REPORT

Contents

1. **About the Webinar**

2. **Objectives**

3. **Schedule**

4. **Resource Persons**

5. **Brief of the Sessions**

6. **Organizing Committee**

About the Webinar

The National Education Policy, NEP 2020, is the first education policy of the 21st century and, the third starting from 1968 policy through 1986/1992 of India, aims to address many growing developmental imperatives of our country. This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulations and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspirational goals of the 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems, amongst other things.

The NEP 2020 lays emphasis on the development of the creative potentials of individuals. It is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities of both the individuals of the 'foundational capacities 'of literacy and numeracy and 'higher-order' cognitive capacities, critical thinking and problem solving, – but also their social, ethical, emotional capacities and dispositions.

The global education development agenda reflected in the Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015 seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster effective learning, so that all the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved.

As a part of national efforts directed towards realization of these targets and goals through NEP 2020, the School of Education organized a webinar during 10th – 11th September 2020 to discuss implications of NEP 2020 on various aspects related to school education, teacher education, open distance learning and online education in general and distance teacher education in particular. The deliberations during the two-day Webinar were expected to help the School of Education and IGNOU to arrive at a viable roadmap for implementation of the policy directions for distance teacher education in the country.

Objectives

The objectives of the webinar were as follows:

1. To discuss the implications of NEP 2020 for school education.

2. To critically analyze the implications of NEP 2020 for ODL teacher education.

3. To deliberate upon the challenges of ODL and online education in the context of NEP 2020.

4. To prepare a road map in the light of NEP 2020.

Webinar theme

Implications of National Education Policy 2020

Sub themes

1. School Education

2. Teacher Education

3. Open Distance Learning and Online Education

Resource Persons

1. Shri. K. N. Raghunandan, Educationist

2. Prof. H.K. Senapati, Director, NCERT

3. Prof. N.V. Varghese, Vice Chancellor, NIEPA

4. Prof. Sharad Sinha, NCERT

5. Prof. Pranati Panda, NIEPA

6. Prof. Akhtar Siddiqui, Former Chairperson, NCTE

7. Prof. J. K. Joshi, Formerly with Uttarkhand Open University

8. Prof. Veera Gupta, NIEPA

9.   Prof. Amarendra P. Behera, Joint Director, CIET, NCERT

10. Prof. Madhu Parhar, Director, CEMCA

Webinar Schedule

10th September 2020

Inaugural session (11.00 AM -12.45PM)

11.00 - 11.05 AM	Welcome & Introduction	**Prof. D. Venkateshwarlu** Director, SOE, IGNOU
11.05 -11.10 AM	Address by the PVC, IGNOU	**Prof. R. P. Das** Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
11.10 - 11.15 AM	Address by the PVC, IGNOU	**Prof. Satyakam** Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
11.15 -11.20 AM	Address by the PVC, IGNOU	**Prof. K. B. Das** Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
11.20 -11.40 AM	Address by the Chief Guest	**Shri. K. N. Raghunandan** Educationist
11.40 -12.00 Noon	Address by Guest of Honour	**Prof. H.K. Senapati** Director, NCERT
12.00 Noon - 12.20 PM	Address by Guest of Honour	**Prof. N.V. Varghese** Vice Chancellor, NIEPA
12.20 -12.40 PM	Presidential Address	**Prof. Nageshwar Rao** Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
12.40 -12.45 PM	Vote of thanks	**Prof. Vibha Joshi** SOE, IGNOU

Session Coordinator: **Prof. Sutapa Bose, SOE, IGNOU**

Rapporteurs: Prof. Bharti Dogra, Ms. Poonam Bhushan & Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla (SOE, IGNOU)

Panel Discussion 1: School Education (1.00 PM - 2.15 PM)

Chairperson: Prof. R. P. Das, PVC, IGNOU

Moderator: Prof. C. B. Sharma, SOE, IGNOU

Rapporteurs: Prof. Vandana Singh & Dr. Niradhar Dey (SOE, IGNOU)

1.00 - 1.30 PM	**Prof. Sharad Sinha** NCERT
1.30 - 2.00 PM	**Prof. Pranati Panda** NIEPA
2.00 - 2.15 PM	Questions & Answers

