other players, work together towards a common goal. While outlining the implementation framework, linkages between education and other related services like health, sports, industry, S&T, IT, etc. must be suitably factored so as to ensure commonality in achieving the outcomes.*

## PRELUDE

Public policymaking in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the varied challenges that developing countries like India face in crafting policies suited to the changing socio-economic needs in a highly globalised environment is an engaging area for research. This article seeks to present a roadmap for the holistic implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. NEP-2020 is the outcome of extensive and comprehensive consultations, aimed to make India a knowledge superpower, by equipping its students with the appropriate knowledge, capabilities and skills. It covers the entire educational spectrum from early education to higher education, vocational studies, teacher

education as well as adult education. Here, we are confining to the implementation of higher education reforms in NEP-2020.

## ROADMAP FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

### Overview of NEP-2020

The NEP-2020 is aligned to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and its underpinnings resonate the multidimensionality of 21st century *learning-to know, to do, to live together and with others, and to be*. NEP-2020 looks at school and higher education as a single organic continuum, and is rooted in the Indian ethos and constitutional values with equal emphasis on the imbibing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. It *inter alia* includes universalisation of pre-primary education, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission, flexibility in the choices of courses for students; examination, governance and regulation reforms; accreditation for quality in public and private institutions; focus on inclusion of all sections; innovative use of technology; embedding vocationalisation at all levels and multiple pathways of learning; promoting Open and Distance Learning; policy for gifted children; revamping of teachers' education; National Research Foundation; learner-centric focus for the holistic development of students; developing India as a global study destination to promote internationalisation of higher education; and rename Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) as the Ministry of Education (MoE), among others.

The Policy articulates 22 cardinal principles that will guide the entire education system which specifies, among others, the notions of flexibility, holistic development, conceptual understanding, creativity and cognitive thinking with the focus on learner centeredness; promoting multilingualism, equity and inclusion, ethics, human and constitutional values; respect for diversity and local contextualisation; developing synergy across curriculum at all levels and life skills learning; recognising the centrality of teachers; academic and examination reforms and expanded use of technology; amending

existing regulatory systems; rootedness in Indian culture, knowledge systems; strengthening the public education while recognising the private sector; and that, education is public service with a need for greater financial investment.

### **Higher Education: Salient Recommendations**

Before making any attempt to outline an implementation plan, the salient features of higher education recommendations are essential.

1. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is targeted to increase to 50 per cent by 2035.
2. The HEIs will be mapped to a new vision and architecture for higher education with large, well-resourced, vibrant multidisciplinary institutions, ranging from Research-intensive Universities, Teaching-intensive Universities and Autonomous degree-granting Colleges.
3. A holistic multi-disciplinary integrated education at the undergraduate level with creative combinations of study of Science, Arts, Humanities, Mathematics and professional fields, integration of vocational education and having imaginative and flexible curricular structures and multiple entry/exit points is envisaged.
4. Initiatives will be taken to ensure optimal learning environments that are engaging and supportive, enabling all students to succeed. All institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad Higher Education Qualifications Framework that ensures consistency across institutions and programmes and across the Open and Distance Learning (ODL), online, and the traditional 'in-class' modes. High-quality support centres to be set up to encourage and support students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.
5. To ensure Equity and Inclusion, that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of the circumstances of

birth or background, special emphasis will be given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).

6. Open and Distance Learning will be expanded, thereby contributing to enhancing the Gross Enrolment Ratio. Online courses and digital repositories, funding for research, improved student services, credit-based recognition of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), etc., will be taken to ensure high quality of ODL.
7. Internationalisation of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations, and student and faculty mobility and allowing entry of top world ranked Universities to open campuses in our country.
8. Faculty will be energised and motivated through a variety of reforms. These include clearly defined, independent, and transparent recruitment processes and incentivising excellence through appropriate rewards, promotions, and progression into institutional leadership. Faculty will have the freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches.
9. Measures will be taken to ensure leadership of the highest quality and promote an institutional culture of excellence as having robust institutional governance through an empowered Board of Governors.
10. The separation of functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting will see a transformation of the current regulatory architecture. There will be a single overarching umbrella body for promotion of higher education—the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), with four new verticals for the above functions. Regulation will be ‘light but tight’. Public and private HEIs will be governed by the same set of norms for regulation, accreditation and academic standards.
11. A new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021, will be formulated and by 2030, the minimum qualification for teaching will be a 4-year

