

REPORT: NATIONAL STUDENT SEMINAR

“NEP 2020 – A NEW PARADIGM TO EMPOWER INDIA”

The Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan (UBA) and Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) of SLC in collaboration with Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas (SSUN) organized a National Student Seminar on “NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY(NEP) 2020 – A NEW PARADIGM TO EMPOWER INDIA”. The seminar was conducted on February 16, 2021 in the College Seminar Hall with 100 participants physically present in the college (including faculty and students) and over 1500 participants joined on virtual platform Zoom and Facebook. The Seminar comprised of an Inaugural Session, one Plenary Session and three Parallel Sessions with students’ paper presentations. The seminar was inaugurated by Shri. Atul Kothari Ji (National Secretary, Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas) with Prof. P.C. Joshi (Acting Vice Chancellor, University of Delhi) as the Guest of Honour and Prof. BalaramPani (Dean of Colleges, University of Delhi), Prof. V.K Kaul (Senior Professor, Department of Finance and Business Economics, University of Delhi), Prof. Kumar Suresh (NIEPA, Delhi), Dr. Debasis Dash (Senior Scientist, CSIR-IGIB) as the distinguished guests and speakers.

The Seminar was intended to focus on NEP 2020 to build an intellectual, socially aware, informed and skilled nation that can inspire the people so as to make the country self-reliant and reclaim the position of *Vishwa Guru*. The Seminar offered an opportunity to all the stakeholders to come forward and interact with experts and make suggestions. The event was also honoured by Shri Arun Kumar Sharma (Manniya Vibhag Sangh chalak, Yamuna Vihar Vibhag and Manager of Arwachin International Group of Schools), Shri Sanjay Swami (Educationist, National Secretary Environment, Sanskriti Uthaan Nyas), Advocate Mukesh Bhardwaj (Educationist, Administration and legal Services, Dharm Jagran Manch, Delhi). The Inaugural session began with the introduction of the theme, purpose and structure of the seminar by Dr.Kusha Tiwari (Convenor, IQAC). The seminar had received 50 papers from students from the educational institution from states like Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Maharashtra and many more. Prof. Rabi Narayan Kar, Principal, SLC (University of Delhi) Shyam Lal College gave the Welcome Address thanked the Chief Guest Shri Kothari ji for coming to the college physically to grace the inaugural session of the seminar. Talking about the NEP, he said, it employs inclusive approach rather than being exclusive. Further, he explained that the NEP 2020 opens wider gates for the students to pursue variety of subjects to blend their professional goals and personal hobbies,

e.g. students can opt out for physics and music simultaneously something which students could not previously. He also highlighted how the NEP 2020 keeps us connected to our past, our values that form the core of *Indianness* while we stretch our wings and try new avenues of the future. He further maintained that this policy document is substantive as it lays emphasis on practical learning rather than merely relying on rote learning. He congratulated the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan and the IQAC team and the convener Dr. Kusha Tiwari for the novel initiative of involving students through the means of the seminar as they are an important target group of the NEP 2020.

Prof. P C Joshi, Vice-Chancellor (Acting), University of Delhi, owing to his inevitable engagements at the university, addressed the audience online as the Guest of the Honour. In his address, he appreciated the efforts put by SLC team led by Prof. Rabi Narayan Kar in organizing such a thoughtful seminar on a topic that is of utmost concern for the Indian educational system. He was happy to see that such a huge number of stakeholders were participating in the deliberations of the seminar physically as well as through virtual mode. Talking about the NEP, he said, it's a new paradigm and new hope for the education in India. **He further said that the 42 member committee constituted by the University of Delhi recommends pertinent points for the advantage of students. He also emphasized that, as facilitated by the NEP 2020, students are empowered to take as many courses as they want to, depending on their professional goals and personal interest. He observed that the initiatives such as Central University Common Admission Test is a progressive step that adopts more acceptable and more progressive steps in admitting students to various courses at the university level. He also wished happy Vasant Panchami to all the attendees.**

Shri Atul Kothari Ji, National Secretary, Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas, remained personally present in the college for the inaugural session of the seminar. While addressing participants at the inaugural session, he elaborately spoke on the various features and provisions of the NEP. While appreciating the organizing committee of the seminar Shri Kothari ji maintained that Indian educational system has a policy that centers on its core values and principles after 150 years. He further informed the audience that the document on educational policy has come by conducting wider consultations with stakeholders from various strata of the society residing in villages, cities and janjati (tribal) areas of the country. He further added that the work on NEP started in 2015 through Subhramanyan Committee and Kasturiragna

Committee. The concerned experts conducted 35 seminars and symposiums that involved more than 5000 persons and received 250,000 suggestions in relation to the NEP.

