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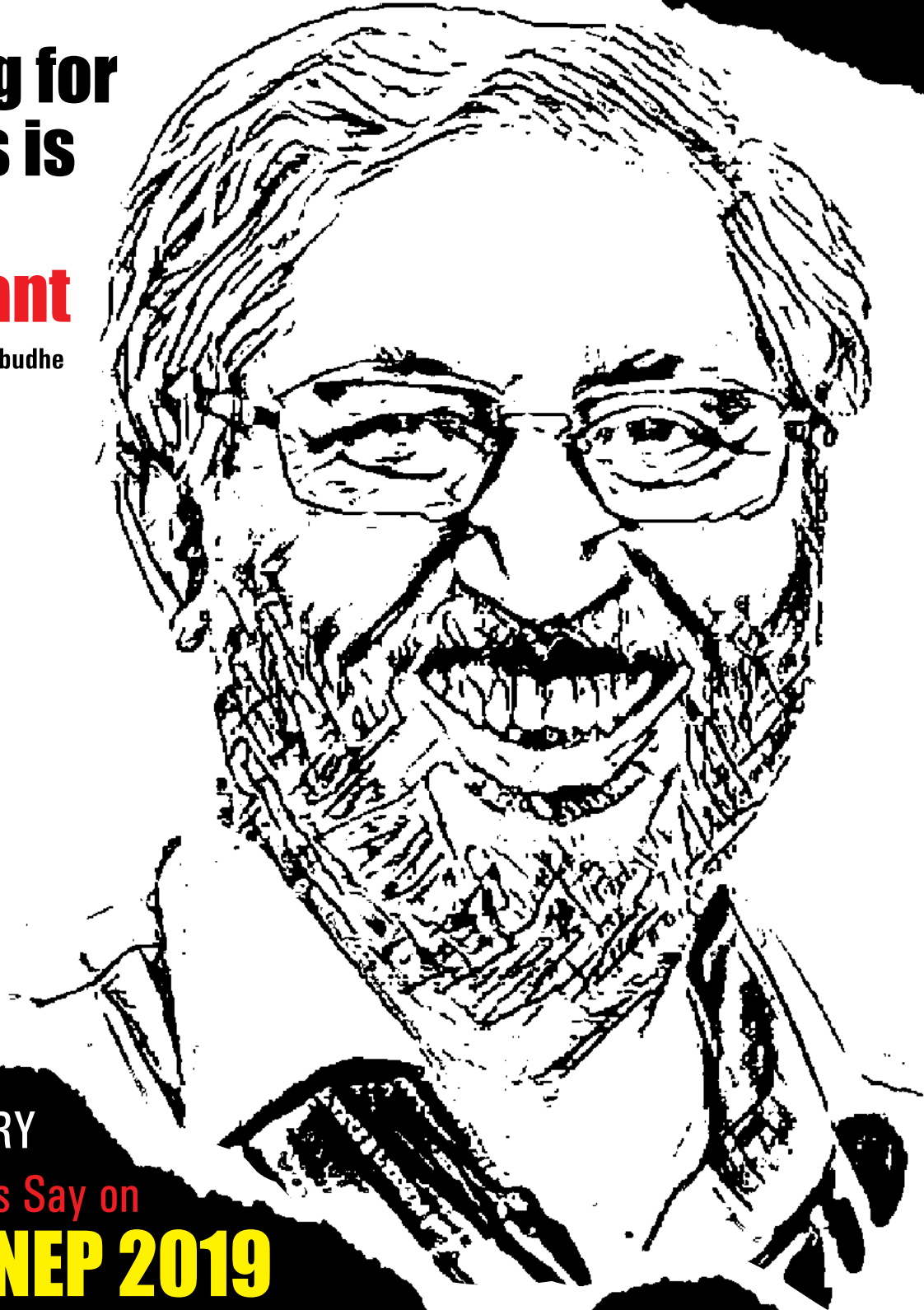
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Vol. VII Issue 7

July, 2019

## Training for Leaders is Equally Important

Prof Anil D Sahasrabudhe



COVER STORY

What Experts Say on

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## CALLING TEACHERS "UNTALENTED LEFTOVERS" DOESN'T TELL THE COMPLETE STORY

With the NEP 2019 zipping and zooming from one stage to another and its interpretations getting into every kind of conversation taking place anywhere, the focus is bound to be on teachers... and students, of course.

Everyone wants teachers to get better. There is a lot of talk about doing away with sub-standard teacher training courses and about the creation of multiple modules to transform the ageing and recessive knowledge base of teachers into something fresh, vibrant, and new-age. And yet, between all the energetic whoopees on education finally getting its progressive injection, I heard someone call the present lot of teachers as being "untalented leftovers".

Untalented leftovers. Really?

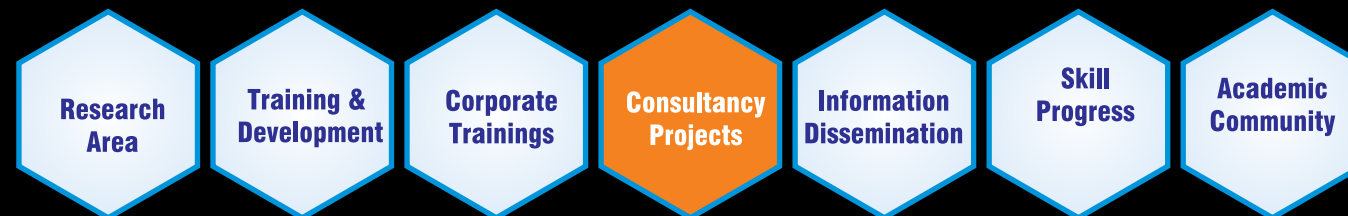
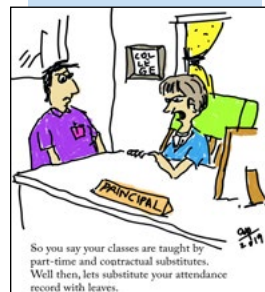
I respect teachers a lot... but as I thought about this rather disparaging expression, I realized at the same time that a large number of teachers teach not because of choice. It is this lot that is untalented, not creative, not innovative at all, uninvolved, and thoroughly disgruntled. This is a major problem with our education system besides there being big and unstable issues of infrastructure, policy imbalance, and funding. Some of these jokers who call themselves teachers are responsible for generations of low-grade professionals that the nation has to deal with today which means that the rot has been going on for quite a while. It is such teachers who have promoted rote learning as the easier alternative to creative thinking and innovative analysis. These individuals are the destroyers of India. Teachers are still the ones to be revered.

The All India Survey on Higher Education clarifies that the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education in India has increased from 20.8% in 2011-12 to 25.8% in 2017-18. This is way higher in US and Germany. Another report by FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and Ernst and Young specifies that 99% of MBAs and 80% of engineering graduates in India are grossly unemployable. One of the aims of NEP 2019 is to transform a teacher who merely teaches into a teacher who also learns. Another aim is to re-align the relationship of what is taught and how teachers teach with what the employers need.

Obviously then, what the country really needs is a reawakened sense of involvement by our teachers at all levels without getting their priorities mixed up with earning more money through private tuitions. The current trends show amply that we do not have a dearth of able teachers... it is just that most treat their classroom teaching as secondary because they wish to conserve all their energies for after-school or after-college private lessons. This is an epidemic that needs to end because we have millions of bright students who suffer because classroom teaching is literally limping and remains ineffective. It is the sheer numbers of those students who find the cost of private tuitions intimidating who enter the post-study world with unflattering images of their teachers and the noble universe of teaching.

I sincerely wish that our decision-makers include every feature that is geared up to filter out those who have an uninvolved approach to teaching and are also unwilling to change their attitude. Yes, a continuous emphasis on relevant modules to transform the information and knowledge quotients of teachers is the need of the hour and is as vital as sternly dealing with those who act in ways that makes the world call teachers "untalented leftovers".

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# BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AS A PROFESSION *rather than* Scientific *model for* Academic Quality Excellence

Jyoti Bansal & Shashank Agarwal  
O P Jindal Global University, Sonapat Haryana



Q

Quality in industries could be defined as adhering to the stated or implied performance requirements of the customer but with interpretations as varied as the individuals, it is rather difficult to define the Quality in educational institutions. The overall scenario of higher education in India does not match with global quality standards. Hence, there is enough justification for an increased assessment of the quality of the country's educational institutions. Traditionally, these institutions assumed that quality could be determined by their internal resources, viz., faculty with fancy



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**The B schools are losing their reputation due to several reasons and lack of foresightedness to improvise upon their existing systems and policies.**

degrees and experiences detailed at the end of the admissions's brochure, number of books and journals in the library, modern campus, and size of the endowment, etc., or by its definable and assessable outputs, viz., efficient use of resources, producing uniquely educated, highly satisfied and employable graduates. This view of determining quality in higher education, popularly termed as the "value-addition" approach, does not measure the competencies students develop through the curriculum and programs offered. These competencies are recall, understanding, and problem solving. "Recall" amounts to a competency of gaining knowledge by way of reading, viewing, listening, assimilating, and demonstrating it when required. "Understanding" is comprehension, which requires explanations and vocabulary development, and demonstrating it by giving ideas, predict, and evaluate cause and effect. The competency of "problem solving" can be developed by solving text-book type of problems and the expertise so developed can be used in handling real-life situations. The students should understand and accept these concepts, and the level of competency they are expected to attain should also be defined in consultation

with them.

For many years, MBA programs of Business Schools enjoyed rising respectability in academia and growing prestige in the business world. Their admissions were ever more selective, the pay packages of graduates ever more dazzling. Today, however, MBA programs face intense criticism for failing to impart useful skills, failing to prepare leaders, failing to instill norms of ethical behavior—and even failing to lead graduates to good corporate jobs. These criticisms come not just from students, employers, and the media but also from deans of some of most prestigious business schools.

The main reason behind this fall in reputation of top B Schools has been the adoption of inappropriate model of academic excellence. Many business schools have adopted self-defeating model of Quality Excellence. Instead of measuring the competency level of their graduates or by how well their faculty members understand important drivers of business, they assesses solely by the rigor of their scientific research.

It has always been realized that technology and business administration is the perfect combination to impart skillful education to students as well as to get them good jobs. However, many B-Schools have transformed their academic model into more science driven curriculum due to this phenomenon based on abstract financial economic analysis, regressions, correlations. Some of the research is excellent but so



**“When applied to business—where judgments are made with messy, incomplete data—statistical and methodological wizardry can blind rather than illuminate.”**



Jyoti Bansal

little grounded in actual business practices. This has resulted them to be more scientific rather than focusing on competence of their students. Hence the B School education is becoming less relevant in the practical scenario and is being considered as depleting and inappropriate. McGill University professor Henry Mintzberg, says that the main culprit is a less-than-relevant MBA curriculum.

Businesses, where an MBA is considered necessary, call upon many areas of science itself but businesses are not merely about science. Business Management is not a scientific discipline but a profession, and must deal what a professional education requires. Hence, if B-Schools are to regain their relevance, they must walk in line with this reality and understand that business management is a profession rather than a mere scientific discipline. According to a Harvard Business School study, business professions have four key elements namely, an accepted body of knowledge, field masters, commitment to public welfare, and enforceable code of ethics. However, these days, most of these four parameters are missing in any B-School vision and mission statements.

Business school faculties simply must discover the practice of business. Imagine a professor of surgery who has never seen a patient, or a piano teacher who doesn't play any instrument, and yet today's business schools are packed with intelligent, highly skilled faculty with little or no managerial experience. As a result, they can't identify the most important problems facing executives and don't know how to analyze the indirect and long term implications of complex business decisions. In this way, they shortchange their students and, ultimately society.

Things won't improve until professors see that they have as much responsibility for educating professionals to make practical decisions as they do for advancing the state of scientific knowledge.

Science can give you a preset formula but not hands on solution, at least to current business complex complications. If the purpose of graduate business education is to develop executive leaders, then the faculty must have expertise in more than just fact collection.

For instance, a leading management journal recently reviewed the results of a promising study of the behavior of several thousand leaders in global corporations. The initial research results showed that certain indicators of leadership misbehavior could be monitored to identify ethical problems before a crisis occurs. Unfortunately, that could not be proved in a strictly scientific sense.

In business research, however, the things routinely ignored by academics on the grounds that they cannot be measured—most human factors and all matters relating



Shashank Agarwal

to judgment, ethics, and morality—are exactly what make the difference between good business decisions and bad ones.

By allowing the scientific research model to drive out all others, business schools are institutionalizing their own irrelevance.

Hence to give students practical exposure, more industry fellows should be appointed to impart practical exposure rather than following only scientific models. What differentiates between scientific models and B-School learnings is that in science top faculties members are known for their publication in top journals and their focus is lesser on attending their own discipline. To be fair, some of these journals are excellent and carry value but they are only research journals far away from practicality. They indulge themselves into various researches and hence they find the scholars of repute. They actually leave the practical implication on others as theoretical knowledge and practical exposure are way to different when it comes to comparison. In any post-graduate programme like MBA students long for learning the ability to deal with practical situations which much depends on the value of the professor's ability to teach and make them skillful for day to day operations. This is what is needed in an MBA aspirant.

Today, business practitioners are discovering that B school professors know more about academic publishing than about the problems of the workplace.

However, this very basic fundamental requirement is missing in a scientific model of learning.

