

Experts Discuss the Role of NEP in Achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals

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Exploring ways to incorporate and align Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the New Education Policy (NEP), IIHMR University, Jaipur, conducted a webinar on "Decoding New Education Policy 2020: Role of National Education Policy in Achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals." The Webinar was first in the recently launched IIHMR Webinar Series on 'Decoding NEP 2020'. Eminent speakers participated in the webinar, including **Dr. V N Rajasekharan Pillai**, (Former Vice-Chairman, University Grants Commission, India), Vice Chancellor, **Somaya Vidyavihar University**, Mumbai; **Dr. Rajesh Tandon**, UNESCO Chair and Founder, PRIA, New Delhi; **Mr. Pooran Chandra Pandey**, Resident Representative, Climate Scorecard (USA), New Delhi; **Dr. Sanjay Zodpey**, Vice President, Public Health Foundation of India, Director, Indian Institute of Public Health, Delhi; and **Dr. W. Chandrabu Singh**, Registrar, Manipur Central University, Manipur. **Dr. S.D Gupta**, Chairperson, IIHMR University, chaired the session and **Dr. P.R. Sodani** addressed the experts and gave a brief on NEP.

Dr. S D Gupta said that in 2015 UN came with SDG's and most of the goals are targeted to be achieved by 2030. NEP 2020 is genuinely transformative. We all are aware of the education system right from the primary level to higher education. We expanded hugely in India in higher education, including vocational that we lost sight of education quality. The higher education institutions got the raw product beyond repair, which was challenging to transform due to the lack of quality. The SDG 4 aligns with the NEP 2020, ensuring inclusive, adequate, quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. The policy is transformative and gives a free hand to the higher education institutions and gives autonomy to refine, define, and redesign curriculum, which helps grow and develop skills. It is high time to prepare the young generation to be global citizens. The NEP gives a significant opportunity for quality and affordable education and accessibility to lifelong learning, which can bring a transformation in the Indian education system.

Dr. Rajesh Tandon said that we have 17 SDGs, and among them, the top 5 SDG's cannot be addressed separately. SDGs must be implemented and addressed locally and must be approached holistically. One cannot address health without looking at poverty, nutrition, water, education and gender status. All factors are interwoven. Socially responsible higher education integrates teaching and research to multidisciplinary locally integrated approaches with teaching, learning, research and producing knowledge. It is the cumulative effect of locally achieved SDGs that the nation as a whole can achieve SDGs. The current curriculum needs modification. It should be more disciplinary and integrated. Get the students to study engagingly in their communities and interact locally. We should foster social responsibility and community engagement in Higher education institutions. The institutions need to contribute to the generation of knowledge for achieving SDGs in a different context. SDGs' achievement requires finding new solutions to various socio-economic challenges and new knowledge will be essential to achieve this.

Dr. P. R. Sodani, Officiating President, IIHMR University, said that SDG has a long-lasting effect on the country's development and growth. When we talk about education, the quality of education is the critical pillar for the growth and development of any geography and society. If the quality of education is strong, we will produce an adequate workforce for the country and contribute to its national income. The NEP 2020 has some great ideas, including access to education, quality education, and affordable education. There are many features, and our government wants to accomplish this. We can create a new India by NEP 2020. The thematic issues include a multidisciplinary approach, internationalization, exit or entry system and credit bank. IIHMR University is taking the lead to discuss all these thematic issues separately and the challenges it brings with its execution.

Dr. V N Rajasekharan Pillai, said that it is for enhancing the quality of life and life management systems when it comes to education. It is essential to understand the context of knowledge and skills. The purpose of education is to provide knowledge, and if we have meaningful education, we should apply it to society. The context of higher education institutions was different from the present. So, we cannot apply the same context to the present time. NEP has many forward-looking ideas. Meaningful engagement with society or employment is the gross success ratio. When it talks about world-class universities, it talks about such universities' characteristics, which is excellence in teaching and research. Higher education institutions should be given complete freedom through a regulatory body that can stop any administrative or political interference.

Dr. Sanjay Zodpey shared that the NEP 2020 is for the advancement of SDG4 in the country. The contribution of education in enhancing health is essential. For achieving this, the policy should have a multidisciplinary perspective. It should adopt a systems approach that should have linkages between education and the job market. The implementation of such an approach requires ground-breaking reforms. The country's health professional education is fragmented and outdated. Our education and work competencies do not match, with poor teamwork and narrow technical focus. This is the main reason for producing ill-equipped graduates. NEP 2020 should focus on redesigning institutional reforms for higher professional education. We must focus on transformative learning. We must move from informative to formative learning and then from formative to transformative learning.

Mr. Pooran Chandra Pandey added that the SDGs could be laid down in the societal, economic and environment bucket. All three factors are equally important for the accomplishment and execution of SDGs. Through NEP 2020, the government of India envisions changing the whole paradigm to something very harmonious. Mr. Pandey emphasized that higher education has special role beyond SDG4, as it drives the capacity building and knowledge development for remaining SDGs.

Dr. W. Chandrababu Singh shared his insights on NEP 2020 and shared that the rest of the sixteen SDGs fail without quality education. NEP initiatives are focused on teaching, research, engagement and campus operations. We must change the teaching and learning process and the entire pedagogy needs to transform.

In the beginning, Dr. P. R. Sodani, Officiating President, IIHMR University, gave a brief introduction on the topic and its relevance. The Webinar was moderated by Dr. Shiv Tripathi, Professor and Dean (Training), IIHMR University.