- integrated BEd degree. Stringent action will be taken against substandard standalone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs)
12. A National Mission for Mentoring shall be established, with a large pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty – including those with the ability to teach in Indian languages and who would be willing to provide mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers.
  13. National Research Foundation (NRF) will be the new entity to enable a culture of research in our universities, suitably incentivise outstanding research, and to seed and grow research at state universities and other public institutions.
  14. All professional education will be an integral part of the higher education system. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities, or institutions in these or other fields, will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions.
  15. The National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created as an apex advisory body on making right choices on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, and administration. Appropriate integration of technology into all levels of education will be done to improve classroom processes, support teacher professional development, enhance educational access for disadvantaged groups, and streamline educational planning, administration and management.
  16. A comprehensive set of recommendations are outlined for promoting online education to ensure preparedness with alternative modes of quality education. Towards this end, a dedicated unit for developing digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be created.
  17. Initiatives for promotion of Indian languages to ensure the growth of all Indian languages with more programmes being offered bilingually, and setting up language academies like Institute for Translation and Interpretation to strengthen language departments, will be undertaken.

## **FINANCING AND MAKING IT HAPPEN**

NEP–2020 reaffirms that education is a public service and must not be a commercial activity or a source of profit. Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialisation of higher education. All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a ‘not for profit’ entity. The centre and the states will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6 per cent of GDP at the earliest. The Central Advisory Board of Education will be strengthened to ensure coordination to bring overall focus on quality education.

## **FUNDAMENTAL PREMISES FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION**

The task of implementing national policies, while at the same time respecting and incorporating regional aspirations and an inclusive agenda of growth, is indeed very challenging. Education is a subject in the Concurrent List and it is logically imperative that a participatory approach in which all stakeholders, be it Central Government, State/UT Governments, regulatory bodies, academics, autonomous bodies and institutions, private sector and all other players, work together towards a common goal. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are autonomous entities that enjoy academic and administrative freedom. The actionable points must move in parallel rather than in an incremental stage-by-stage manner. The convergence among actions to be taken at the National level with those at the State and the institutional levels is critical to effective implementation. While outlining the implementation framework, linkages between education and other related services like health, sports, industry, S&T, IT, etc. must be suitably factored in, so as to ensure commonality in achieving the outcomes. There is a perceived need for greater coordination amongst the relevant multiple agencies and functionaries, and also between education and other departments. Equally important is to take into account the ongoing schemes and initiatives currently being implemented. Many of these schemes can be modified or altered to



align to the proposed implementation strategies. This would ensure optimising available human, administrative, infrastructural, and financial resources. It is pertinent to note that the Draft NEP 2019 has provided some detailing on the implementation which is worth examining too (DNEP-2019)

## TOWARDS REALISTIC IMPLEMENTATION

Policies, in general, are aspirational vision documents which postulates the trajectory of changes to bring about transformation. The successful and complete implementation of any policy will determine its efficacy in achieving the desired goals. The challenge inevitably lies in working out a robust implementation strategy. This requires:

- clearly identifying the responsibility agencies/bodies;
- identifying the major, medium and micro/unit level actions and strategies;
- the detailed timelines and phasing;
- having multiple models for different states and institutions depending on their preparedness and availability of infrastructural, human and financial resources;
- financial resources; and
- a proper mechanism for regular review and monitoring.

### Agencies Anchoring the Responsibility

The reforms require actions in parallel at the Central, State/UT and institutional levels. At the national level, the main players are the Ministry of Education; the existing regulatory bodies University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) etc.; national or apex level institutions, like Association of Indian Universities (AIU), National Institute of Educational Planning and

Administration (NIEPA), National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), National Board of Accreditation (NBA), Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Inter University Centres for Teacher Education (IUCTEs) etc.; and the new structures which will be created, like Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) etc.

The State/UT Governments need to actively involve their Higher Education Councils; all their higher education and research institutions, industry bodies, civil society, think-tank bodies; organisations in the development sector; autonomous bodies in economic planning and public policy, accreditation, capacity building, open & distance education institutions; and language institutions in this exercise. Given the thrust on internationalisation, the involvement of bilateral bodies, and international offices within the HEIs also need to be invited. At the institutional level, within each HEI, a Nodal Unit must be identified to making the Institutional Development Programme (IDP) and the Programme of Action preferably involving the Internal Quality Assurance Committee (IQAC), and other relevant departments.