Another point evidencing that why scientific model application is not completely immersible with B School learnings is the question of judgment. what appears like a simple managerial decision has several implications on other related parameters? Such as a decision to cut down the cost which is a financial decision, has direct impact on marketing, strategy, sales and manufacturing divisions etc.

Another point worth mentioning here is that when scientific models such as regression and statistics are applied to a problem solution, the results are often overweighed. This means there are several other non-scientific factors to be considered before reaching a conclusion, which may get missed due

to a hardcore scientific approach. Scientific models are like set machines where you put in raw data and the outcome will be based on preset rules. There is no scope of making necessary adjustments to it. Hence the results usually don't apply to real world problems. This finally leads to a lack of confidence in to-be-managers to solve real time business issues and hence this becomes a major reason of loss in faith on B-School learnings.

Where does this legacy comes from? These so-called B-Sschool scholars, becoming professors of future, teach their MBA students what they have researched and what they have learnt through these researches. Generation becomes used to what has been written in journals rather than what actually needs to be applied in business issues. No doubt these professors are brilliant in fact collections but they fail to perform well in real classroom multidisciplinary issues. They feel uncomfortable in devising strategy and examining cases requiring judgement based on true facts. The decision-making in today's cut-throat competitive market is a key essential skill which can't be taught by research-oriented professors and hence the quality of B-School is deteriorating as students who are the future managers fail to imply what they have never learnt but what is actually required of them.

Integration of Scientific knowledge often referred to as discipline-based knowledge is left to the wisdom of students. But since the course curriculum of MBA studies is designed by research scholars, the entire toil goes in vain. Hence, first of all the course curriculum of MBA courses need to be revamped and be made in line with practicality rather than set principles which prove vague in current business situations. At least the curriculum should be elastic enough to adapt to changing needs of the business environment. The current-age employers have also realized that the failure to succumb to business requirements has been a major area of concern for many B-School alumnus.

Though it will not be easy for B-Schools to look back and mend their teaching methodologies retrospectively to fundamental business problems. However, if they long to regain the confidence of students, society, employers and professors at large, they need to change the way they are making future leaders. No curriculum reforms will work until scientific model is replaced by more appropriate models grounded in the special requirements of profession along with quality policies, procedures, and practices which are critical to ensure the relevance and effectiveness of business and management education. ■



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Prof Anil D Sahasrabudhe  
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IN CONVERSATION > PROF ANIL D SAHASRABUDHE

# AICTE BELIEVES

**that training for leaders is equally important. Under the MHRD Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya mission for teacher training, IITs and other institutions have been given a mandate to train teachers in a three week program, shares Prof Anil D Sahasrabudhe with Arvind Passey**

# W

hen Frank Gehry talked about architecture speaking of its time and place, but yearning for timelessness, he couldn't possibly have visited the AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education) building on Nelson Mandela Marg in New Delhi. Timelessness has been the essence of whatever decisions have emerged from the offices here where natural light and intuitive ventilation have ensured that creative solutions are articulated well. As I walked in the AICTE building to interview the present Chairman **Prof Anil D Sahasrabudhe**, I observed that the large statue of Goddess Saraswati had offerings of fresh flowers and the ambience of the reception was one of calm involvement.

When we think of AICTE we think of the creation of centres of excellence in technical education. This organization was first set up in November 1945 as a national-level apex advisory body to conduct a survey of the facilities in technical education and promote its development in the country in a coordinated and integrated manner. However, the statutory AICTE was established on 28 March 1988 with an aim to be a true facilitator and an objective regulator besides providing affordable education to all with a

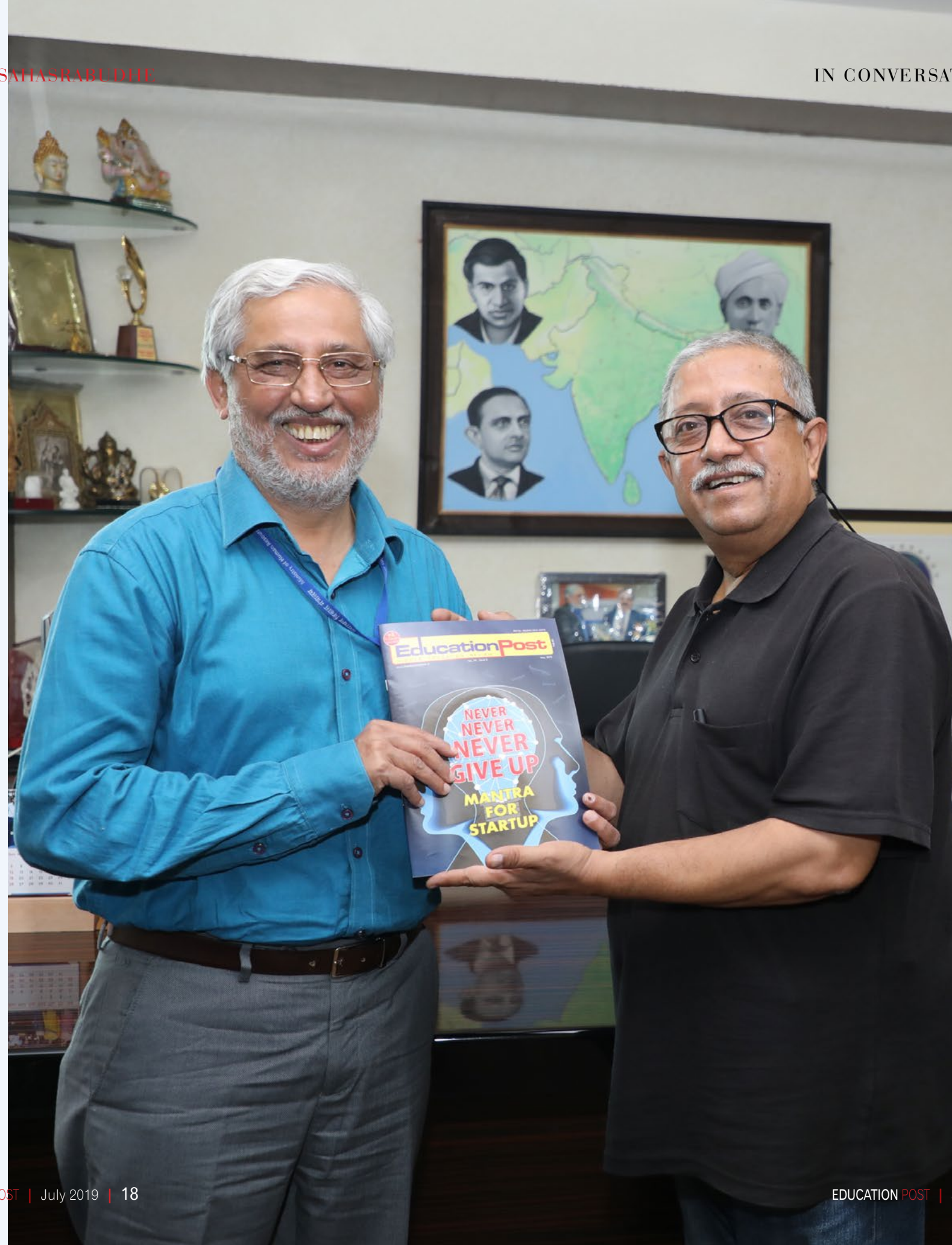
focus on skill education through internship. Their mission includes inculcating entrepreneurship and making technical education in India globally competitive through transparent governance and an accountable approach.

It is only reasonable to say that AICTE has reached new heights at a blazing pace. Yes, there will always be detractors, naysayers, and dissenters but AICTE think-tank over the years has always managed to consider all opinions as constructive feedback and has invariably come up with something more dynamic and innovative as a policy that finally does good to everybody concerned.

**If we are teaching students of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, they certainly will be not employable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and, therefore, the revision of curriculum is a continuous process.**

I began by asking Prof Sahasrabudhe as to what attributes were at the heart of AICTE transforming India into competitive technical manpower giant today? Is it all about curriculum updations, introduction of new-age course specializations that include AI, robotics, data science and more, or directing institutes and universities to teach their students the art of educating themselves forever? “Or all of them”, I added.

Prof Sahasrabudhe began by saying that it is all of them and more as “I think all of them are equally important. We start with curriculum revision. If we are teaching students of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, they certainly will be not employable in the 21<sup>st</sup>



century and, therefore, the revision of curriculum is a continuous process. Earlier, the changes in technology were happening at a slower pace and if you change the curriculum in five years, what was good enough at the start may no longer remain relevant in a few years. Thus curriculum revision happens whenever new elements demand an entry. In fact, it is often expected that students remain prepared for solving problems that are not known today, using technology that is yet to be invented. How do we do this? One step is a continuous upgradation of curriculum.”

It was obvious that Prof Sahasrabudhe was completely focused on new technologies as they were anyway entering our world at a blistering speed. He continued, “Secondly, you have correctly pointed out that our students are to be prepared for learning on their own and continuing their yearning to learn. Thus, learning to learn and lifelong learning are two important ingredients that have to be an integral part of the curriculum in a subtler subliminal way. This is why we insist that in any course taught in the class need not be taught in a routine manner. A sixty minute classroom session is not enough. Today we asked students to watch relevant videos available on YouTube along with a wide range of reference books, and must come prepared in the class with questions and doubts. Faculty must be willing and prepared to engage, solve difficulties, and then set assignments that induce more learning. This is the new pedagogy which is emerging and we have to be ready for it.”

“All this sounds wonderful, Prof. Sahasrabudhe,” I said, “what if the faculty is not comfortable with new technology. In such a scenario, how will they be able to inspire this kind of learning to learn attitude?”

Prof. Anil D. Sahasrabudhe thought for a moment before saying, “There is another aspect to this concept which is about our engagement with teachers. We have a set of eight modules that includes curriculum revision, curriculum development, how to engage in the classroom examination reforms, how the old examination method needs to be changed, the new concepts that do not encourage rote learning and more. A thorough understanding based on analysis, synthesis, and creative interpretation is meant for the faculty. The importance of engagement with the industry is also communicated to the teachers. Thus orientation for teachers is as important as any other aspect that involves student welfare, infrastructure,

or even regulations.” The Chairman paused for a while, smiled and then continued, “What I have just said about orientation is for new recruits in teaching. We have an equally effective formula for old teachers as well. They too will need to go through these eight modules and there is no escape route here. In fact, even the faculty will need to spend at least three weeks as their own internship with the industry.”

*This came as a big relief to me as I have had teachers who were generally completely foxed by the new developments in the subjects that they were teaching. This used to be rather disorienting as what the new-age books then told me was never in complete consonance with what was being told in the class. The Chairman then chuckled and said, “I hope all the teachers and faculty in colleges and institutes will go through this interview. They will then know that if the nation has to win a global race in competence, they will also need to run faster.”*

We then talked about exam reforms and the need for a deeper impregnation of the concepts of skill-building. Prof. Sahasrabudhe pointed out that it is both the faculty as well as students who need to be in a position to apply every theoretical bit into real situations where a practical application makes all the difference. “Faculty today must be prepared to bring in creative thinking and thus their critical analysis of the entire system will become note-worthy in multiple ways,” he added. He also said that the time had come when “we cannot isolate technical education from an insight into



awareness of associated and non-associated forms of learning as both are equally important and so, for instance, engineers without any practical skill sets that have an inter-disciplinary regimen may not be able to lead in a world that knows more about more and more.”

This is precisely what is already happening in universities abroad. They give the students an option to enter by opting for one stream of study and emerge as a specialist in an entirely different stream. For instance, engineering and humanities have a kind of seamless merger where a student enters wanting to study, say, aeronautical engineering and actually emerges being an anthropologist. Are we anywhere near to such an innovation in our teaching?

The Chairman admitted that our education system was moving in that direction, albeit a bit slower but “there is a committee already set up in order to create what is known as a credit bank for students. So, it is not only about an engineer taking up anthropology or becoming a biologist or a physicist but more importantly for us, even if we have a student who goes to x university or y college then goes to Z university will be able to get his credits transferred and be able to complete his own degree.”



**“We cannot isolate technical education from an insight into awareness of associated and non-associated forms of learning as both are equally important and so, for instance, engineers without any practical skill sets”**



“What sort of obstacles do you foresee in this kind of flexibility?” I asked.

Prof. Sahasrabudhe replied, “In this scheme of flexibility, the number of credits for awarding a particular type of degree is one thing but the definition of credit has to be universal. Our biggest challenge is that there is a uniform formatting of the credit system and we are working on a system where credit banks are created, a mutual recognition of credits is in place, and with all regulations in place we can confidently say that our system may be more flexible than anywhere else in the world.” He later added that AICTE has “already made provision for 20% of the courses to be taken through MOOCs. This helps student in remote locations where the right faculty may not be there and students should not be deprived of not being able to learn those courses. They can learn from some of the best institutions in the country through the MOOCs platform and get it credited into their account and into their academic performance record.”

As the term ‘regulations’ was popping up often I decided to ask how easy it is to get them implemented. His answer revolved around two methods adopted by AICTE. “One is the formal layout and formulations that are deliberated by different faculty from premier institutes like the IITs. Secondly, AICTE officials also visit these institutions to understand the features to be inducted. A consensus is then possible.” This obviously means that AICTE does not believe in

accepting suggestions and feedback with their eyes closed and “that’s why we visit institutes, observe programs and functions, congregations, graduation ceremonies, and attend international conferences. Our visits include interactions with the faculty as well the students there and our learning is constantly updated”. Prof.Sahasrabudhe insisted that AICTE never takes their own conclusions as the final word but consider innovative feedback from external sources as well. He said, “AICTE listens to voices that make sense.”