11th September 2020

Panel Discussion 2: Teacher Education (11.00 AM - 12.15 PM)

Chairperson: Prof. K. B. Das, PVC, IGNOU

Moderator: Prof N. K. Dash, SOE, IGNOU

Rapporteurs: Prof. Y. Nirmala & Dr. Gaurav Singh (SOE, IGNOU)

11.00 - 11.20 AM	**Prof. Akhtar Siddiqui** Former Chairperson, NCTE
11.20 - 11.40 AM	**Prof. J.K. Joshi** Formerly with Uttarakhand Open University
11.40 - 12.00 Noon	**Prof. Veera Gupta** NIEPA
12.00 Noon - 12.15 PM	Questions & Answers

Panel Discussion 3: Open Distance Learning and Online Education (12.30 PM -1.55 PM)

Chairperson: Prof. Satyakam, PVC, IGNOU

Moderator: Prof. Santosh Panda, STRIDE, IGNOU

Rapporteurs: **Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy &Mr. Ajith Kumar C (SOE, IGNOU)**

12.30 – 12.40 PM	Welcome by **Prof. R. Satyanarayana** Director, STRIDE (IGNOU)
12.40 – 1.10 PM	**Prof. Madhu Parhar** Director, CEMCA
1.10 – 1.40 PM	**Prof. Amarendra P. Behera** Joint Director CIET, NCERT
1.40 – 1.55 PM	Questions & Answers

Valedictory Session (2.00 PM - 2.45 PM)

2.00 - 2.10 PM	Concluding Remarks	**Prof. D. Venkateshwarlu** Director, SOE, IGNOU
2.10 - 2.25 PM	Valedictory Address	Vice Chancellor / Pro-Vice Chancellor (IGNOU)
2.30 PM	Vote of Thanks	**Prof. Amitav Mishra** SOE, IGNOU

Brief of the Sessions

10th September 2020

Inaugural session (11.00 AM -12.45PM)

Prof. D. Venkateshwarlu, Director, School of Education welcomed the Chief Guests and the Guests of Honour, Prof. N. V. Varghese, VC, NIEPA and Prof. H.K. Senapati, Director, NCERT and thanked them for accepting the invitation for the webinar. He also welcomed Pro-Vice Chancellors, Prof. R. P. Das, Prof. Satyakam and Prof. K. B. Das. He expressed his gratitude to Prof. Nageshwar Rao, VC, IGNOU for the support and guidance in organizing the webinar. He presented a brief introduction of the two-day webinar and set the tone for the inaugural session.

Prof. R. P. Das, PVC, IGNOU addressed the participants by highlighting the role played by IGNOU in the field of teacher education and online education through ODL mode. Briefly touching upon the various dimensions of NEP, 2020, he stated that this policy would prepare global citizens without diluting the Indian ethos and the value system.

Prof. K.B. Das, PVC, IGNOU stated that NEP, 2020 is a blueprint that will transform the educational system of the country to achieve the goals of a knowledge society. He recalled the three tier-systems mentioned in the policy that would facilitate the vertical mobility of the students. He highlighted the flipped classroom model and other digital initiatives of IGNOU.

Prof. Satyakam, PVC, IGNOU welcomed the fact that NEP lays stress on imparting education in student's own language. He said that innovation and research should be done in our own languages for creation of fundamental knowledge.

Shri. K.K. Raghunandan, the Chief Guest, called NEP, 2020, as a peoples' policy. He stated that NEP 2020 formulated after taking into account opinions and suggestions of nearly 2 lakh people at various levels including panchayats and thus making it one of the most comprehensive policies. He also observed that the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system will have to play a major role in achieving 50% GER by 2035 as envisaged in the NEP 2020. He suggested that the responsibility of implementation of this policy may be entrusted upon the different stakeholders of the society. In his address he made a few observations such as:

1. At present, it is difficult to find research supervisors for conducting research in Indian culture and Indian dance forms.
2. Achievements in any occupation should not to be attributed to educational degrees.
3. Why does education make us more corrupt?
4. Why are educated people more likely to remain unemployed?

He stressed the need for quality education, knowledge-based society, and giving equal importance to all languages. He also talked about pre-school education, adult education, and holistic development of the child.