Ideally, an overarching Implementation Task Force can be constituted at the Central and also the State/UT levels, which will include relevant government departments, such as Technical Education, Skill Development, Social Justice, Tribal Affairs, Women & Child and others, along with stakeholder representatives of the above-mentioned bodies and institutions.

Since NEP-2020 highlights the inter-connectedness between different stages of education, the implementation of higher education reforms will need to factor in the realities and current status of secondary stage education. For instance, the transition rate of secondary stage education is a determinant of GER at higher education. Existing disconnect between secondary schooling and higher education is a major deficiency in the current system. This must be addressed while arriving at baseline data for realistic trajectory of future action.

## Broad Actionable Points

The 17 major recommendations excluding the GER target can be broadly clubbed under the following actionable themes. These are macro-level points which will have to be broken down or unbundled to specific micro-level actions/activities:

*New Legislations, Amend Existing Regulations, Develop New Frameworks, New Bodies (Action to be done at Central/National level)*

- Reconstitute Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) and revise its mandate as per NEP.
- Enact Higher Education Commission of India Act and process to annul UGC, AICTE, NCTE.
- Establishing new four independent verticals within the umbrella architecture:
  - *Regulation*: Creating National Higher Education Regulatory Council,
  - *Accreditation*: Creating the super accreditor and suitably altering existing NAAC, NBA,
  - *Funding*: Establishing Higher Education Grants Commission out of erstwhile UGC,
  - *Academic Standard Setting*: Creating General Education Council (GEC) which will perform academic standard setting functions of such disciplines not covered by other PSSBs and existing Professional Councils of the different domains will be redesignated and remodelled as Professional Standard Setting Bodies (PSSBs).
- Strengthening Internal Governance of HEI's by developing guidelines for Empowered Board of Governors (BoGs).
  - Action to set up BoGs will be appropriately taken by State/UT governments, State Universities and aided colleges and private HEIs.

- Establishing the National Research Foundation (*already done*).
- Bill permitting Foreign Universities to open campuses inland and vice-versa.
- Necessary regulation to help standalone institutions in teacher education, legal education, technical education, medical education, and agriculture education to become multidisciplinary institutions. Though regulation of medical and legal education is excluded from NHERC, education in these two domains is part of the recommendation of integrating professional education.
- Amending existing regulations, statutes and ordinances relating to recruitment and career progression of faculty; appointment of Vice-Chancellors/Directors; graded autonomy; credit mobility of regular, ODL, online and blended modes of learning; notifying discontinuation of MPhil; revise PhD regulations; and optimise Faculty Student Ratio and necessary incorporation of these in the individual Statutes.
- Setting up the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) as an apex advisory body.
- Formulating the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and guidelines for the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC).
- New Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) by the NCTE as a PSSB
- Develop National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) at all levels and National Committee for Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE) along with the active involvement of Department of School Education, MoE
- Establish Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI).

### ***Rationalisation of Higher Education Institutions***

- Developing a Matrix with pre-determined parameters for classifying HEI's as RU's TU's and Autonomous Degree Granting Colleges/constituent colleges.
- Categorising all higher education institutions—be it Central, State, Centrally Funded Technical Institutions, Deemed Universities, Unitary or Affiliated, Private Universities based on focus of teaching and research.
- Conversion of HEIs into Multidisciplinary Universities and identifying government and government-aided HEIs in each district/near every district and supporting it.
- Establish new or identify existing HEIs in each district/near every district and support it to become MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities).
- Ensuring balance of RU's, TUs within the state.
- Ensuring equity in access for unserved, underserved areas and special zones.
- Identifying autonomous colleges with potential to become universities.
- Identifying autonomous colleges which can be accorded degree granting status.
- Graded empowerment of affiliated and autonomous colleges to be initiated.
- Colleges to be encouraged, mentored, supported & incentivised to gradually become autonomous.

### ***Integrated Education and Flexible Holistic Multidisciplinary UG/PG & Research Programmes***

- The UGC or the HECI will develop the National Higher Education Quality Framework (NHEQF) and the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC)

- Following this, a decision to implement integrated education as well the flexible multidisciplinary programme across the country from a given academic year will have to be notified.
- Adding new departments in existing universities to convert single stream to multidisciplinary HEIs.
- Establishing/Strengthening Departments: Languages, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Dance, Theatre, Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Sciences, Sociology, Economics, Sports, Translation and Interpretation, etc. in all HEIs.
- All HEIs, public and private, to prepare an Institutional Development Plan which will cover:
  - o Assess faculty and other vacancies;
  - o Work out timebound recruitment plan;
  - o New departments to be opened;
  - o Academic arrangements/MOUs for forming HEI clusters to make multidisciplinary offerings possible;
  - o Assess faculty and infrastructural requirements for the new departments;
  - o Develop capacity building of existing faculty for multidisciplinary education;
  - o Ensure good basic facilities, academic and digital infrastructure;
  - o Create appropriate infrastructure and learning devices/resources for the differently-abled;
  - o Devise strategies for enhancing education of SEDGs; and
  - o Create necessary facilities to make colleges and institutions safe zones.