If we look at statistics we find that in 2017-18 though the approved intake was 35.5 lakhs, the number admitted was 18.9 lakhs out of which 13.4 lakhs graduated and 6.5 lakhs were placed. At first glance a lot of people may have a few doubts about the gap between the approved intake and admitted numbers but it is the stringent regulations ideated and implemented that ensure quality at every level in the education system. Prof. Sahasrabudhe mentioned that a part of this anomaly could be because a decade ago there was huge demand in engineering and the number of seats allotted to some colleges may be beyond the present requirement. On being asked if such things happened because of political pressures, he simply said that it “could be the anticipated potential... and anyway, there were a large number of private entities who wanted to start the colleges. Such mismatches will be reduced. There is also the case of a number of colleges being denied the right to admit until they meet the requirements of infrastructure and faculty development.”

So far as faculty development is concerned, the Chairman did mention that “apart from eight module orientation for faculty there are nine areas which we identified. They include artificial intelligence, machine learning, IoT, deep learning, robotics, blockchain, augmented reality, virtual reality and so on. These modules are also for existing faculty who may not have kept abreast of the new developments for decades now. We plan to pick those who know enough to be trainers for our ‘train the trainers’ program. Thus the time to reach out and update the knowledge base of our teachers will be considerably reduced... and today with the use of technology, they don’t have to physically come and learn so many things.” He also added that AICTE was aware that quite a few serving faculty may be reluctant to learn and unlearn so readily. “The solution to this is that it is the leader in an institution who needs to lead well,” he said, “the principal, for instance, has to inspire and motivate. Sometimes a mere pep talk helps. AICTE believes that training for leaders is equally important. Under the MHRD Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya mission for teacher training, IITs and other institutions have been given a mandate to train the teachers in a three week program. It could be one or two weeks in India, and a week in a foreign University. This exposure to new methodologies to counter bad attitude and resistance to change is definitely going to help.” Every teacher equipped with this new learning will set the tone to the very act of being open to change and is truly inspirational which any day is better than force-feeding.

**AICTE has already made provision for 20% of the courses to be taken through MOOCs. This helps student in remote locations where the right faculty may not be there and students should not be deprived of not being able to learn those courses.**

There was also a short discussion on accreditation of institutes and the Chairman mentioned that AICTE has 12 parameters equally valid for both degree and diploma courses in private and government colleges. “We have a scheme called Marg Darshak and all faculty members and institutions performing well will have faculty, even retired ones, to help us upgrade the level in other institutes that need guidance and the entire expenditure is being born by AICTE. We can loosely translate this into a sort of mentorship. These people will engage and help lagging institutions remove existing deficiencies leading to accreditation.” Thus if there is a retired faculty settled in Kolkata, AICTE will ask him to take charge of mentoring 10 to 15 institutions in the area. Accountability is the keyword here and the system replaces the mundane chore of a routine inspection with an innovative edge. Prof Sahasrabudhe added that every institution needs to introduce good teaching and a wholesome research orientation. “All my students will be capable of becoming entrepreneurs, all my students will be employed by the best of the companies, all my students will become able officers of the government, all my students will get into various types of social activities,” said Prof Sahasrabudhe, “The involvement of faculty is deep-rooted. We know that some can be good administrators and some can deliver engaging lectures. We want people to recognize their inner strengths and be self-actualized.”

As a final gesture Prof Sahasrabudhe said that his message for students is whatever course they choose they need to put in their “best efforts, hard work, passion, and consistency. If you do that, success will follow you and you don’t have to follow success.” He added that

**AICTE has 12 parameters equally valid for both degree and diploma courses in private and government colleges. We have a scheme called Marg Darshak and all faculty members and institutions performing well will have faculty, even retired ones, to help us upgrade the level in other institutes that need guidance and the entire expenditure is being born by AICTE.**

“so as far as faculty are concerned, they have to change their attitude. Whatever the way they were taught 25 years ago or 30 years ago may no longer be valid. New-age changes in pedagogy have happened and they must adapt to that. Otherwise, they will not be able to survive in the market. And therefore, faculty members have to constantly start learning... learning new things. The only thing that matters is constant lifelong learning and if we start practicing what is relevant, our students will also start practicing the same.”

He also added that teachers need to become good role models “and that is why I request all my faculty colleagues to not always complain about workload. I think I’m against the word workload, because whenever you say you have a 20 hour workload it looks like a load on your head. Better to call it a work opportunity that is given and start asking for more opportunities. Both faculty and students have to engage in dialogue and discuss fearlessly. And once this happens, students will not be inhibited from asking some difficult question. No question is a silly question. This is the change that we are trying to bring in and for this change to actualize, we need support from both students and faculty.”

This interview did leave me a much more informed person who can say he has finally understood that “the main aim of education is to liberate us from all kinds of difficulties, diseases, darkness, and disorder” as Dr. Satya Pal Singh once said. Even Prakash Javadekar’s words echo the primary aim of AICTE: “Access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability are our mantra.” AICTE has definitely laid the foundation for a comprehensive revolution in technology education with its wide range of quality initiatives. ■

*Note: This article is the edited and condensed version of the actual interview.*

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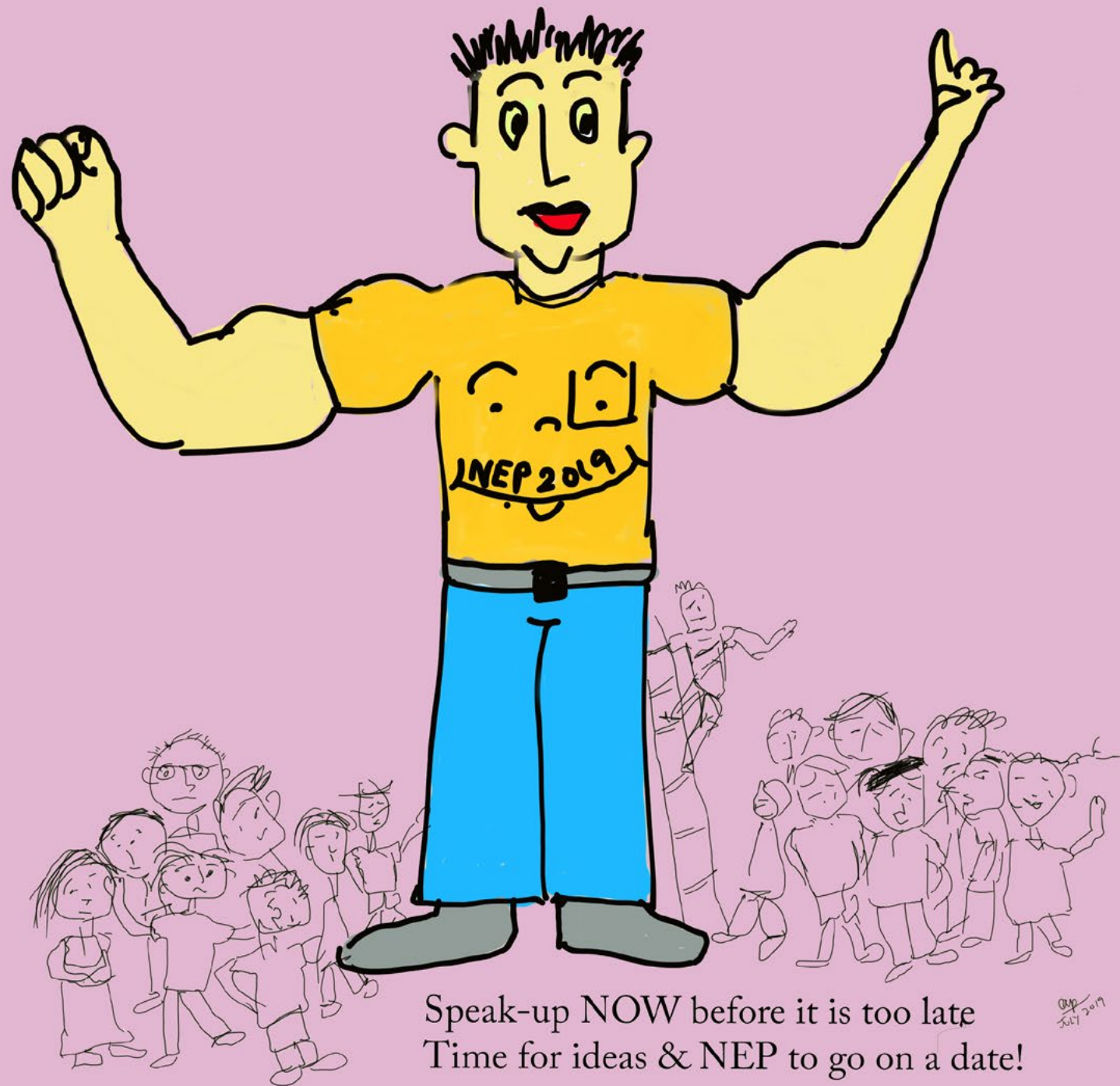
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COVER STORY > ARVIND PASSEY

# IS THE NEP ABOUT OLD MIND-SETS IN NEW BODIES?

**Training interventions for teachers** are going to be sturdier as this is the only way to upgrade the doddering **literacy** and **numeracy** that exists today.

**S**ome thinkers believe that reports and recommendations invariably remain what they are if unaccompanied by the micro-details of strategic implementation maneuvers. A bit higher in the hierarchy of proposed actions and actionable steps is the wave theory of political will of the powers, the calculus of economic certainties and uncertainties, the gravitational laws pervading in the moral and social matrix of the times, and the much simpler yogic asanas of accepting divergent views and counter-points of critical thinkers in the academic and non-academic world. This cover-story has the distinct honour of being sandwiched between some worthy insights by eminent thinkers and locating them isn't going to be difficult for the discerning reader.

Critical assessment must and always will begin by asking questions. For instance, how is the concept of 'inter-disciplinary' woven in with the futuristic policies mentioned? Is it true that terms like 'future-ready', 'employability', and 'job-ready' have been mercilessly exploited by the corporate world to hide their own inefficiencies? Or is it the other way round? How must the education industry tackle this? Do corporates too need an overhaul in their attitude? What are the features or suggestions in the policy that makes the private colleges and institutions restless? There are mentions in NEP 2019 about private and public institutions to be treated at par. What does this really imply? The concept then goes on to add that education is to be 'not for profit' for ALL. How do you think this aim can be achieved, considering that there are a number of institutions and universities subsisting on just grants doled out to them? Will the policy-makers read and hear the voices of dissent or will they prefer to listen only to those opinions that kowtow and applaud? Finally, is it time for more eminent educationists to enter politics and make their views heard when legislations are being debated because according to a media report, the 217 eminent people consulted while forming this draft did not include even one teacher?

The Draft NEP 2019 was submitted on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 2019 and deals with challenges in the access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability in the education system. I am sure the Chairman Dr K Kasturirangan will be pleased to note the sort of whirling excitement that this report has already initiated.

### NEP and our school education

There is a major rejig of curriculum and pedagogy with the early childhood care education or ECCE. Focus is obviously on health, nutrition, and education but the multiple regulatory bodies involved are going to be integrated and the *anganwadi* institution will be brought under the new educational setup.

Training interventions for teachers are going to be sturdier as this is the only way to upgrade the doddering literacy and numeracy that exists today. Besides strategic placements of focused training for teachers (other points of focus will be recruitment, motivation,

continuous education and career development), a positive increase in the use of technology is aimed at. Even Prof Anil D Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE remarks, 'Faculty today must be prepared to bring in creative thinking and thus their critical analysis of the entire system will become note-worthy in multiple ways.' This obviously cannot be possible unless there is an equally powerful thrust of public investment in education. These are the two pillars besides a single-minded focus on vocational and adult education that are going to lead the nation towards universal access to education by 2030.

One of the common features throughout the policy is the emergence of the idea to merge multiple bodies and schemes that are sometimes uncommunicative with each other and become the cause for needless heartburn



**“Faculty today must be prepared to bring in creative thinking and thus their critical analysis of the entire system will become note-worthy in multiple ways.”**

**Prof Anil D Sahasrabudhe**  
Chairman, AICTE



Members of EPSI discuss draft NEP 2019

in the officials concerned. Operational efficacy thus goes up. Another vital component of this policy is the visible shift from rote learning through modified pedagogy aimed to enhance critical thinking, creativity, scientific temper, communication, collaboration, problem solving, ethics, social responsibility and digital literacy. The objective for this dynamic transformation is set to be achieved by 2022.

There are recommendations like shutting down all sub-standard teacher training institutes in the nation and starting a 4-year integrated stage-specific B.Ed that need to go way beyond mere mentions in a report. These, like re-organising schools into school complexes where adult education too can be made possible, blurring the lines between curriculum, co-curricular, and extra-curricular areas, activating the 5-3-3-4 structure for schools, and developing core competencies to include life skills and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills can be fairly intimidating demons without a clear set of step-wise instructions with clearly defined fiscal and completion goals. NCERT developing a national curriculum framework may seem fine but why has it not thought of reducing content load in school education curriculum all these years? Why hasn't NCERT thought of developing a national

## Great ideas also need to be implemented

**Dr. Harivansh Chaturvedi**  
Director, BIMTECH, Greater Noida



“Draft National Education Policy report (NEP) Submitted by the Dr. Kasturirangan Committee has suddenly jolted the nation on the dire urgency for educational reforms. We find that after 26 years of the declaration of the previous NEP in 1992, this Draft NEP has followed the path of ‘Change with Continuity’. Overall objectives of access, affordability, accountability, equality and quality are in continuity of earlier goals.