Prof. N. V. Varghese, Guest of Honour, highlighted the gaps existing among States in terms of GER. He stressed the need to revisit school education as it is the basis of higher

education. He also pointed out the social and economic inequalities that impact GER in our country. He classified major challenges being faced by higher education system into the following:

1. Issues related to expansion of education

2. Question of inequality

3. Consolidation of the institutions

The key takeaways of the issues related to expansion of higher education are the following:

- Expansion of higher education is not possible unless we are able to expand school education.
- Entry levels to university education should change.
- Education should be considered as a lifelong process.
- Role of institutional structure and ODL system

The issue of inequality was discussed along the following dimensions:

- Inequality among various social groups
- Inequality in the status of family
- Inequality in terms of learning outcomes of higher education learners as well as their entry to and exit from higher education institutions

The connected issues related to institutional consolidation are as follows:

- How can institutional consolidation be seen in different contexts of the State?
- Matter of 'distance discount' which impacts the cost of education for those living far off from higher educational institutions.

He made observations regarding the Quality of education and the accreditation frameworks in higher education in India, which he said, needs to change accordingly. He welcomed the allocation of 6% GDP to education, and said that earlier education policies had also allocated similar GDP to education but we have not been able to implement this

recommendation of earlier policies. He advocated redefinition of the role of the state in higher education.

Prof. Senapati highlighted issues of pre-school education, vocational education, local flavor in textbooks, and importance of local history, multilingual education, and a shift from product oriented to process-oriented assessment. He also mentioned about the four curriculum frameworks that would be developed by the NCERT. He stressed on the need to develop the competencies of children and not their content mastery;

The Presidential address was delivered by the Honorable VC of IGNOU, Prof. Nageshwar Rao. He touched upon the aspects of equity, governance, ODL and online regulations. The major thrust of his speech was on the digital initiatives of IGNOU.

Prof. Vibha Joshi, senior faculty of SOE presented a vote of thanks. The session was coordinated by Prof Sutapa Bose and the Rapporteurs of the session were Prof. Bharti Dogra, Ms Poonam Bhushan and Dr. Elizabeth Kuruvilla, Faculty Members, School of Education, IGNOU.

10th September 2020
Panel Discussion 1: School Education (1.00 PM - 2.15 PM)

The session was chaired by the Honourable Pro-Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, Prof. Rajendra Prasad Das and was moderated by Prof. Chandra Bhushan Sharma, Senior Faculty Member, School of Education, IGNOU. Two distinguished panelists, Prof. Sharad Sinha, Department of Teacher Education, NCERT, New Delhi and Prof. Pranati Panda, Head, Department of School and Non-Formal Education, NIEPA, New Delhi delivered their lectures on various aspects of School Education and their implications. The Rapporteurs for the session were Prof. Vandana Singh and Dr. Niradhar Dey, Faculty Members, School of Education, IGNOU.

The first panelist, Prof. Sharad Sinha, Department of Teacher Education, NCERT, New Delhi highlighted the following main recommendations of NEP, 2020 related to the School Education.

1. The new pedagogical and curricular structure of School Education, i.e. 5+3+3+4 system of education can serve as an equitable, vibrant, and quality pedagogical structure aimed at

promoting holistic development and well-being of the children. But the challenge is to synchronize the proposed pedagogical and curricular structure with the present structure of our school system.

2. The proposed curricular structure suggests an integrated approach to the schooling practices without fragmenting it into curricular and co-curricular activities. In this regard, the policy recommends the constitution of a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development).

3. For contextualizing fundamental literacy and numeracy, there is the need to develop language and basic arithmetic skills among the children which will help achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in the primary schools by 2025. Therefore, the policy focuses on Learning Outcomes-based school education for achieving the required level of learning and skills in different subjects at different levels of education.

4. Development of National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) as per the new pedagogical and curricular structure by 2020-2021 and National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) by NCERT in line with the NEP 2020 recommendations by the policy was highlighted by her.

5. She emphasized the recommendations of the policy regarding the development of school curriculum with focus on local context, reducing curriculum load, practice of 10 days bag-free fun sessions, providing wider scope for choice of the subjects at the secondary stage, making combination of subjects from across the disciplines as per the aptitude and interest of the students, providing space in the curriculum for conceptual understanding, experiential learning, critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, innovation, eliminating hard separation in arts and sciences, achieving 21st century skills, etc.