Explaining the core impetus of NEP 2020 he said, the NEP's vision mentioned on the 8th page states that it wants to do away with contradictions and wants to promote thoughts and intellect rooted in *Indianness*. He further expanded on the NEP being student centric policy that has multiple level entry and exit points. The academic bank of credits (ABC) earned can be utilized for further studies without having to start all over again. He further mentioned about the online learning facility in respective mother tongues/local languages of the student/s. Various regulatory bodies such as UGC and AICTE would be merged together to form Higher Education Commission. The NEP has a provision to set up National Research Foundation to promote research at higher levels of education. He further informed the audience that the new education policy puts **emphasis on optimum utilization of resources and existing infrastructure**. Experiential learning would be another hallmark of the NEP putting an emphasis on the **vocational education and skill development. Compulsory internship and apprenticeship** would also be encouraged in the courses of studies. Shri Kothari ji further emphasized that the NEP is for the people of India and its' core agenda is to address and solve the existing problems in the Indian Education system. Henceforth, he said, **research would be carried out on the practical aspects** that are required for social and economic wellbeing of the people. In conclusion, he said, the NEP endeavors to introduce paradigm shift from abstract learning that breeds stagnancy and irrelevance to **practical pedagogy** keeping in tune with core values of Indian tradition that connect with the present ensuring better future for all.

The Inaugural session was followed by the Plenary Session in which Prof. V K Kaul, Prof. Kumar Suresh and Dr. Debashish Das expressed their views in the Panel discussion highlighting purposes, objectives and features and the need of the NEP 2020 in the present context.

Prof. V K Kaul in his presentation at the plenary session talked on the independent principles such as purpose, content, process, structure and governance enshrined in the NEP document. He observed that through such provisions, the NEP keeps itself attuned with changing scenario at local and global levels that have witnessed vast changes in terms knowledge productions and its dissemination, changing technologies and techniques. Therefore, an emphasis has been placed on remolding educational systems to allow upward mobility and

nation building. The NEP, he said, would help individuals to translate their potential to actual realization if implemented as per the envisioned objectives. Explaining further, he stated that developing good citizens that are engaged in productive tasks contributing to the nation building is the purpose of the NEP. He said the NEP further looks forward to recognizing, identifying and fostering of unique capabilities in students. The NEP's content part visualizes enhancing **literacy and numeracy skills among students**. Talking about the multidisciplinary approach the NEP adopts, Prof. Kaul, observed, it does away with the watertight compartments between sciences, social sciences and humanities, rather it employs holistic approach. This, he said, will imbibe conceptual clarity, understanding, critical thinking, human values and ethics along with constitutional notions among students. The process of assessment and evaluation, respect for diversity, respect for local context, bringing synergy in curricula designing, engaging teachers in this process etc form the part of content and process. He said, the NEP, prescribes tight but light structure. Emphasis on research and regular assessment, rootedness in India's rich, diverse and ancient culture, he noted, connect our past to achieve futuristic objectives. Talking about challenges, Prof. Kaul said, the teacher is the backbone of the entire concept of the NEP. Therefore, ensuring their quality is of utmost importance. The teachers are expected to be willing to learn new things and new developments and they need to constantly upgrade themselves. Another challenge, he said, is that of coordination in terms of implementation at central, state and local levels of governance. He concluded by saying that the NEP is an excellent document that has the potential to transform India's educational system for better results.