Some of the big-ticket reforms proposed in the Draft NEP are laudable. Prominent among those are extending RTE from age 6 to age 18 in school education and clubbing pre-primary education of 3 years. Draft NEP touches upon almost all aspects of school education, but the crucial question is whether the diagnosis of the problems and prescriptions suggested are according to the hard realities existing today?

In higher education, the Kasturirangan Committee has given comprehensive recommendations related to curriculum, teachers education, duration of undergraduate courses, regulatory model, accreditation, financing etc. The Committee has made a fervent demand to raise expenditure on education from the current 2.7% of GNP to 6% of GNP.

Draft NEP 2019 seems futuristic but very ambitious. It is to be seen how this futuristic vision will be translated into pragmatic actions and execution.”

curriculum framework for adult education all these years? The question that I’d like to ask here is if all the giant procedure and process generating institutions work only when a policy pushes and catalyses them? Are terms like ‘being proactive’ actively prancing around only for junior executives in multi-nationals? Yes, policy makers believe that certain changes will improve governance, but isn’t it time that our thinking bodies stopped just waiting for instructions and began generating ideas to maximize resource utilization?

It is only correct and timely for this policy to suggest the creation of an independent State School Regulatory Authority to handle all sorts of school regulations including the oversight of the system and implementation of accreditation. A separation of functions to eliminate conflicts of interests is obviously included.

### NEP and Higher Education

Yes, I know this and everyone else too knows pretty well that the draft NEP favours high class research, high quality teachers, and an ever-evolving inter-disciplinary curriculum besides the National Research Foundation egging this orientation onwards. The question that many people in the higher echelons of decision-making may not want to hear starts and ends with a single word: how? Yes, there will be the RashtriyaShikshaAayog to co-ordinate between the centre and the states and then there will be a newly created superbody given the acronym NHERA (National Higher Education Regulatory Authority) as the only regulatory authority. Yes, bodies like AICTE,

## Market driven and government led

The NEP 2019 is a powerful vision document though intentions clearly outrun strategies on implementation. Without a strategy and stable structure it is a paper document that without much value and much pragmatism.



**PadmaShri Dr Pritam Singh**

Former Director of IIM Lucknow. He also serves as a Member of the Local Board for Northern area of Reserve Bank Of India and holds PhD and Masters degree in Commerce from Benares Hindu University and Masters degree in Business Administration from the Indiana University, USA.

One major issue is that they haven’t talked in detail about the quality of faculty, how to attract the best, and how to attract quality along with accountability. One way of attracting the best be the best is the creation of something like a National Fellowship Fund which isn’t a difficult objective. Look at the CSR spending in the country that is around 50,000 crore in 2018. A mere 5% of this can be diverted into the National Fellowship Fund. Mathematically, a corpus of 2500 crore means taking care of a huge number of fellowships besides other productive activities. Once we have the right kind of students, we will also have research that makes its mark globally

Besides this, the structure and the governance mechanism of the universities needs to be re-examined. Committees need to always remain manageable and relevant. The enrolment figures need to go up faster and more meaningfully and private institutions have helped in this effort. However, providing quality education and just concentrating on making tons of money are two different aspects and accountability is the bridge here. There are cases of some players running engineering courses through distance education. Can you run engineering programs through distance learning?

The physiology of education is market-driven and government led and any policy needs to consider this in every way.



As **Dr Harivansh Chaturvedi** asks in a straight-forward tone: “The crucial question is whether the diagnosis of the problems and prescriptions suggested are according to the hard realities existing today?”

Even a cursory look at the

profit’ venture for everyone concerned. **Padma Shri Dr Pritam Singh** believes that “the physiology of education is market-driven and government led and any policy needs to consider this in every way.” He goes on to add that for research to be progressive, additional sources for generating funds need to be identified. “Look at the CSR spending in the country that is around 50,000 crore in 2018,” he says, “A mere 5% of this can be diverted into the National Fellowship Fund. Mathematically, a corpus of 2500 crore means taking care of a huge number of fellowships besides other productive activities. Once

## SDG4 is a worthy goal



**Kamal Singh**  
Executive Director,  
Global Compact  
Network India (GCNI)

“Education is a fundamental human right and essential for the exercise of all other human rights. NEP 2019 drafts the policy efficiently addressing all the challenges i.e. access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability faced by the current education system. The alignment of NEP 2019 with UN Sustainable Development Goals especially SDG4 is the need of hour as it seeks to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by 2030. SDG4 is, therefore, an all-encompassing goal which is applicable to every nation attempting to bring quality of life to its citizens in a sustainable way, without degrading the environment. Without achievement of SDG4 none of the goals of the SDGs can be achieved.

I am hoping that NEP 2019 will accelerate the Achievement of SDGs Target by India.”

plans expressed one gets a feeling that is rather invigorating. One of the radical features is the mention of a slow transition of all institutions towards full autonomy – academic, administrative, and financial. Tagging along is the fact that all private and public institutions will be treated at par in the long term and that education to finally be a ‘not for

we have the right kind of students, we will also have research that makes its mark globally.” While we are on innovative approaches, it must be mentioned that in one of my short conversations with eminent educationists, **Dr M Venu Gopala Rao** remarked that “we also need to think about having courses ideated by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). Foreign universities should be allowed to open campuses in India and Indian universities may be allowed to open their campuses overseas.”

Talking of finances, the NEP clarifies that the fiscal burden was 6% of the GDP in 1968 and remained the same in 1986. However, in 2017-18 it was 20% of the GDP. Thus it is only logical to look towards doubling public investment to rise upwards from a mere 10% to 20%. For higher education, the Policy sets

a target of achieving at least 50% GER (Gross Enrolment Ratio) by 2035. Today we are a little above 25%. The higher education system is to be literally turned into a new entity if the aim to create world-class multidisciplinary higher education institutions that are distributed across the country is to be actualized. Vocational education that is today sitting outside in a separate bucket will be integrated and brought under one roof as the aim is for it to be 50% of the total enrolment by 2025 from the present 10%.

According to the 2011 census we have 3.26 crore youth non-literates and 26.5 crore adult non-literates. With these kind of bone-chilling figures, it is only heartening that the NEP 2019 talks about moving towards a liberal approach of which the 4 year undergraduate programs with multiple exit options will be an important part besides the entire thought-cloud about the inter-disciplinary programmes.

As already mentioned earlier, professional education will be integral to the overall higher education system. **Sudhir Ahluwalia** praises the aim in the new NEP to discourage “the setting up of stand-alone universities for professional education” and the fact that “institutions that offer either professional or general education will organically evolve into institutions offering both seamlessly.” This objective is targeted to be achieved by 2030. The intentions are more than just being fine and no one can ever disparage the inclusion of facts like having a **30:1 student:teacher** ratio, professional development of faculty, and even the wave of encouragement to build upon research capabilities.

## A thoughtful document if regulations remain pertinent

“The draft National Education Policy 2019, a thoughtful document giving directions for school and higher education for the country, is both futuristic and bold. It is refreshing to note that the draft policy touches the most important issues of separating the various functions of funding, standard setting, accreditation, regulations to be conducted by independent bodies, and the need to eliminate concentration of power and conflicts of interest.

It talks about academic, administrative and financial autonomy for the Universities and treating of private and public institutions at par by the regulatory regime. The establishment of National Research Fund (NRF) and Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog (RSA) are unique initiatives that will give the desired impetus to research and eliminate regulation by multiple agencies.

The plan to have three types of Institutions and phasing out affiliated colleges by 2032 will help breed innovations on one hand as well as give an incentive for moving from a type 3 to a type 1 institution. Caution may be needed in certain functional areas to remove excessive stifling regulations as has been the practice in the past.”

**Dr. Raj Singh**  
Vice Chancellor  
Ansal University,  
Gurugram.





## Let's get inspired by the West

**Dr. M Venu Gopala Rao**

Vice President,  
MODY University of Science & Technology  
Lakshmanagarh.

“The proposal to attract maximum private investment in education will require regulations to avoid encouraging isolated profit motives or personal agendas over educational welfare. The proposal to integrate play-schools with the formal education system is a welcome move as the present concept of primary education and pre-schooling has become a conduit, at least in major cities, for generating profits through donations. Play-schools too need to be brought under the Ministry of Education (currently MHRD). Even the transition of grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 into semester systems, with a choice of 40 plus courses, is a brilliant idea. However, it must be ensured that students will take their exams within a stipulated time or a specified number of attempts. Private schools must also have complete freedom to decide their fee-structure provided they are not engaged in profiteering and are practicing philanthropy. ‘Complete freedom’ needs reconsideration and needs to have reasonable and relevant restrictions. Emphasis on topics like *Knowledge of India* and *Inspiring Lessons from India* should be incorporated in the curriculum. The curriculum should also include basic health and safety training including sex education, STD prevention and family planning as well as life-skills training like developing resilience, emotional intelligence, prevention of suicide, mental health etc. Under-represented groups may not be a fair term when we are aiming at equal opportunities.

The right thing to do will be to focus from the start on compulsory education and equal opportunities for all. National Testing Agency (NTA) the sole body to conduct all entrance/ competitive exams is encouraging though these exams need to be conducted more than once every year to give students multiple attempts to improve their performance. It is time to initiate the formation of bodies like the Indian Institutes of Liberal Arts (IILA) on the pattern of IITs and IIMs, to provide a four-year Bachelor in Liberal Arts (BLA), Bachelor of Liberal Education (BLE) or BLA with Research. This thought can be taken ahead to discontinue M.Phil, convert PG degrees into graduate courses which implies that graduates can be enrolled for their doctoral course as is done by many universities abroad. We also need to think about having courses ideated by the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). Foreign universities should be allowed to open campuses in India and Indian universities may be allowed to open their campuses overseas. Such inclusions will make the NEP more desirable.”

### The Retality

Dr. Jitendra K Das writes that “a wish list with inclusions like the establishment of new institutions, restructuring old ones, use of technology, and boosting vocational education needs a clearer roadmap.” Dr. Raj Singh mentions that “caution may be needed in certain functional areas to remove excessive stifling regulations as has been the practice in the past.” Dr. Irfan A Rizvi opines that “the real test of any policy, including that of NEP 2019, is in its implementation”. Thus we have the intellectuals being appreciative of the features of

NEP 2019 but at the same time being a tad worried about implementation and the fact that the road-map needs to be unambiguous and clearly defined. These doubts exist because the past decades have not been excessively kind on education and education-related policy-making.

Dr. Rizvi has also mentioned in his commentary that this “policy requires a renewed focus on this aspect without curbing our secular ethos of religious freedom.” Earlier NEP documents have invariably invoked the secular vision of the country in one way or the other but the 2019 document mentions

## A clearer implementation roadmap is essential



**Dr. Jitendra K Das**

Director, FORE School of Management,  
New Delhi

“Since 1947 the government essentially could not ensure high-quality higher education in India through the existing system. It created a parallel higher education system for Engineering and Management through IITs and IIMs respectively. Currently, there are ten different categories of institutions in India reflecting this ad-hoc approach. There is a pressing need to have a uniform regulatory system as the expected output is similar across such institutions. The difference may be only in their source of funding and sectoral specific requirements. A higher education system reform as radical as the Economic Reform of 1991 is desperately needed.

The current NEP proposal to set up NRF is wonderful and so its role as a scholarship or research funding agency must be made absolutely

transparent, objective and efficient. However, the concerns arising from the existing education policy are being addressed by the new policy though the future needs have not been objectively expressed. The detailing in the proposed NEP look like a wish list and these may have implementation issues as has been the case with many previous policy recommendations made since the last few decades.

While pertinent issues like consolidation of regulatory bodies are welcome, a wish list with inclusions like the establishment of new institutions, restructuring old ones, use of technology, and boosting vocational education need a clearer roadmap.”



## A harbinger of transformation with a few riders

**Dr. Irfan A Rizvi**

Professor of Leadership & Change Management,  
IMI, New Delhi

**NEP 2019 incorporates the best features of earlier policy frameworks and if implemented in letter and spirit is bound to transform the Indian learning and development system with its impact felt over many generations.**

**It is well known that poor quality of teachers, abysmal teacher-taught ratios, and inadequate infrastructure plagues our education system, especially the government schools and colleges. The policy runs short of providing concrete directions in improving upon these most critical factors of teaching-learning. The document as being commissioned by the Central Government, also does not adequately address the state government level issues in our education system.**

**Actionable directions for modernizing the teaching and learning system of traditional community based institutions, especially in the 'maktabs' and 'madarsas' need attention. The policy requires a renewed focus on this aspect without curbing our secular ethos of religious freedom.**

**The future of stand-alone/independent single program/discipline higher education institutions worries me. These institutions have been in existence for more than three decades now and have provided yeoman service towards professionalizing education through their employability programs and internationally published research with practical implications. If they are forced to merge with some University to be part of any of the type 1 to 3 higher education institutions, then such stand-alone institutions lose their unique value proposition for now and for-ever.**

**I hope that at the next stage when all inputs and critiques on NEP 2019 are available, the Ministry and the NEP 2019 drafting team will give due considerations to the above and many other such suggestions. The real test of any policy, including that of NEP 2019, is in its implementation. I sincerely hope that all stakeholders will insure that implementation doesn't suffer.**

a number of values and goes on to invoke our “democratic outlook and commitment to liberty and freedom; equality, justice, and fairness; embracing diversity, plurality, and inclusion; humaneness and fraternal spirit; social responsibility and the spirit of service; ethics of integrity and honesty; scientific temper and commitment to rational and public dialogue; peace; social action through constitutional means; unity and integration of the nation, and a true rootedness and pride in India with a forward-looking spirit to continuously improve as a nation”. A word, even when it makes its appearance physically can be absent in spirit... and this document has a myriad other facets that talk about progressive education

even as it remains silent on the word secular. However, it will be equally interesting to see if this absence leads to yet another yet hidden interpretation though I am confident that the policy has a lot of good vibes surrounding it.