6. Implications of the practice of three languages in the schools and making mother tongue as the medium of instruction till the completion of Class-V may have widespread impact on school education in India. Using mother tongue as the medium of instruction is pedagogically appropriate as understanding of children in different curriculum areas develops in one's mother tongue, but this may create certain difficulties for the children during their transition from one

stage to other. She emphasized a careful implementation plan in this regard. She highlighted the recommendation of policy on multi-lingual teaching and development of multi-lingual learning materials. She said that this may be an appropriate strategy for addressing language issues and developing conceptual understanding among the young children. Further, this may also have an implication for the recruitment rules of teachers. These points need to be kept in mind while the policy is being implemented.

7. Bi-lingual development of National Textbooks with Local Content and Flavor has also wider implications on students as they belong to diverse groups so far as language and other practices are concerned.

8. Improving school performance for authentic and quality learning, ensuring access and equity, achieving learning outcomes, acquisition of values and life skills, addressing the needs of CWSN in the inclusive schools, governance of schools with regard to allocation of funds by the Central and State Governments, etc. are the major foci of the policy for realizing quality schooling of children.

9. Focus on formative assessment (assessment for learning) as compared to summative assessment (assessment of learning) for transparent and authentic assessment practices is really a welcome step as it will reduce rote learning, cramming and instead will develop conceptual understanding among the learners.

10. Conducting Teacher Eligibility Test by the National Testing Agency for all stages of School Education to recruit quality teachers for school education and converting stand alone teacher education institutions into multidisciplinary institutions for implementing 4-Year Integrated Teacher Education Programme by 2030 have been recommended in the NEP 2020.

11. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of the school teachers for 50 hours through different modes every year is an important step towards acquainting the teachers with latest content and pedagogical developments.

The Second panelist of the session was Prof. Pranati Panda, Head, Department of School and Non-Formal Education, NIEPA, New Delhi. She presented the recommendations of the

NEP 2020 on school education from an analytical perspective. The following were the main highlights of her presentation:

1. Currently, we are managing the huge system of school education which is hierarchical in nature. She analyzed the recommendations of the policy in two parts: transformation of school and transformation within school. For making the changes in school education, the integrated approach to improve the school education, which takes care of the development of both parts, is required.

2. She highlighted the challenge of bringing back about 3.22 crore dropout school children in the age-group of 6-17 years to the school system. The challenge is just not educating them but also to develop skills and competencies among them through vocational education so that they can be engaged meaningfully in the world of work and sustain themselves.

3. For improving quality of school system and setting the standards, it is needed that school accreditation must be seen as a necessary step for developing 21st century skills among the students and to achieving Sustainable Development Goals as per the Agenda 2030.

4. She highlighted the recommendations of the policy to transform curriculum & pedagogy by 2022 to encourage holistic development with minimal rote learning. It will be a challenge to synchronize the proposed curriculum changes to align with the present structure of school system.

5. The Policy aims to render school governance more local, effective, and efficient while facilitating the sharing of resources through school complexes. This model of sharing resources through school complexes will ensure better management of the school resources. But there is an issue of operationalizing this aspect as we have a multiple school system ranging from public to private schools. These schools also differ in their operations from region to region. Therefore, a serious thought needs to be given to come out with a plan of action for this issue.

6. The policy puts importance on the accountability of the school system to improve its quality, thereby only empowering the school system but to achieve quality education; a huge investment is required to empower the schools. This should be focused, and a detailed plan of action needs to be prepared to achieve the target.

7. The transformation of schools is a big agenda in the NEP 2020, but it requires a huge intervention by the school system to ensure equitable performance of schools.

8. Substantial investment has been proposed by NEP 2020 for school infrastructure, quality educational practices, achieving learning outcomes-based education and achieving equity, equality and quality.

9. Creating a school complex for the purpose of mutual development through resource sharing, collaboration, cooperation, and realizing a sense of accountability for the quality progress of the schools is an important recommendation in NEP 2020. This needs to be implemented.