- State Governments will work out mapping HEI clusters and bring the private institutions to network within the cluster,
- Devise Institutional mentoring norms and identification of mentor -mentee institutions by the States,
- State Higher Education Councils (SHECs) to develop a broad curriculum framework for the four-year undergraduate programme.
- Introducing projects at UG level: community engagement, environmental, value based-internships, and industry apprenticeships
- Norms for mandatory internships or apprenticeships in the UG programmes and HEIs to weave in these changes.

### *Optimal Learning Environments*

HEIs will transform curriculum transaction and use innovative pedagogies to ensure:

- A stimulating and engaging learning experience for all students.
- Move towards continuous formative assessment to further the learning goals of each programme.
- Move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses competencies.
- Move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation.
- Identify accredited HEIs offering ODL courses and encourage them to develop online courses.
- Integration of online courses into curricula of HEIs.
- Setting up Student support Centers: professional academic and career counselling to be available to all students.

- Provide counselling for handling stress and emotional adjustments in all HEIs.
- Provide opportunities for participation in sports, culture/arts/eco-activity clubs, community projects, etc.
- Support to students from rural backgrounds, including increasing hostel facilities.
- HEIs will ensure quality medical facilities for students in their institutions.
- Identify students needing financial support and ensure proper disbursements of scholarships.
- Create Gender Inclusion fund and other Social Inclusion funds.

### ***Equity and Inclusive Education***

- Set GER targets for SEDGs.
- Create more capacity within existing HEIs to meet increased targets of SEDGs.
- Special Economic Zone (SEZs) to be identified and established in aspirational districts or with larger concentration of SEDGs.
- Establish high quality HEIs in SEZs.
- Offer higher education in regional languages as per HEI's capabilities.
- Encourage bi-lingual teaching in colleges and universities.
- Ensure gender balance and create Gender Inclusion Fund.
- All SEDG scholarships to be brought on a single platform.
- Make admission processes more inclusive.



- Ensure sensitisation of faculty, counsellor, and students on gender-identity issue and its inclusion in curricula and other aspects of the HEI.
- Ensure all buildings and facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly.
- Develop bridge courses for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Strictly enforce no-discrimination and anti- harassment rules.

### *Energised, Motivated and Capable Faculty*

- Faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad NHEQE.
- Filling up all the vacant /sanctioned posts across all the HEIs.
- Attract PhD students to teaching through teaching assistantships.
- Promote research on pedagogy & teaching-learning models in HE.
- Provide research grants to faculty for proposing/ implementing innovations– online training, e-content, courses, skills, assessment tools etc.
- Focus on student-centered pedagogy.
- Supervised project-based learning, student satisfaction surveys, cooperative learning, gamification, community project, develop analytical skills and technology mediated pedagogy.
- Establishing a National Academy for Teaching, Learning and Leadership.
- Strengthening existing Human Resource Development Centre (HRDCs), AICTE capacity building measures,

Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission for Teacher Training (PMMMNTT) centres and other institutions, such as National Institute of Technical Teachers' Training and Research (NITTTRs), IUCTEs.

- Continuous Professional Development
  - o Establish Centres of Excellence CoEs/Teaching Learning Centers,
  - o Identify Tutor's for faculty mentoring,
  - o Identify Pedagogic Experts,
  - o Conduct Faculty Induction Programmes (FIPs),
  - o Conduct Leadership Development programmes, and
  - o Conduct Online Refresher Courses,
- Faculty to be given active role for preparing the IDPs.

### ***Teacher Education***

- States to collect data of all standalone TEIs so that steps will be taken to convert them to multidisciplinary institutions or join a HEI cluster.
- Teacher education programmes will include cutting edge pedagogy training and grounding in Sociology, History, Science, Psychology, ECCE, foundational literacy & numeracy, knowledge, culture, values of India.
- Establish Education Department in HEIs.
- Multiple forms of teacher education: HEIs offering the 4-year integrated BEd may also run a 2-year BEd, for students who have already received a Bachelor's degree in a specialized subject. A 1-year BEd may also be offered for candidates who have received a 4-year undergraduate degree in a specialised subject.