The **NEP** talks about reducing content curriculum and encouraging critical thinking that in the current flow of things seems rather improbable.

We seem to have had a gala time adding more and more flab to our content in the past decades... and I am not talking about heavier school bags here, but about the bulging reading lists even in higher education. In my opinion this has been happening because we have always been fascinated with information instead of being an informed nation. A sudden shift from being an information-obsessed society to being a critical one is never going to be easy. Moreover, giving lip service to critical thinking isn't ever going to be enough if our leaders and decision-makers are going to be afraid of being questioned, grilled for truth, and are going to come heavily upon dissenting opinions and expressions. We live in times when the borders between fact and fiction is blurred, when technology has given us all access to create and communicate multiple interpretations of anything, and where campaign and propaganda rules our psyches. Thus when the NEP talks about a liberal approach even the powers around us need to avoid stifling new voices and fresh conversations, however uncomfortable they may seem to be. A recent article in **THE WIRE** dot in points out that “the report's understanding of critical thinking has less to do with independent thought or free and critical inquiry into received

traditions and wisdom and more to do with courses in statistics, data analysis and quantitative methods (page 229).” Only time will tell us if the words in the current NEP are going to encourage our coming generations to question, critique, and remain free to think.

As a final word it will be reasonable to say that a good policy attempts to be an enabler and importantly, a supporter of freedom where accountability has been factored in. The **NEP 2019** contains these encouraging signs though a lot depends on the people or sets of people who step in between the formulation of a policy and its actual implementation. ■



## The transition of India to a developed country status

**Sudhir Ahluwalia**

Former Global Head of Government Consulting in TCS & Former member of the IFS.  
Author of multiple books on herbs and natural products.

“While the policy deserves praise for its comprehensive and integrated approach to education, I have a few concerns. While some of the individual objectives have quantified targets, institutional and regulatory reform objectives which are critical to transforming the education sector do not have a target date for completion. Regulatory reform is the engine of the transformation train and needs to be completed before meaningful progress will be possible in operational areas.

The vision is generic. For a government that has a clearly defined goal of achieving five trillion-dollar status in the next five years and a ten trillion-dollar status soon after, it would have been great if the vision too had a clearly defined and quantified goal. Education and people will drive the move from a developing country to developed country status. A policy vision on education cannot be generic.

We know that anything that cannot be measured can also not be monitored.

We have had a poor track record when it comes to social indicators. The nation and its people are suffering under the weight of convoluted rules, over-bearing bureaucracy, long and complex processes. These continue to impede us achieve our aspirations and dreams.

The education sector is crying for transformation. Transformation will require restructuring of business processes. Convoluted processes impede speedy implementation. The education policy chief failing is that it is silent on this critical aspect of transformation.

While the policy does propose the creation of a National Technology Forum, MOOCs and digitization of administration, it is silent on how it will prepare the nation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century digital world where artificial intelligence, mobile technology and internet will be ubiquitous.

Our citizens have adopted mobile technology like a duck takes to water and the policy makes only a perfunctory mention of this powerful tool. Content streaming will become a household thing with the introduction of 5G and education should leverage its power.

Redrawing the education sector regulatory organization chart as is mentioned in the policy is not enough. The business processes driving regulation require re-engineering and technology needs to be mainstreamed. An effective and professionally executed business process re-engineering will make for efficient and independent monitoring of stated objectives.

Be that as it may, the 2019 education has all the ingredients which will help transform this critical sector. A bit of tweaking here and there should set us up for the massive shift from developing country to developed country status.”

# SOME THOUGHTS ON DRAFT NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY



Prof. R.K. Shivpuri

## School Education

The Draft National Education Policy (NEP) announced by the Govt. is a bold, thought provoking and a reformist initiative. The timing couldn't have been better as the whole education system desperately cries for reform. Of particular interest is the establishment of National Education Commission and the Governance of education. These measures are planned to be taken for the first time. Hence, in almost all spheres, NEP is a radical & enlightened policy.

There are some areas which call for serious attention. Firstly, there is a problem of teacher absenteeism as well as of students, particularly in schools in rural areas. This point has not been addressed seriously in NEP. To suggest that the School Management Committee (SMC) will hold schools accountable has not been found to be effective. The SMC's already exist in

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He has been Principal Investigator of several International Research Projects including Fermilab D-zero Collider Experiment, USA and Search for New Particles at the Large Hadron Collider, CERN, Geneva, Switzerland with total grants over Rs. 15 Crores. He has been associated with the two greatest discoveries of Particle Physics in last fifty years - Top Quark in 1995 and Higgs Boson (God Particle) in 2012. His research area is experimental High Energy Physics and Si detector Technology in Nuclear Interactions. His research work has been cited over 80,000 times in International journals.

He has been a Visiting Scientist at Fermilab, Chicago, USA, where he worked in three major experiments for over 25 years. He has received research grants- a few million dollars from National Science Foundation, Washington, USA.

Schools and had they been effective then there would not be any need for our concern. The most important point that needs to be addressed is that of accountability of teachers and students. The situation is grim in schools lying in rural areas. The infrastructure in such schools also needs to be strengthened.

The next question is how do we take care of socially disadvantaged students? Normally, The Govt. transfers the money to schools and let the school management disburse funds to such students. To depend upon the school management to do this job would not achieve the desired objective. The best arrangement would be to transfer the money directly to the accounts of such students. There will be no middle men and hence no possibility of pilferage of funds. This policy has been found to be eminently successful by the Modi Govt. in direct benefit transfer to citizens for farm subsidy, LPG

subsidy etc.

The other point is knowledge imparted to the students and knowledge gained by the students – how do we ensure that the knowledge and skill gained by the students is of desired level? This has to be uniformly followed by all the schools – public & private.

The draft NEP suggests that there should be a huge increase in the public education expenditure to 20% of the Govt. budget. This is not warranted by the circumstances as there is considerable wastage in expenditure at the current levels. Quoting NEP, 28% of all public primary schools have less than 30 students. As per Unified District Information System For Education (UDISE), Ministry of Human Resource Development, in Feb 2017, the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) at national level for elementary schools is 24:1 and the required level of PTR should be 30:1. Thus there is no shortage of teachers, in fact there is surplus of teachers.

We don't need more funds but we need accountability.

## Higher Education

The NEP is an excellent document for Higher Education Institutions (HEI). There is hardly any area which has been left untouched by NEP. The draft NEP states that "Private higher education institutions will arrange their own funding; however, so long as they

**The Govt. should make provision for funding their infrastructure and research. Such HEIs also contribute to raise the educational level of students, thus contributing to National development. Private HEI's do not get any funds for infrastructure or Labs.**

publicly disclose their full academic, administrative, and financial details to demonstrate financial probity, and academic and administrative responsibility, they too will move towards full autonomy in order to allow them to strive for excellence". With regard to private Universities/ Institutions, The Govt. should make provision for funding their infrastructure and research. Such HEIs also contribute to raise the educational level of students, thus contributing to National development. Private HEI's do not get any funds for infrastructure or Labs. The situation about most private Universities is lack of Infrastructure in the form of classrooms, laboratories etc. As per the University Grants Commission (2019), there are total 907 Universities and 334 are privately managed, which constitute about 37% of the total institutions. Such a large number of private institutions and hence students can't be left untouched by NEP, if we have to raise the education standards of the country. We need to get all the private HEI's under the ambit of NEP.

will aim to seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions where research is currently in a nascent stage, through systems of mentoring by active research scholars, who may have retired or be near retirement at top research institutions. It must be emphasized that private HEI's at present get negligible amount of grant for research from Govt. as well as from the management of their institutions. Hence, there is hardly any research work going on in these institutions. This is the main reason why there is no private University in the country finding a place among the top Universities of the world. Addressing this issue of emphasis on research will go a long way in significant improvement of the academic standards of private HEI's.

In general, the faculty to student ratio in private HEI's is much more than suggested by University Grants Commission. If the faculty spend all their time in teaching, how can they do research? While assessing the private HEI's, this point about the teaching load of the faculty should be taken into account. ■

## LITERARY TRENDS



Kulpreet Yadav

# HOW TO WRITE A KILLER THRILLER THE SUPER EASY WAY

**First fact :** It's not very difficult to write.

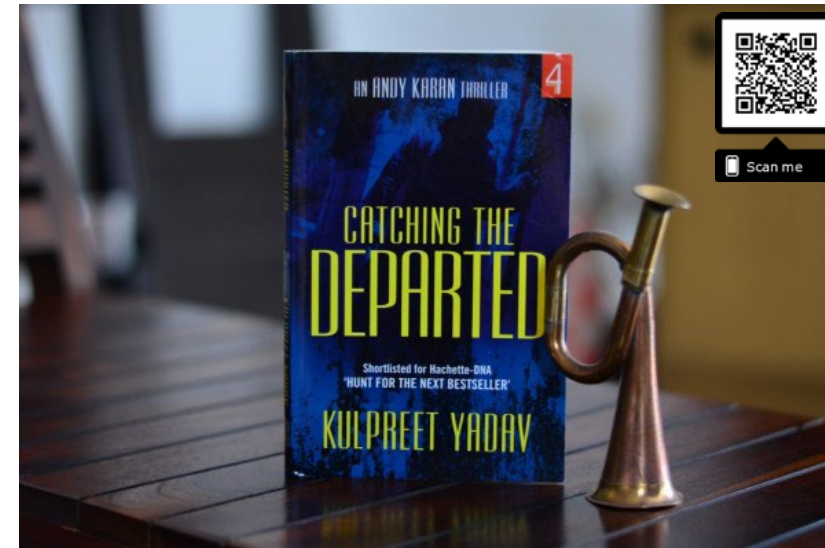
**Second fact :** Thriller writing isn't work at all.

**Third fact :** Well, not just not-difficult & not-work, writing a thriller is really an enjoyable experience.

I know what you are thinking. How?

**First step,** if you want to become a thriller writer, you got to trust me. You do? Great! Then let me take you on a journey by the end of which you would be all set to become a good thriller writer. I know you are smiling. You are not? Well, now you are. You see, I've knocked away **your biggest obstacle – self-doubt.**

Now, a bit of background. To tell you the truth, I've admired thriller writers all my life. As a young school-going boy, after I had crossed the age of Tintin, Bahadur, and Mandrake comics, every time I read a thriller, I ended up marveling at the brains of writers like Sidney Sheldon, Harold Robbins & James Hadley Chase (those days I used to wrap books written by them in newspapers because their covers were,



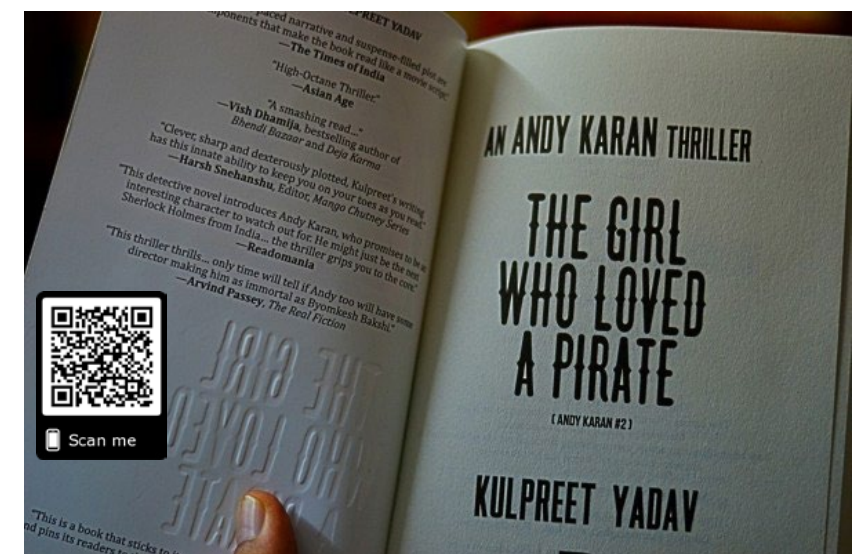
well, considered obscene). More than writing, I used to admire these guys for coming up with such intricate plots that involved diverse characters who lived in such exotic places. I was seventeen, in case you are wondering how could I have laid my hands on such books in the late eighties. At seventeen, I thought I was a big boy. I still think I was a big boy when I was seventeen. Anyway, now that we are talking about my being not-so-mature, let me put your doubts to rest. My dad used to help me cover these books before giving them to me to read. My mother never liked the idea of me reading novels instead of school books. Mothers... I know... I know. But the newspaper cover idea always worked. While dad was aware what I was reading, mom thought I was reading a school book because all my school books had a similar-looking newspaper cover. What is that you are asking? Does she know now? Of course she does. I've convinced her that without that secret pact between me and my dad I wouldn't have succeeded in

my career as a writer now.