10. For achieving the concept of Sala Siddhi, the expert emphasized that maintaining quality and standard performance of 1.55 millions of schools, which are diverse in nature, is a big challenge, as it has been observed that a large number of schools come under the category of very low performance. In this regard, a comprehensive implementation plan is required for transforming the schools both in terms of structure and pedagogical practices.

11th September 2020

Panel Discussion 2: Teacher Education (11.00 AM - 12.15 PM)

'Panel Discussion - 2' on the sub-theme 'Teacher Education' was chaired by Hon'ble Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU Prof. K. B. Das and the session was moderated by Prof. N. K. Dash. The moderator of the session, Prof. N. K. Dash, initiated the panel discussion on 'Teacher Education'. While initiating the discussion, he said that deliberations will be held during this session on 'Teacher Education' in general and 'Distance Teacher Education' in particular. The Rapporteurs of the session were Prof. Nirmala Y and Dr. Gaurav Singh, Faculty Members, School of Education, IGNOU.

Before initiating the session, Prof. N.K. Dash welcomed the panelists. He initiated the session by briefly mentioning about the three major dimensions of the Policy viz. (i) Intentional, (ii) Structural and (iii) Operational. He also mentioned about the vision statement of National Education Policy, 2020. In the context of the vision statement, he mentioned about the need for

addressing the inequity in education system and providing high quality education to all in order to contribute to an equitable and vibrant knowledge society.

He also opined that there is a need to discuss about one year, two-year and four-year integrated teacher education programmes and how to come out with a viable roadmap for the implementation of these programmes.

Then he invited the panelists Prof. Akhtar Siddiqui, Prof. J. K. Joshi, and Prof. Veera Gupta for deliberating on Teacher Education in the context of National Education Policy, 2020.

The moderator requested Dr. Gaurav Singh to introduce the panelists. After brief introduction of the Panelists, the panelists deliberated on 'Teacher Education' in the light of National Education Policy, 2020.

Prof. Akhtar Siddiqui

Prof. Akhtar Siddiqui highlighted the change in the school structure in the new education policy. He mentioned about the qualifications for pursuing various types of teacher education programmes, namely one-year B.Ed., two-year B.Ed and four-year integrated B.Ed. programmes. And he also mentioned about teacher education courses that are being offered by open universities through distance learning mode. He mentioned about the recommendation of the policy regarding Post-B.Ed. Certificate Courses to be offered to teachers for their vertical mobility. The high quality blended four-year integrated teacher education courses may be offered by higher educational institutions. He mentioned about the recommendations given by the High Powered Committee regarding the teacher eligibility tests at all four stages of school education and for subject teachers. The test conducted by NTA will be considered and the interview will also be conducted to know the passion and motivation of teachers for teaching. He suggested that passion for teaching needs to be assessed at entry level of the individuals when they join teacher education courses instead of when they come for job interview.

There are national professional standards for teachers mentioned in the policy which is a new recommendation. He mentioned about the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes for teachers and teacher educators. These programmes may be conducted at national and local levels which may be in the form of workshops, training programmes, etc. DIETs will

be upgraded to organizations for teacher education responsible for organizing CPD. NCTE will setup National Professional Standards and will develop curriculum.   Attracting talents to teaching profession has been addressed by way of launching scholarships and other incentives. He mentioned about missing links in the policy such as teacher accountability, CPD linked with career progression, etc. He said that 92% teacher education institutions are in private sector, 6% in aided sector and only 2% are in government sector. All the DIETs may be upgraded into pre-service teacher education institutions so that they may offer four-year integrated teacher education courses.

He mentioned that no clear role of ODL universities such as IGNOU and other open universities for teacher education programmes is mentioned in the policy. So, he opined that policy needs to talk about the role of open universities for teacher education programmes. Education of teacher educators is not mentioned in the policy. The frame of implementation of the policy is long and by 2040 many things may be implemented.