Prof. Kumar Suresh appreciated the Principal of SLC and the college fraternity for their active engagement in terms of boosting teaching and learning outcomes at the campus and outside. He recounted his experience of visiting college in 2019 and stated that SLC has marked distinction by featuring in the 100 best colleges of India for three consecutive years in NIRF ranking. Talking about NEP 2020, he observed that as vision document, the new education policy is loaded with a lot of promises and transformative agenda. Further he noted that it will surely make India a global knowledge power. But for that to happen, he observed, it's necessary to work upon certain daunting challenges. Among challenges the first thing he mentioned was **bringing synergy between school education and higher education**. In order to do that, he said, it's of utmost importance to ensure substantial intervention on the part of all stakeholders such as policy makers, teachers, students and parents. Therefore, he said, we must do away with the idea of treating knowledge in fragments rather we need to

adopt the approach of envisioning knowledge as an integrated whole. He said, **teachers in higher education and those at the school level education can collaborate and plan out pedagogy for the benefit of learners** who are not disunited but connected at all levels. The NEP has amply provided for such initiatives. The second aspect of the challenge, he spoke about, was that of **centrality of teachers in the teaching and learning process**. Teachers as the important pillars of realizing the vision of the NEP in working reality are expected to venture beyond the conventional means and techniques of pedagogy and adopt **innovative methodologies**. So far, he observed, the teaching fraternity has been able to deliver sufficiently well on this front. If we failed to do so, he observed, the policy will just remain a statement which not sufficient in itself. Therefore, he noted, teachers need to think out of the box. Thirdly, he talked about the idea of university. Elaborating further he said, we have seen proliferation of institutions both public as well as private in recent years. But most of them, he said, are either small in numbers or have little number of students or are working in a fragmented manner. Such universities lack much on the front of teaching and research facilities. This is something that needs to be taken care of. Further, he mentioned, we have to build bigger universities promoting multidisciplinary teaching and research. NEP 2020 talks of consolidating such institutions and he observed, such a step will prove effective in the long run. Fourth aspect of the challenge, he stated, is that of **assessment and evaluation**. He said that the culture of coaching and tuition has led to testing on score, putting emphasis on rote learning rather than promoting conceptual understanding. He further informed the audience that such a development can also be seen in countries like South Korea, Japan and China. There is strong need of continuous and adjustable evaluation, e.g. introduction of choice based credit system can help in this regard. The new education policy has amply talked about such a process, e.g. academic credit bank system. Therefore, **teachers can be important actors of transformation for such methods to become integrated with our assessment and evaluation process at school and higher education**. Further, he elaborated upon the need of **improving enrollment ratio in higher education**. He said, though we have made some progress in improving enrollment ratio of our young students in the targeted age groups at school level education through initiatives such *sarv shiksha abhiyan* and right to education act etc, we have not improved in terms of quality of learning outcomes. The findings of National Achievement Survey and *Pratham* stand testimony to that. He emphasized that we have not been able to achieve much on the fronts of creating inclusive educational culture because of our poor performance in terms of qualitative learning outcomes. Therefore, there is a need of serious thinking and intervention at all levels of education.

Dr. Debashish Das started with expressing his views on how the NEP 2020 provides an avenue to students to pick courses that they are interested in, thereby honoring the principles of specialization as well as multidisciplinary. **He emphasized on the need to employ the same principle even in case of recruitment.** He also shed light on the **importance of Indian languages and indigenous knowledge traditions in school curricula** something which has been recognized in the NEP. He said practical approaches to teaching and learning look forward to translating data into knowledge and finally transmitting that into wisdom. The session was concluded with comments and questions concerning importance of **translating standard books on various disciplines into Indian languages** so that the students studying in Indian languages can access them without having to struggle to learn foreign language and so on.

The students' participation was overwhelming and over fifty papers were received from all over the country. Students from Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, etc. zealously presented their views and presentations. They presented their views based on their area, creativity, concepts, speech and context of their respective papers. It's noteworthy to mention that the students were keenly involved in the process as the key stakeholders in terms of comprehending the impact of NEP. Students' observations and their expectations from the NEP would be considered by the College Task Force in the near future.

The Seminar concluded with a formal vote of thanks wherein the organizing team thanked the Chief Guest, Shri Atul Kothari ji, all the distinguished guests and speakers, faculty members, students, participants and organizing committee for their endeavors. The key takeaways of the seminar can be noted as: the NEP aims at sharpening the skills of a student to make him/her more self-reliant and efficient to serve the futuristic national and social aspirations of emerging India. Hon'ble Principal, Prof. Rabi Narayan Kar concluded the seminar with his final remarks. He extended his heartfelt thanks to the speakers for enlightening the students and audience at the seminar, and for their thought-provoking reflections at various sessions conducted at the seminar. He also expressed his resolve to lead the SLC community in the direction of realizing the NEP's vision into working reality.