Well, as usual, I have digressed. But no worries, because there's a lesson in this too. **Healthy digression is a must-have quality for writers.** And all of us are so good at it even though we do our best to hide this. So **fact number four,** it's okay to "float" when you write. This way your thoughts usually become organic and in case you discover later that some parts are sticking out like a sore thumb, just strike them through. Simple, isn't it? That's **the power of a storyteller: create what you wish, delete what you don't like, later.** Can you feel the power?

Back to thrillers. Now that you know you can write if you trust yourself and indeed you can write whatever comes to your

**My dad used to help me cover these books before giving them to me to read. My mother never liked the idea of me reading novels instead of school books. Mothers... I know... I know. But the newspaper cover idea always worked.**



mind, it's time to tackle another important thing. And that's knowledge. None of us can do anything (not just writing) without having proper knowledge, right? So there's no escaping this. For those of you who are now seeing the prospect of having to bury under tomes of books on crimes and criminology to enhance your knowledge and become worthy of becoming a writer, you are on wrong track. No extra knowledge is needed. Certainly not the kind you are imagining. How about trusting your own experience? Chances are, you already have eighty percent knowledge because of your experience. Let me elaborate.

Here's **fact number five**. Knowing people is knowledge, having to deal with lies is knowledge, solving a problem is knowledge, coping with heart break is knowledge, following a few cases in newspapers is knowledge, reading social media updates of people is knowledge, binge drinking with friends where they talk about their secrets is knowledge, having a secret desire for that model or that actress you find so hot is knowledge. So, you see, you are already so full of knowledge. What you need is just a "top-up" plan. Like the one you get for your phone or your TV subscription.

But how to do this? Easy, let me confide in you what I do. But first, I want you to make a promise. Promise me that you will buy three of my latest books. Okay, one, if not three. And I already know that all those reading this article who are under 25 will buy three books. Others, well, I can never be sure. Age makes us different. We forget to respect and honour our gurus (don't frown at the word

guru, that's what I'm doing here, isn't it?). But that topic is for another day.

Back to basics as I bring to you **step number two**. Here's your top-up plan. Know how the police works. Basically, their rank structure, their forensic readiness, their investigation procedures and their general daily life. How to do this? Easy, read the website of the police of your city. Read the public information pages like Wikipedia about Indian police organisations. If you spend about three hours (by clock) you would know enough. Now, supplement this by understanding the life that cops lead. Best would be to watch a video where a policeman is talking about solving a case. See him talk, understand his behaviour, see what he focusses on etc.

Next is **step three**. Having figured out about the police, we need to understand the criminal justice system of India. Once again, lot of it is available online. In addition, you could walk into a court one day, pay fees and hire a lawyer to understand a few cases. Lawyers don't charge much in India and they like to talk. What better option is there than to hear from the horse's mouth.

Now, the last part is to understand the human mind. This is **step four**. Reading Sigmund Freud and other psychologist's analysis could be a good starting point. You don't have to read their books (though you could, if you wish), just stick to their gist which can be found online. This, added to what you already know about people through your own ups and downs, would be sufficient.

**Step five** is to read books written by other thriller writers. This would take a major part of your time. I would recommend reading at least twenty books. Try to read thrillers written by Indian, Japanese, American, British, and Nordic writers. Get diverse perspectives to get familiar with different styles and moods that their imagery creates. On an average, it takes around 5 hours to finish a book, so do your maths.

Alright then, if you accept the above facts and take all the steps mentioned in your stride, you will be ready. My advance best wishes. My advance congratulations too. Because now, nothing can stop you from writing that super-duper thriller book you have always wanted to write. And when you do, please don't forget to tag me and let others know that this article inspired you. In case it did.

Smile. Yes, I can see your teeth now. That's better. You look so much better when you smile. Smile, and write that killer thriller.



Oh, I've got to do now, sorry. The phone's ringing. It's...

Oh my God!

One of the leading writers in India, Kulpreet Yadav retired voluntarily from the armed forces to pursue his passion for writing. He lives with his family in Delhi. ■

Kulpreet Yadav is one of the leading writers in India, Kulpreet Yadav retired voluntarily from the armed forces to pursue his passion for writing. He lives with his family in Delhi. Queens of Crime is his latest book co-authored with Sushant Singh Rajput.

# REDEFINING SANJEEVANI AT THE VALLEY OF FLOWERS

Arvind Passey



*VoF – the trail is not easy at all*

**I**t was sometime in the nineteen thirties that Frank S Smythe ‘came upon the lush and colourful Bhyundar Valley, the Valley of Flowers’ and he describes his adventures in the lower and upper Himalayas in his book. Smythe discovered that ‘the predominant note was peace; not the faintest breeze ruffled the herbage and

*the silence was the silence of a vast ocean utterly calm, though always the sounds of the streams came to the ear as a soft, almost imperceptible cadence*. It was this book that prompted me to trek to the Valley of Flowers... and though with the rising popularity of trekking and hiking we were never really in the midst of a predominance of peace, the charm of the place is unforgettable.



*VoF - difficult to decide what to click and what not to click*

## Reaching Ghangaria

The overnight train from Delhi to Rishikesh and then after a nearly eleven hour drive via Rudraprayag and Joshimath, we were finally at Govindghat where we spent the night. The trek to Ghangaria begins from Poolna which is a short drive from Govindghat. There is reasonable walkable path from Poolna to Ghangaria that goes up and down and is sometimes really steep. We were literally huffing and puffing and sweating and the progress was slow. After all we had come from Delhi which is at a height of 216 metres or 709 ft and were now walking from 1,920 metres or 6,300 ft to Ghangaria which is at 2,926 metres or 9,600 ft. The distance has increased now because of the flash floods in Uttarakhand and it took us nearly 8 hours to reach our base as we had to trudge up and down for somewhere between 12 to 14 kms.



*VoF-I know now the reason why clouds rush to the mountains*

Our heavier bags were carried by Gajender Singh Negi, our Kandiwala, who would be coming back to Poolna after dropping our bags at the GMVN resthouse at Ghangaria. Gajender was a sport and waited for us to catch up with him every few hundred metres.

I asked him if the trek is going to get easier after negotiating every steep climb and he smiled and said, ‘This is the easy part. The climb through the forest after we cross the river is really steep.’ Our trekking poles were quite helpful though there were shops en-route selling walking sticks for around 40 INR.

Reaching Ghangaria is the first leg of the trek. To simplify, one stays at Ghangaria and goes on to the next leg, that is, trek to the valley of Flowers. The third day is trekking to Hemkund Sahib and then on the final day one must have the energy left to trek back to Govindghat. Despite a stone-layed path from Govindghat to Ghangaria, the first leg itself can be physically



*VoF the entire route has exotic species*

demanding... however, this part goes through Poolna, Jungle Chatti, Bhyundar, and Randhuni villages and the path along the river Alaknanda goes through a dense forested area. There are large sheds and benches after every km and even paid public restrooms. The few shops owned by the villagers sell all sorts of snacks, lemon-soda, Maggi, and Pyaaz-chana. The locals sweepers and cleaning staff are throughout this route minimizing the possibility of any trekker stepping on mule-shit. At one point as we rested our tired limbs, Gajender told me that there were **plans to construct a motorable road from Govindghat to Ghangaria in the near future. If**



*VoF\_nature at its very best*

**this plan really comes through it is going to spell disaster for the region,** I thought. There will be hordes of city folk driving through a region where one can still hear the calls of birds, the distant gurgle of a fast flowing river, and the sound of wind whispering through Chir and Rhododendron trees.

Ghangaria is a small village with plenty of small hotels, homestays, eateries, chai stalls, facility for foot or body massage, and even those willing to dry your shoes and clothes. There are a few shops selling everything from walking sticks to raincoats and ponchos. But the best part is the tourism office having multiple shows in their small auditorium showing documentaries on the valley of Flowers. One of these documentaries tells visitors about how Hanuman flew to the Garwhal Himalayas to find the ‘Sanveevani’ booti or herb to revive Lakshman, as he lay unconscious in their battle with Ravan.

## Trek to the Valley of Flowers

Ghangaria to the place where the Valley of Flowers begins. Statisticians say that the valley covers around 87 square kms. The trek takes one from 2,195 metres to an altitude of 3,505



*VoF\_flowers that mesmerize the soul*

metres or 11,500 ft. This may look easy but the path that earlier went along the river Pushpawati was destroyed during the flashfloods a few years back and the new path goes winding up the mountain and then down only to keep going up and down and turning and twisting through a dense forested area with large patches of flowers that make everyone stop and admire. I am not a botanist but some of the species one comes across are Meadow Geranium, Snake Foil, Hooked Stick Seed, Himalayan Rose, Blue Poppy, River Anemone, White Leaf Hog Foot and Dog Flower. For me it wasn't so much about identifying Geraniums, Marsh Marigolds, Prinulas, Potentillas, Asters, Liliums, Ranunculus, Corydalis, Inulas, Brahmakamals (plenty on the route to Hemkund), Campanulas, Pedicularis, Arisaemas, Morinas, Impatiens, Bistortas, Ligularias, Anaphalis, Saxifrages, Sibbaldias, Trollius, Codonopsis, Dactylorhizas, Cyripediums, Strawberry, Epilobiums, and Rhododendrons but about hundreds of pauses during the 7 or 8 km trek. Each pause meant standing enraptured by the hues and colours



*VoF\_one of the stars there*

that are all around. No one was rushing through because this is one trek where pausing and wondering is what creates a magical charm that is going to stay on for years. The delicate creations positioned right in the centre of a difficult terrain where landslides are a frequent occurrence is enough to tell me one definition of 'sanjeevani' is the act of moving away from the mundane and into the heart of moments that willingly reveal the secrets of life, if only one stays long enough to listen and understand. By the way, the flowers in the valley bloom from June until September. The officials claim that there are 520 species of flowering plants here. The site was declared a national park in 1982.

But let me not digress into the poetry and philosophy of this trek and hurry to tell you that even part of the trek is fairly steep with a narrow path strewn with large loose stones. No one can call this an easy trek because every time the path opts for a downward incline, the knees yelp! So yes, knee caps can help. Mules aren't allowed into

the valley and entry is ticketed. We did see quite a few who had decided not to trek but sit on a *kandi* or even a *palki*. Unlike the Govindghat-Ghangaria stretch, there are no small villages and no shops selling anything. It is wiser to carry chocolates, snacks, and of course, your lunch-pack and a water bottle. Refilling your water-bottle is easy as there are a few streams that one needs to cross. **The river one meets on this trek is Pushpawati which joins the LaxmanGanga which joins the Alakhnanda that finally adds to the value of Ganga.**

Once you reach the Valley after crossing the gorge and the stream that starts from Nar Parvat, you love it and love everything there. At the entrance of the Valley stands the snow-clad peak of Ratban Parvat, with Nar Parvat to the left separating the Badrinath valley from this valley, and to the right is a dense Birch forest on the hillsides. Once there, all you want to hear is the sound of nature.

The young crowd who obviously reached way before us managed to perch on the few boulders around leaving us with the only option of walking further into the valley... which was good because if you manage to walk for another couple of kilometres inside, you reach the



*Ghangaria for those who aren't accustomed to long treks, this appears like a saviour*

glacier at the other end. It is only the habituated trekker and the young who do this. Those who do go further inside come across the **memorial of Ms Margaret Legge** who was a botanist from Edinburgh and was here in 1939 but slipped and died. She was buried by the locals and the memorial erected by her sister when she visited the spot much later.

The place is a literal paradise. One wishes to stay here forever... but the rules of the forest department are stringent and one must report to the ticketing counter by 5 in the evening. One of the finest moments of this trek was as we stood at a height and got our first view of the valley before going down and across a tributary of river Pushpawati. The eyes were mesmerized by the miles and miles of gently swaying stanzas of different colours with occasional couplets of green meandering between them in careless abandon. It does not matter how deep you walk into the valley because the moment you see it from a distance, you know you have had the best introduction to poetry.

The valley has lot of mythological stories connected to it... and the 'sanjeevani' booti searched by hanuman is just one of the many references from the Ramayana and the



*VoF\_this is nature's own garden that spreads all over an entire valley*

Mahabharata. The title of this article mentions redefining 'sanjeevani' at the Valley of Flowers and so besides the minor explanation that I've already mentioned earlier, there are **three suggestions** for not just this place but



*Ghangaria\_the walking sticks in case you do not have a trekking pole*

for almost every other hill destination:

**ONE** : Each visitor generates a lot of disposable garbage during these short trips and we know how difficult and expensive it is for those involved with its disposal. There are instances where people simply throw empty plastic bottles down treacherous slopes and they just stay there. Imagine the harm that thousands of tons of such material can do to our environment. I suggest that every visitor to the hills must carry his or her disposable garbage back to the plains where disposal is easier.

**TWO** : Single use plastic bottles and plastic carry bags should be banned from these places. There are plenty of streams and safe water can always be piped to strategic refilling points.

**THREE** : The idea of having a motorable road going up to Ghangaria is completely daft and needs to be discarded without assigning any reasons. Not just this, let the entry to the valley as well as other prime hill stations remain restricted with permits that can and must be obtained from the tourism departments of the states. Chakrata and Lansdowne are good examples of how restrictions help... though the civilian authorities have allowed the villages on the outskirts of Lansdowne to turn into multi-storied slums. ■







## Making A Choice for RIGHT CAREER FIT

Dr A K Puri

# C

hoosing a career for life involves decisions that are to be based on realities of life rather than wishful thinking.