Prof. J. K. Joshi

Prof. J. K. Joshi said that while discussing about the implications of National Education Policy, 2020 for teacher Education, we need to think about its immediate or short-term or long-term implications. He mentioned that the spirit and intent of the policy, especially with reference to teachers and teacher education, are laudable and commendable. He said that it has been accepted that teacher in India is the most respected member of the society and this has been stated in the National Education Policy. The high respect for teachers and high status of teaching profession must be restored to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession. This is what is 'intended'. He quoted a sentence of an article written by Mr. Sanjay Kumar, India Country Director of Mittal Institute of Harvard University which states "Even though the demand for teachers is rising in India, teaching is not even in the top ten career preferences among upwardly mobile career aspirants, this is unfortunate".

He also mentioned about a point in Justice J. S. Verma Committee's report on teacher education in 2012, i.e. most stand alone teacher education institutions over 10,000 in number, at that time, were selling degrees.

The policy document makes it clear and empowers the statutory body in teacher education to take strict action against substandard and dysfunctional teacher education institutions. The policy states that by 2030, only educationally sound, multidisciplinary and integrated teacher education programmes shall be encouraged.

He said that in his opinion, the immediate implications are:

1. The policy document states that the National Curriculum Framework for teacher Education, 2021 will be prepared by NCTE in consultation with NCERT and other stakeholders such as the State Governments, the apex bodies, the Universities, the Higher Education Institutions, etc.

2. The document recommends for one umbrella institution for performing statutory and regulatory functions, i.e. the Higher Education Commission of India which will have four independent verticals. They are:

    i. National Higher Education Regulatory Council

    ii. National Accreditation Council

    iii. Higher Education Grants Council, and

    iv. General Education Council

As recommended by the Policy, scholarships will be given to meritorious students. Policy document has also mentioned that all concerted efforts should be made for allocating 6% of GDP to education. He mentioned that the same percentage of allocation was also made to education in 1968, 1986, 1992 and again it is mentioned in the NEP 2020 Policy that 6% of GDP will be spent for education. At present it is 4.43%. To curb the commercialization of education, 'light but tight approach' will be utilized. He said that between 2030 and 2040, the entire policy will be in an operational mode.

Prof. Veera Gupta

Prof. Veera Gupta focused on the agenda of National Education Policy with respect to outcomes of education and teacher preparation. So, there is one recommendation on developing

National Professional standards for teachers. It is a new thing but she wondered how these standards would be developed. These are standards not only for teachers but also for teacher educators. That is another challenge. "If we know that this recommendation is based on which she opined, report or which study, then we as implementers will have an easy task or if we have taken it from the best practices of other countries like UK which already has this system then may be as implementers, we will know how we should be adopting it for our country".

The next question how are these standards decided? Still that kind of information is not available. If a teacher or teacher educator is being judged, what are the criteria for this judgment? This we need to take if we must make this policy implementable as dissemination of knowledge is very essential among all the stakeholders with respect to National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). This is also important that our promotion and movement is based on NPST; not based on seniority.

If this must be made operational then legislative policies at national level have to be changed. Besides this, the state level policies also must be changed for teacher recruitment, promotion, and assessment. For that, education code or recruitment rules of the state level bodies need to be changed. Besides the legislative and executive policies, there will be a change required in the monitoring and appraisal performance of the schools. At present, each state has a different proforma for appraisal of teachers; each management body has a different proforma for appraisal of teachers. Such appraisal proformas are neither useful for the promotion of the teachers nor for curriculum preparation of teacher education courses. These are a few implications of NEP, 2020 which we need to understand.

The second recommendation is with respect to synergy. She suggested for creation of one statutory body, especially for education of children with disabilities. In this context, she mentioned about inclusive education, RPWD act and about special education teachers. She also talked about the documents prepared by RCI. She touched upon home-based education by special educators along with the constraints involved in implementing it, such as geographical and transport. She emphasized the need for synergy between RCI and NCTE regarding teacher preparation.

11th September 2020

Panel Discussion 3: Open Distance Learning and Online Education (12.30 PM -1.55 PM)

The session, 'Panel Discussion - 3' on the sub-theme 'Open Distance Learning and Online Education' was chaired by Hon'ble Pro-Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, Prof. Satyakam, and the session was moderated by Prof. Santosh Panda, STRIDE, IGNOU. The Rapporteurs of the session were Dr. M. V. Lakshmi Reddy and Mr. Ajit Kumar C, Faculty Members of School of Education, IGNOU.