- Offer scholarships to meritorious students for all types of BEd programmes.
- Identify ODL institutions to conduct Teacher Education programmes

### ***Catalysing Quality Academic Research – New National Research Foundation***

- Work towards improving global rankings of HEIs.
- Seed research in State Universities.
- Greater industry-academia interaction.
- Encourage research in Languages, Social Sciences, Indian Knowledge systems, Sports, Sports Medicine, etc.
- Multidisciplinary Research in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Health, Agriculture and Climate Change.
- Set up a greater number of startups, incubation centres technology development centres, centres in frontier areas of research, greater industry-academic linkages, and interdisciplinary research in HEIs.
- Increased number of internships.
- Increased use of technology in training.
- Initiatives to promote innovations through ongoing and new activities.

### ***Technology Integration, Open and Distance Learning and Online education***

- ODL will be treated on par with face-to-face education.
- Teacher Education and vocational education can be conducted through ODL.
- ODL accreditation will be introduced.

- ODL and Distance education institution will be assessed for quality assurance and necessary steps to attain better quality will be undertaken.
- Develop multiple models for blended learning.
- Creation of Digital infrastructure in HEIs.
- Developing institutional, student and faculty preparedness.
- Online teaching platform and tools.
- Content creation, digital repository, and dissemination.
- Offering courses in disruptive technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) etc. in HEIs and engage industry experts as faculty in these courses.
- Training and incentives for teachers.
- Online assessment and examinations.
- Technology integration in MIS and data management.
- Appropriate training for administrative staff.

### ***Reimagining Vocational Education***

- Vocational courses to be introduced in all undergraduate programmes, including the 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programmes.
- State/UT Governments and /or HEIs to set up Skill Labs.
- HEIs to conduct short-term courses in various skills including soft skills.
- 'Lok Vidya', developed in India, to be integrated into Vocational Education (VE).
- Vocational courses to be offered through ODL mode.

- Efforts to bring dropouts to reintegrate them by aligning their practical experience with the relevant level of the NHEQF.

### ***Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts and Culture***

- Establish Academies for different languages.
- Establish departments in HEIs for Indology, arts, translation & interpretation, museum administration, Indian languages etc.
- High-quality fonts, software, books, learning materials, etc. will be developed for all Schedule 8 and other Indian languages.
- Document all languages, arts, and culture in India via a web-based platform.

### ***Internationalisation of Higher Education***

- Steps must be taken by States/Union Territory (UT) and HEIs to develop India as a Global study destination.
- Work out programmes and schemes for promoting faculty and student mobility.
- Facilitate foreign students by setting up Foreign Student Officers (FSOs).
- International campuses of Indian universities to be opened abroad – Government of India (GOI) and State Governments to work out a list of potential institutions.
- Top 100 Universities to open campuses in India – action after Bill is enacted.
- Eminent faculty from foreign universities to be invited to Indian universities and colleges, faculty exchanges and research collaborations.
- GOI & State Governments to identify HEIs to add more foreign students.

- New courses to attract international students to India – Indian Culture, Yoga, Arts, Languages along with regular Degree and Professional programmes.

## Timelines and Phasing

The NEP-2020 specifies timelines in a few recommendations: viz GER target of 50 per cent by 2035, totally phasing out affiliation by 2035, and all standalone TEIs and other institutions to become multidisciplinary by 2030. An attempt to broadly divide the identified actions within four phases is given below. Further, what is articulated here is not rigid or inflexible but is only a projection of the desired direction. A certain degree of flexibility will be expected, given the local conditions and regional needs to suit contexts and emerging scenarios, failing which implementation will be rendered either difficult or unfeasible.