In India career lines get somewhat established at the time of stream choices at the High School entry level. As a student enters eleventh standard she has to choose one out of Science, Commerce or Arts streams for further studies. At an average age of about fifteen years each student is required to freeze the related career options within each stream that is to be taken up post senior secondary studies. The science stream

entitles a student to pursue courses at graduate level as higher studies in Engineering, Healthcare, Pure Sciences, Information Technology and the likes. Commerce stream allows students to take up courses in Business, Accounts and Economics. Arts stream is the entry point for higher studies in History, Political Science, Languages and liberal/ performing arts.

The irony of this system is that while science stream students can switch to take up courses in higher studies of commerce or arts stream; commerce students can take up courses in higher studies of arts stream; arts students are denied this privilege of studying courses in commerce and science and commerce students are not permitted to take up courses of higher studies in Science.

At this juncture of life most of the students are clueless about careers and the prospects these streams will offer in future. This may result in the streams getting chosen either by herd mentality of students (largely driven by following the favorite buddies) or parents making choices that may at times be manifestations of latent unfulfilled ambitions of their own lives.

When you're looking at different career options, you should consider the earning potential for each one. You can weigh things like salary and benefits against your passion for that particular career path.

Perhaps doing something you love is more important to you than a high level of income devoid of any excitement in life. For leading a comfortable life, however a knowledge of level of income required and finding a career that will match the financial requirements is critical. An easy way to find it out is to know what is your family's average monthly household expense now. Adjust it for the future inflation to know how much you will require to earn to run your family as you become bread earner in future.

### List Your Interests

Think about the things that genuinely interest you when it comes to a work environment. An excellent place to start is by making a list of the things you do well. How could they be applied to a career? If not sure with you answers ask your parents, teachers and friends for a review of your list.

### Discover Your Attitude to Life

We all have different attitudes toward work and get driven by a range of motivations for the outcome of our fruits of labour in job situations. How one feels about a job carries forward to the home life. If you're contented at work, your family life will most likely be better. There is a need to know your temperament and match it with the same as job requirement

For a self-motivated person with a positive attitude about hard work, a leadership position in any job may be highly rewarding.

How one responds to new challenges defines growth in life. A habit to pick up one

It's time the system treats students as adults and help them make a rational choice for their career!

We'll be focusing on important factors you should think about when you're choosing your course of study. By keeping these factors in mind, you're more likely to go into a career path that you enjoy, and experience success along the way.

Determine How Much Do You Want to Earn?

challenge at a time and excel to confront it is the sure path to high street of achievement. This attitude to work life may help you realize the job and segment of activity which is the right fit for you.

Picking up a career that does not match your degree of attitude and determination to face or avoid challenge can make you unhappy and frustrated in life. And, it won't

likely be a job that you stay in for too long. Attitude is essential when it comes to the work environment.

## Identify Sunrise Sectors for Jobs

There are many job industries today that didn't exist ten years ago. There are thousands of jobs within those industries that are still barely being tapped into. Most of this is due to advancements in technology. Taking a step into these 'new worlds' can be exciting.

Before you select a career, you need to determine whether you're comfortable working with advancing, ever-changing technology. If it's a large part of a career path, you'll have to immerse yourself in it. Some people are quick to embrace these changes, but not everyone. Others feel more comfortable utilizing with the skills they already know. Technology will continue to change and grow – will you be a pioneer with each new step, or would you prefer a career that relies on the technology you're already familiar with?

One of the best places to start looking for a new career path is focusing on opportunities where the demand is high. It may be frustrating to pursue a path with limited number of job options. You may end up in a sector where you have to spend years slowly working your way up from the bottom of the pile. A large demand for recruitment, even at the lower levels opens up opportunities for growth at all levels. Make a list of sectors of industry and business which are likely to require a large manpower in future. It could be of innovative technology, upcoming entrepreneurial enterprises or game changing business practices at their nascent stage.

Online trade, digital payment platforms, healthcare services, use of artificial intelligence, cyber security and digital marketing are some of the opportunities showing promise of a spurt in manpower demand as examples of sunrise sectors.

However, certain industries seem to stand the test of time better than others. Medicine and technology are always the future. There are many careers experiencing steady growth. As long as you do your research and ensure that the industry you're looking at has job vacancies, you'll definitely be on the right track.

## Go with Your Passion

An interest and a passion for something are entirely different things. Some of the most successful people in the world have a real passion for what they do. You may have interests that don't necessarily line up with these passions, so it's important to differentiate the two.

What are you passionate about? Make a list of several of your passions to start narrowing down. Chances are, a few of them will be as practical as they are passion-filled. Finding the right combination of what you love and what is a feasible career can make the entire experience much easier.

Keep in mind that passion doesn't always guarantee financial success. You have to decide what might be more important to you. You may be interested in more lucrative jobs. You may even have the right skillset for them. But, if they don't fulfill your passions, you may find yourself always wanting more. Having a career that you're passionate about typically equals long-term success and fulfillment.

## Focus on Your Idea of Success

Your definition of success is crucial to the type of career you choose. Some jobs will reward you with a hefty paycheck. Others will give you the opportunity to help people. Some professions will even be a combination of things.

One person's definition of success may not be the same as others. While a good salary is nice, if it does not help make one feel successful, you are likely to feel as though something is missing from your life. That can leave you feeling frustrated and disappointed.

Before you choose a career, make a list of the things you feel you would need in a job to make you feel successful. The answers can be very many. We tend to define success with numbers. On a personal level, it can be very subjective considerations, though. Some persons may get the satisfaction in life through serving others selflessly. For some, it could be spreading happiness among the have nots that can be the driving force of life.

Seek advice by Talking to Others Talk to someone who has already been through the same course of study you are targeting to pursue. There's a good chance you'll get very specific information about the career under consideration. Plus, they'll be able to give you an inside view of what you can expect.

There are a lot of things to consider when you're making such a big choice for your life. Thankfully, the more time and thought you give these factors now, the easier your ultimate choice can be. It can pay off even more once you've completed your course of study!

Once you have a basic idea about a career that interests you, create a roadmap. Make a plan of action that has the potential to convert your dreams into reality.

Wish you a happy journey of work life! ■

# TECHNOLOGY IS A DOUBLE SHOT OF ESPRESSO

Arvind Passey

I've always believed that technology dances with the spirit of life... and I did not use the word humanity because from agriculture and medicine to entertainment and information, from the ethics of politics and the economics of infrastructure, and even from the sweat and blood of relationships to the heat and dust of yearnings it is technological innovations that determine the path that decisions take. Yes, there are times when we tend to overestimate the effect of a technology in the short run and underestimate the effect in the long run but this word literally rolls in the history, geography, and the sociology of moments like nothing else does.

Technology is the new high in education, a supremely heady feeling that isn't all fizz and fun because what drives it is a concern for everything that exists. So if you thought technology was all about looking for a television that was way beyond QLED and SUHD, buying only the latest iPhone or Galaxy Note, or that this instinct hobnobbed only with brands like Rolex, Lamborghini, Bang & Olufsen, Bose, and Hasselblad, you're terribly wrong.

Really? Isn't it always the latest expensive and exclusive innovative offering that gives joy its most influential adrenaline shots? The answer is NO. I realized this fact half-way up a short but steep trek near Chakrata. As we slowly made our way up the rock-strewn

path, another trekker on his way down stopped and said, 'There are plenty of sturdy branches in this part of the trek. Choose one. It helps you while going up and makes the return journey really comfortable'. Seeing the expression of doubt on our faces he smiled and added, 'Your knees will thank you for your choice. Trekking poles would have been ideal but now that you don't have even walking sticks, the jungle gives you nature's alternative to technology.'

That trekker was right. Technology doesn't always come covered with complex ICs and mind-boggling end-results of machine intelligence. Technology doesn't always need metallurgy and ceramics experts to help new-age AI brains rest in a comfortable and safe housing. Technology is an idea that is smart enough to silence the 'if' in life.

Technology goes out into the fields to help farmers understand everything from the uncertainties of the weather to the economics of type of crop that will maximize yield. This enigma is there in our hospitals and medical specialists to help us remain healthier for longer. Yes, technology also makes connecting with the world so much easier. If you think technology is a serious looking bloke doing things that makes us work smarter, you're right because it does just that but also ushers in a lot of fun for all ages. After all, if it wasn't for technology we wouldn't today be sitting and asking Alexa to switch on

our lights and kids wouldn't be tapping a few buttons to get fuller explanations of complex issues.

However, technology not only demands more attention and has a steep learning curve at times, it also brings with it issues circumnavigating environmental pollution, and issues of stressed out minds that then look for escape routes. There is then the ever-increasing menace of hackers and tech-savvy thieves who are forever out with newer ways to give crime a new dimension.

Technology is both amazing as well as intimidating for a lot of the 7.5 billion people on earth of which barely 40% are comfortable with living their lives with the internet meandering through moments. We are living in a world where more than 350,000 tweets per minute, thousands of virtual friends on the social media platforms, and 24 hours of video uploaded per minute jostle for our attention. We are living in heady times when the future casually asks us to embrace self-driven cars, accept the growing power of cryptocurrency, and allow robots to accomplish tasks that we were doing.

So yes, when a friend asked me what I thought about technology, I replied, 'Technology is a double shot of espresso. It can make the heart beat faster in excitement and can leave you sleepless for a long time.' ■



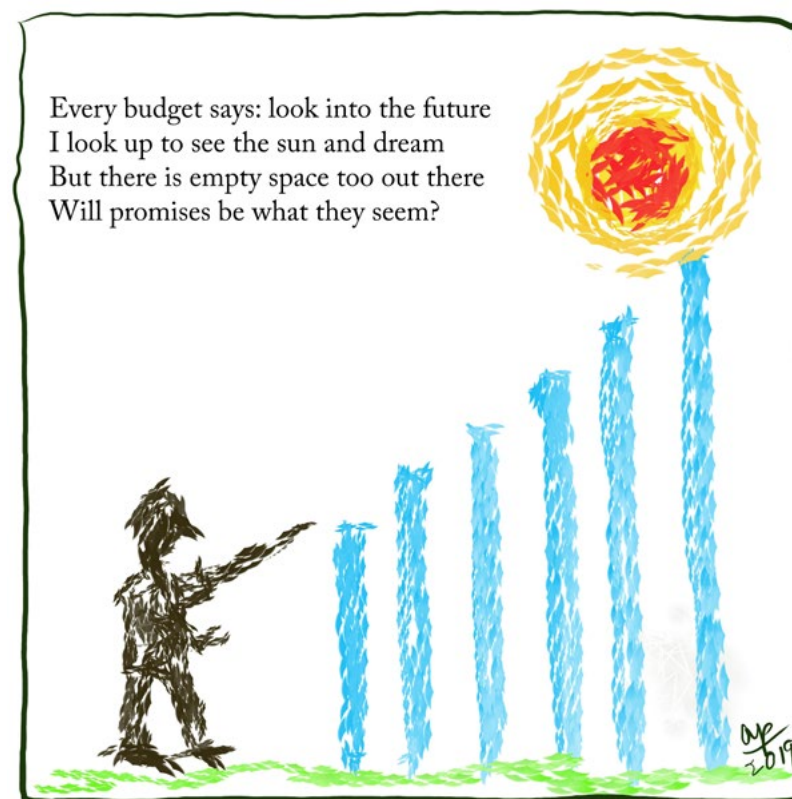
# POST-BUDGET PERIOD IS ROFL TIME

Arvind Passey

# T

here will be hundreds of seriously analytical articles carefully torn from newspapers and rolled into cones to sell salted peanuts on every street all over the country... so one can safely say that even the written word in India is a job creator. The budget, of course, sings mellifluously about promoting just this in place of being whining job seekers forever.

Post budget period is always a delight and Specky, my wife, summed it up rather well when she said, "It is rofl time for all." I guess it is because if we have Manoj Tiwari shouting about the realization of "the farmers, youth, women, and poor people" we have other equally vociferous utterings saying just the opposite. Just open any newspaper and you'll know what a battlefield looks like. The post-budget period is indeed ROFL time the moment the opposition leaders begin commenting.



As a common man I am completely submerged in decibels that mix-n-matches capital gains with step-motherly treatment, and terms like relaxations and reliefs begin to hobnob with bitter pills, duty hikes, and tax cuts with Mr Modi nudging in words that sound like "hope". Derek O'Brien of TMC said that "the government is still only selling dreams and not delivering. Far from a dream, it's a nightmare for common people who are suffering." Well, I've seen so many budgets in the past and most of them are doing just this. Like every other budget, what matters most is how speedily and surely well-meant pronouncements are going to move in the real world of mounting economic stress after both bouquets and brickbats have lived their ephemeral lives.

With so much hot air breathed by the opposition leaders on a mere budget speech, I'm not surprised that cool air is no longer going to be as affordable as it was in the past. Sitaram Yechury of CPM went on and on about every kind of distress from agrarian to infrastructure to investment and he breathed so much fire only to ask for debt-relief! P Chidambaram from INC was amazed about figures of revenue generated "through the increase in the prices of fuel. We will have to sit and calculate that but it's never happened in the past." He is going to have to work over-time and we will end up paying more for cool air.

P Chidambaram also remarked that "the voices of other ordinary citizen or economists" have not been consulted. Come on now, if one has to build a \$5 trillion economy by 2024, one cannot possibly keep play the debate game forever. We've already spent decades hurling objections for political motives and anyway, why would the ordinary citizen want to get sleepless over economics when there are more interesting things happening in the world of cricket.