Beginning the proceedings, Prof. Panda made brief introductory remarks about the two-day seminar as well as open distance learning and online education in the context of implications NEP, 2020 its implementation. Later, he requested Prof. R. Satyanarayana, Director, STRIDE for his welcome remarks.

Prof. Satyanarayana briefly mentioned about the professional training programmes organized by STRIDE through face-to-face, online and ODL modes. Describing Open and Distance Education (ODE) as an umbrella term, he emphasized that it subsumes in it the ODL, online and blended learning approaches. With openness and flexibility being the crux of philosophy of ODL, it can play crucial role in creation of knowledge societies. Highlighting the local elitism of Japan and other counties that made them excel others, he advocated collation of ICT with Indian culture. He referred to pioneering attempt made by IGNOU to develop SLMs for ODL programmes and to provide student support services through different modes, media and technologies that contributed to blended learning at large. He emphasized the strengths in the processes followed in designing, developing, and delivering ODL programmes that led to emergence of IGNOU into a mega-university in the world. Specification of learning objectives and learning outcomes in SLMs, credit system, use of technology in delivering support services, adoption of grading system in assessment, etc followed in ODL have now found significant place in the current education policy, albeit as a few lines here and there and not as a comprehensive paragraph devoted to ODL. He stated that the focus in education system is now changing from 'how to think' to 'what to think' and called for effective merging of pedagogy and disciplines. Pointing to the uniform indigenous policy aimed at Indianization in its implementation, he raised issues of local and national importance in implementation of ODL and online programmes, as

well as involvement of partner institutions abroad. Referring to India's emergence as a global power in technology, he emphasized the need for experiments and innovations in ODL for realization of 'Atma-nirbhar India' in the present context.

However, he noted the undesirable shift in focus from popular public institutions in ODL to private institutions. Towards the end, he mentioned that, for ODL to be successful, three parameters -- coordination among apex bodies, integrity of people, and statutory policy on ODL– are very essential.

Prof. Madhu Parhar, Director, CEMCA opined that there is no clarity about ODL in NEP 2020. Emphasizing the need of having policies at different levels for sustainable development of the humanity and for realization of SDG-4; she drew special attention to international literature and NEP 2020. She highlighted the significance of current education policy in realizing the SDGs from India's point of view. In this regard, she drew attention to the states having low GER (Bihar and West Bengal) on the one hand and those such as Kerala and Tamil Nadu having high GER on the other and stressed upon the need to minimize the regional disparities thereof. Referring to the literature of international bodies/agencies such as World Bank, UN, UNESCO, OECD, UNICEF, etc, she touched upon varying timelines set by them in achieving their global agenda. In this context, she hoped that the free and open source technologies available to teachers and students are effectively utilized by different institutions in various countries. Highlighting the changing trends in articulation of educational goals, she made special mention about UNESCO document 'Futures of Education' of 2019 and the new pillar of 'learning to become' which is its focus. Regarding NEP 2020, she highlighted important points from its Part-II (Higher Education) and called for renewing and expansion of ODL through evidence-based efforts for promoting optimal learning environments. While highlighting the important points from Part-III (Other Key Areas of Focus) of NEP, she mentioned about the need for integration of technology and digital and online education in the light of emergence of digital technologies and the emerging importance of leveraging technology for teaching-learning at all levels from school to higher education, as recommended by the policy. She underlined the need for clear policy guidelines at different levels – National level, State level, Institutional level, Regulatory Authorities level, and so on. Focusing on much emphasized multidisciplinary nature of institutions in the policy, she raised the issues of institutional restructuring required to be

addressed to offer both ODL and online programmes that need to have parity in quality with in-class-based programmes. In this context, she highlighted the fast-changing nature of distance education driven by technology use and integration, and also the need to adhere to the global standards in promoting blended learning as well as online learning with inter- and multi-disciplinary programmes though innovations of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. She also emphasized the need for preparing institutional action plans encompassing vision, mission, and activities along with long-term, medium-term, and short-term plans for effective implementation of the policy.