- *Immediate (up to March 2022)*: The actionable points listed under New Legislations, amend existing regulations, develop new frameworks, new institutional structures/bodies which have to mainly be done at Central/National levels must be completed preferably by December, 2021 or early 2022. Only if the legislations and regulations are in place, can action be initiated in full earnest on the other actionable points.
- *Short-term (academic year 2022-23 to 2024-25)*: Most of the actionable points listed under Sl. Nos. 2 to 12, which are largely process-driven, can be initiated as soon necessary legislative enactments have been made or guidelines issued. Notwithstanding this, preparing Institutional Development Plans which outlines the comprehensive strategic vision of each HEI – filling faculty positions; opening new departments; introducing curricular, pedagogic, assessment reforms including technology-enabled learning; promoting ODL; and integrating vocational education – can be initiated by the States/UTs and also the colleges, universities and other academic institutions, so that the

goals of holistic, integrated multidisciplinary education can gradually be realised. However, we must be cognisant of the fact that a substantial number of institutions are there in the states and each of these states are at different levels of educational indices with respect to access, equity, and quality. Similarly, the HEIs are of varied sizes – some with optimal enrolment and some sub-optimal – and are at different stages of their development indicators: academics, infrastructure, learning resources, faculty availability and training, and digital empowerment. This would unfortunately, mean that a few institutions may not translate all the envisaged actionable points within the indicative timelines. However, depending on the effective date of the 3/4-year flexible UG programmes to be rolled out throughout the country, it is imperative that all states and their institutions mandatorily adhere a final cut-off deadline. Failure to do so would result in a chaotic higher education academic structure, which would greatly harm the students. Hence, every state must work in tandem and in a coordinated manner with their HEIs to reach the targeted date.

- *Medium-term (between academic year 2025-26 till 2030):* Many of the operational and infrastructure intensive as also research focused actions may take shape in the emergent HE scenario during this phase. These include complete implementation of reforms in teacher education, strong research base in state institutions, making new Foreign Universities functional, granting Autonomous College (AC) status to colleges, and operationalisation of SEZs across the country.
- *Long-term (between academic year 2030 and 2035):* Major structural changes, such as closure of standalone institutions, setting up and operationalising Multidisciplinary Education and Research University (MERUs), monitoring SEDG GER targets, ODL and VE enrolment so as to ensure attainment of 50 per cent GER.

## Multiple Models

Given the variations in the state's educational development and also among the HEI's themselves, it may not be desirable to be prescriptive with a single uniform Programme of Action (PoA) for the entire country. To avoid such a situation, it is desirable and appropriate for each State/UT to formulate a PoA, which is synchronous to its regional, social and cultural needs. The PoA will outline the institutional arrangements, lay down administrative processes with clear performance indicators to achieve quantifiable targets and desired qualitative outcomes for these suggested phases. Equally critical in the context of democratic decentralisation and greater community participation that this process of specifying operational strategies will percolate downwards to the grassroot levels with each district, block formulating a PoA of its own. Similarly, each educational institution will prepare a micro- level operational PoA.

## Financial Resources

Financial resources have always been a challenge that limits efficiency in outputs. Hence, it is necessary that the government, private sector and all other extra-governmental agencies and relevant stakeholders, provide the resource support for implementing the NEP.

## Review and Monitoring

Learning from the past experiences, it will be the endeavour of each operating unit to devise appropriate monitoring methods, mechanisms, and systems, so that periodic assessment and evaluation of the progress made in achieving the outcomes and outputs of each actionable point can be undertaken.

The remodelled and restructured CABE will have a larger mandate to perform the role of constant monitoring of the implementation. Several Sub-Committees of CABE can be tasked to take stock of progress under different thematic areas. All States/UTs and HEIs must create Project Monitoring Units (PMUs). Regular review meetings



at six-month intervals involving all stakeholders must be driven by the MoE. A dashboard for online monitoring with a user-friendly interface for the responsibility agencies with links to each HEI and state government, regulatory bodies must be developed. This would enable transparency and good governance and minimise risks of lack of institutional memory and also enable sustained review towards effective implementation. Evaluation Studies must provide feedback into the implementation cycle to make mid-course corrections for smoothening any rough stumbling blocks.

## CONCLUSION

Education is the main driver and the catalyst for promoting the global goals of eliminating hunger & poverty, improving health, promoting gender equality; inclusive and sustainable economic growth; productive employment and decent work; peaceful and inclusive societies, building effective and inclusive institutions; and creating sustainable societies. The successful implementation of NEP–2020 will transform the educational system to one of high quality, affordable, flexible, and relevant to the individuals, economy and to the society as a whole, so as to develop India as a knowledge society.

## References

1. DNEP 2019: The Draft National Education Policy 2019, Committee to Draft National Education Policy. [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/Draft\\_NEP\\_2019\\_EN\\_Revised.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Draft_NEP_2019_EN_Revised.pdf)
2. NEP. (2020). National Education Policy 2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, July 2020. [https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)