It is difficult to keep rofl-ing over dry figure-inundated economy-infested words that budgets fires towards us unless people like Mamata Banerjee step in. She called

it "completely visionless which will increase the sufferings of the people" and was clearly out-classed by Sheila Dikshit who declared it to be "a disappointing budget – full of rhetoric and tokenism..." Randeep Singh Surjewala of INC decided to get a bit more creative in his comment and called it "an utterly lackluster, non-descript, uninspiring and directionless budget. Zero on economic revival. Zero on job creation." Quite obviously then, poor Amarinder Singh had nothing left to pick up and so he calmly said that the budget "has nothing to offer to any section of the society." The point to be considered here is that everyone knows that every budget aims to boost business and invariably has features that have a deep impact on whatever facet is important for the period in question.

Budgets have always been about the birth of new slogans. This one in 2019 is no exception. *Naari to Narayani* nudges women empowerment and obviously aims to target issues like construction of toilets and triple talaq. *Har ghar jal* is the resolve to make safe drinking water available to every household. *Gaon, garib, kisan* touches upon housing, roads, and farmer-friendly policies and schemes. The problem with impressive taglines and slogans is that they have invariably remained just that in the past. I do have a lot of *asha, vishwas, and aakanksha* this time simply because *yakin hi toh koi rasta nikalta hai*, to quote the current FM Nirmala Sitharaman. ■



## THE DANGERS OF MISUNDERSTANDING NUTRITION

**N**utrition invariably carries with it a bunch of myths that need to be understood in the right perspective lest running after them becomes a major risk. When the tenets of nutrition are misunderstood they tend to rise and terrorise.

### Are nutrition myths dangerous?

Yes, they can be. The next plausible question will be if one can take Nutrition advice from one's next door neighbor and BFF? Obviously no if you are serious about your health. A friend told me they were bamboozled by false health information on TV & social media. Another talked about several blogs having raving reviews for a honey brand with the same language! One reader asked me why I didn't like soybean when so many health bloggers loved it!

Well, health blogging is competitive but definitely profitable. However, if you are worried about the quality of information that you consume, be careful. Just as you need to watch what you eat, you must carefully curate what you read. As a doctor, I am legally licensed to give health information.

You might want to ask if self-proclaimed Health and nutrition gurus without license are dangerous? This question works for me and so I would be careful about going for a crash course or some sort of a bridge course and I would also be careful when googling for medical and health information as even Google has cracked its whip on health sites recently. All these precautions are essential because



contradictory information, and no credentials, just step away and restart your search.

### Nutrition Myths Busted

#### Myth 1:

*When you want to lose weight, expensive health food is the only way!*

Diet food versus *Gharkakhana* or home-cooked food. This is the fight between so-called health food and healthy food. India has different food cultures from North to South and East to West. What's interesting is that in all the regions, *Gharkakhana* is more or less healthy. Keeping the calories in mind, eating fresh, controlling portion size, actually works if you don't have medical obesity.

Just remember that all those packets of *dietnamkeen*, lose-extra-pounds-cornflakes, and diet soda are not suitable for anyone. Diet *namkeen* or baked *namkeens*, for instance, has only a minuscule difference in calorie count from the fried variants. Check the food label at the back of the pack and compare. If it doesn't have nutrition and calorie information in a standard format, it's not a good idea to snack on it!

#### Myth 2: *Skip the carbs*

It is fine to believe that skipping carbohydrates forever is not sustainable. For working adults, children, and adolescents an inclusion of carbs is necessary, for instance, if the brain needs to keep doing its job. The brain needs a lot of sugar as it is the only energy substrate that neurons can break down. It is possible to form glucose from protein and fat but needs hours of complex metabolic process. Therefore, in the morning before going to school or college of work, you need that carb. Get the right carbs without fearing their complex structure.

Fruits and veggies have complex fibers which help in slow breakdown and release of sugars in the bloodstream. Fruit juices are just not equal to fruits as the more processed your food is, the worse it is for your body. A golden rule to know is that good complex carbs simplify health. Do not skip the carbs!

some of these YLYM (Your life, your money) update can seriously jeopardize your health aims. Thus the source of your information needs to be diligently authenticated before you decide to follow the advice mentioned there. You cannot obviously blame misprints for your health.

Does this mean that one must necessarily stop Googling? No, just curate with care. The search engines make information freely available, giving you an overview. To separate the grain from the chaff, you need professional help.

### What to look for in an online health resource?

A good authority site will display the credentials of the author. Check sites like Lybrate and LinkedIn for qualifications of the doctor who wrote the post if you are interested. Lybrate listing needs medical registration details uploaded before listing. Most sites, like the Mayo clinic have the name and credentials of doctors displayed. Do check resources mentioned in the blog post that you are referring as they need to be from authority sources.

If information appears to be biased and with

**Myth 3: Salt restriction is needed only if you have a blood pressure problem**

Excessive sodium can be a problem for all of us. What we must know is when food has excessive salt that can harm. The saltiness in your food is because of table salt or common salt chemically known as sodium chloride. When you add salt while cooking, they break down sodium enter your cells. This increases sodium load. But food may still not be salty enough as the nature of the compound changes and sodium and chloride acts no longer like table salt. But what if you add the salt at the end of the cooking process? This is when it lightly coats the food, doesn't break down well, and steps out of the permissible range.

The trick here is to know how much salt is fine. It is safer to take about one teaspoon (5 gram) of salt every day. But it will be better if one restricts salt intake to 3 gram per day for better cardiovascular health.

Most processed food is HFSS (High-fat salt sugars) driven and is a well-known devil in pretty packaging. Think fast food, packaged snacks and you'll know that the saltier food is, the more sugar you crave. In simpler terms, it is not advisable to risk your health by following celebrity endorsement of unhealthy health food.

**Myth 4: The soybean myth: The good, bad & ugly**

The good part of a soybean rich diet is that it has high-class protein and plant estrogen besides PUFA. It is full of antinutrients that block the good effects of other nutrients. Without fermentation, soybean is not good for you. The Chinese use a lot of soy products but they are nearly always in a fermented state. Also, it is bad for your thyroid gland. The soy you eat is a waste product after the soya oil is extracted. It's not fit for human consumption until it undergoes chemical processing and additives. You already have enough soy protein in your diet through the hidden sources and so there is no need for more anyway.

A lot of studies point to controversial and contradictory results. While the Chinese and Japanese consume about 8 gram of fermented soya per day through their diet, a higher consumption trend has been noticed in the food habits in the west. The ugly perspective of soybean includes thyroid dysfunction and obesity that can affect even the way you think.

What about Soya milk? Even this form of soya can make one gain weight without increase of any other calorie source... and it is so easy to chug down calories when in liquid form. Therefore, choose your protein with care.

**Myth 5: About Probiotics in health drinks work**

Probiotics are the good bacteria in your gut, oral cavity and elsewhere, which have surprising benefits. Improving gut health is most well known but they also

affect mental health, oro-dental health and more. This part is no myth. The problem starts with the source of probiotics.

People often wonder if fresh is better than packaged or if it is beneficial to supplement diet from Probiotic health drinks? Probiotics are live bacteria and need good preservation and handling. The best sources are packaged well to maintain the viability of organisms. Consuming probiotics that are multistrain is better as different strains have different actions and usefulness. Sometimes even commercial yogurt has acceptable levels of viable organisms. One must remember that products with added sugars, flavors and chemical agents with probiotic bacteria will have limited health benefits in the long run. If you want to include probiotics, have fresh homemade curd, set around 12 hours earlier. This is the purest source of live bacteria.

**Myth 6: All calories are similar**

Is a calorie just a calorie or more? Does the source of calorie change how the body uses it? These are all questions which have vague and contradictory answers. Fat metabolism is much more efficient at storage stage but is different once nutrients break down. So while you need a balanced diet, how much of what you eat is essential. The difference between calorie in and calorie out determines whether you gain weight or not and thus a balance in intake is crucial.

We are all responsible for our own health choices. It is best if one makes healthy choices after consultation with a professional. Beware of falling victim to nutrition myths.

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# MOVING EDUCATION FORWARD



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The vision of India's new education system has accordingly been crafted to ensure that it touches the life of each and every citizen, consistent with their ability to contribute to many growing developmental imperatives of this country on the one hand, and towards creating a just and equitable society on the other. The Report argued that education throughout life was based on four pillars:

## Drawing from India's heritage

The aim of education in ancient India was not just the acquisition of knowledge, as preparation for life in this world or for life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of the self.

Culturally, India has been, and continues to be, a cradle of great diversity in all walks of life, with its myriad languages and dialects, with as many as seven classical dance forms and two classical music forms, many well-developed traditions of folk arts and music, pottery, sculptures and bronzes, exquisite architecture, incredible cuisines, fabulous textiles of all kinds, and so much more.

As Einstein said to a group of children "Bear in mind that the wonderful things you learn in your schools is the work of many generations. All this is put into your hands as your inheritance in order that you may receive it, honor it, add to it, and one day faithfully hand it on to your children. Thus do we mortals achieve immortality in the permanent things that we create in common".

## Taking forward the agenda of previous education policies

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE Act) which came into force in April 2010, entitles every child of the age of six to fourteen years to the right to free and compulsory education in a neighbourhood school till the completion of elementary education. The narrow time lag between the generation of new knowledge and its application, especially in the fields of science and technology, necessitate the periodic renewal of school and higher education curricula to maintain their relevance to the changing societal and personal needs of learners, and the emerging national development goals.

## Alignment with the global sustainable development goals

The direction of the global education development agenda is reflected in the sustainable development goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Another dimension of the future of education is the need to deal with the connected dimensions of education. An overarching aspect of SDG4 is that of inclusion and fostering quality education, and in order to be a practitioner in the field of education, one needs to have some orientation to this mode of thinking.

### An integrated yet flexible approach to education

The present Policy begins with viewing early childhood care and education (ECCE) as a part of the Foundational stage of school education (three years of pre-primary education and Grades 1 and 2), a single curricular and pedagogical phase of play- and discovery-based learning for very young children, between the ages of 3-8 years. In conceptualising and drafting an overarching Policy for education development, the Committee has kept the interconnectedness of the various phases of education in mind and how the same will enable continuity, coherence and processes to ultimately realise an end-to-end educational roadmap for the country. The concept of interconnectedness also provides for preparation of the students for further studies at higher levels through proper orientation, coming from early efforts at broad-based liberal education that will be introduced at the Secondary stage of education.

### Liberal arts approach in higher education

In this context, several institutions of higher studies across the world have implemented what we today characterise as Liberal Education through an array of different disciplines that include the Arts, Humanities, Mathematics and Sciences suitably integrated with a deeper study of a special area of interest. The available assessments on such an approach that integrate the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) have showed positive learning outcomes. More explicitly, the outcomes here include, among other things, increased critical thinking abilities, higher order thinking and deeper learning, mastery of content, problem solving, team work and communication skills besides general engagement and enjoyment of learning.

### Focus on high quality research

The Masters and Doctoral levels are being strengthened with provision of at least three routes into the Masters'

degree - a one-year degree, a two-year degree, and the integrated five-year degree. The NRF will catalyse research in universities and colleges, institutions that have hitherto not been big players in the research scene of the country, and help build the capacity to do research through an institutionalised mentoring mechanism, involving expert researchers from premier institutions in the country.

### Facilitating transformation of the education system

None of this will be possible without passionate and committed school teachers and faculty in higher education institutions who will take charge of transforming the education system as envisioned in this Policy. It is expected that in the years to come, universities will provide opportunities for higher education and research, in a multidisciplinary environment and suitably integrate professional education, such as agriculture, medicine, law, etc., thus making education a truly holistic exercise, with flexibility for students to make their own choices, thereby bringing in the best of creativity and originality. With regard to regulation, we have made our recommendations based on a key principle namely, that regulation, provision of education, accreditation, funding, and standard setting, will all be done by separate entities, and that regulation will be kept to a minimum. The approach should be to ensure that both political initiatives and administrative systems serve the goal of transforming the education system, and eliminating the power of vested interests, improving the transparency and efficiency of regulation, and investing public resources in areas that build the capital for effecting change. The RSA will bring in a new approach to governance that will draw considerable expertise through educationists, researchers and professionals, and provide oversight of the educational system that is consistent with the objectives of a 21st century education system.

### Facilitating national development

India aspires to take its place beside the United States and China as the third largest economy by 2030-2032, the same period during which this Policy will bring about the biggest transformation. Even at the risk of repetition, it would be appropriate to recognise that becoming a ten trillion dollar economy will give us the money we need, but if we don't spend now then it will not be easy to achieve and sustain such a large economy.

### Ensuring implementation in spirit and intent

Within the broad framework of the Policy objectives and initiatives, States and Union Territories will be encouraged to (i) prioritise and adapt the broader Policy objectives and targets to their contexts; (ii) formulate state-specific targets and education sector development programmes/plans within the broader scope of the national Policy objectives; Considering the extraordinary influence that an educational endeavour has on society and vice versa, it is important not to overlook societal response to the different aspects of building of a knowledge society for which this Policy is expected to play a central role. The National Education Policy 2019 provides a framework for the transformation and reinvigoration of the education system in order to respond to the requirements of fast-changing, knowledge-based societies while taking into account the diversity of the Indian people, their traditions, cultures, and languages. Highest priority is accorded to the task of ensuring universal access to an education of high quality and breadth that would support India's continued ascent, progress, and leadership on the global stage - in terms of economic development, social justice and equality, environmental stewardship, scientific advancement and cultural preservation, and help develop and maximise our country's rich talents and resources for the good of the individual, the country, and the world. ■

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