Prof. Amarendra Prasad Behera strongly highlighted India's robust education system and its technological advancements in space using cutting edge technologies. He laid focus on the themes in chapters 23 and 24 of NEP 2020. He highlighted importance of IT cities and policy directives in launching quality e-campaigns for advancing technology-based programmes. In the multi-lingual and multi-cultural context of India, he stressed upon the need for broadening the reach of the benefits of ICT through mother tongue and other local/regional languages which mainly fall under five distinct language families in India. Stating that there are 30 crore students spread across 15 lakh schools and other educational institutions at all levels, he laid special emphasis on application of technology for reaching children in general and those with special needs (CWSN) in particular. In this context, he pointed out three major concerns and challenges of technology use/integration: quality digital content, multi-language issues while developing digital content, and digital content for CWSN. He also highlighted the utility of technology in the form of Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, automation, and data analytics. He mentioned about the significance of platform such as DIKSHA. Emphasizing the need for CPD, he drew attention to the recommendation of continuous CPD of teachers for 50 days every year. In this context, he mentioned about National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement' (NISHTHA) of NCERT as a mega training programme for capacity building of teachers through improving Quality of School Education through Integrated Teacher Training. He mentioned that 17.5 lakh teachers were trained prior to Covid-19, and there are still 24.5 lakh teachers to be covered. He also underlined the need to go for online offer of the same, since online programmes have become new normal. One challenge, he mentioned, was addressing the problems in providing experiential learning through technology. Resilience and coherence are mentioned as keys to designing and delivery of digital content while every teacher should also be an

independent learner. He laid special emphasis on integrated use of technology, and collaboration between and among the institutions such as IGNOU, NCERT, CIET, NIOS, etc. He called for convergence of different programmes, schemes, and projects at all levels along with their institutional infrastructure, faculty, and other resources for collective realization of the objectives of the institutions and their programmes/schemes/projects.

Prof. Satyakam, the chairperson of the session, in contrast to the views of earlier speaker's from IGNOU, made explicit reference to the hidden but prominent place that ODL finds in the policy. He stressed that there is no scope for any apprehensions about the role and place of ODL in implementing NEP 2020. By citing relevant excerpts from the policy document, he emphasized the role that ODL can play in promoting equitable and just societies by effectively reaching the historically marginalized, disadvantaged, unrepresented and underrepresented sections of the unprivileged society. He stressed that ODL is, in fact, in the heart of the policy and is in the centre-stage of implementation of the current education policy. It can play a crucial role in capacity building of teachers, among others. Therefore, ODL institutions have significant role in implementation of the current policy of education. Above all, with multidisciplinary nature of its programmes and its institutional structure, IGNOU befits itself into the type of multidisciplinary Institutions advocated by the National Education Policy 2020. This can be clearly appreciated by anyone who reads and digests the current policy document in its true spirit. Towards the end, he laid special emphasis on the need for offering the programmes in the mediums of mother tongue and other local/regional languages.

Prof. Santosh Panda, the moderator of the session, in his concluding remarks fully endorsed the views of the Chairperson of the session. Further, he mentioned about the transformation he finds in the current education policy in its course from pre- through post-COVID periods, as it has strengthened ODL component in it. He summed up the points discussed by two panelists and the Chairperson thus ushering in the need for resorting to the following in implementing the policy.

➢ Set up global standards and technology-specific standards for ODL, Online and Blended learning programmes

➢ Promote alternative modes of offering the programmes

➢ Encourage and ensure technology-dependent, convergence and blended learning approaches to delivery of programmes

- ➢ Develop digital content with emphasis on mother tongue, and other local/regional languages
- ➢ Enable integration of technologies, convergence of institutions and programmes, schemes and projects
- ➢ Convergence of SWAYAM and DIKSHA platforms
- ➢ Adopt state-of-the-art cutting-edge technologies for heavy data management and programme delivery.

Prof. Panda concluded the session with thanks to the Chairperson, the speakers, and the rapporteurs, among all others.

11th September 2020

Valedictory Session (2.00 PM - 2.45 PM)

The valedictory address was delivered by Honourable VC of IGNOU, Prof. Nageshwar Rao. He highlighted the aspects of equity, governance and ODL and online regulations. He thanked all the participants of the Webinar. Prof. Amitav Mishra, faculty of SOE presented a vote of thanks thus concluding the webinar.

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