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Transformation of Education through NEP 2020: Dharmendra Pradhan Vice Chancellors' Conference at Kevadia outlines NEP 2020 Strategies for Viksit Bharat 2047



Union Education Minister Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Emphasizes Panch Sankalpa Principles, Students-First Approach, and Raising Higher Education GER to 50% by 2035



Kevadia. The two-day Vice Chancellors' Conference of Central Universities commenced on July 10, 2025, at Kevadia, Gujarat, with over 50 Vice Chancellors of premier higher education institutions participating to review, assess, and strategize the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Organised by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Central University of Gujarat, the conference aimed to consolidate institutional progress and chart a roadmap toward realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Union Minister of Education Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the conference and highlighted the transformative progress in India's higher education over the last decade. Student enrolment has reached 4.46 crore - a 30% increase since 2014-15 - with female enrolment growing by 38%, female GER surpassing male GER, and Ph.D. enrolment nearly doubling. Female Ph.D. scholars have

increased by 136%, and GER for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes has improved significantly, reflecting the government's commitment to inclusive education and social justice. India now has over 1,200 universities and 46,000 colleges, among the largest higher education systems globally.

Shri Pradhan underscored the "Panch Sankalpa" of NEP 2020 as the guiding principle for higher education institutions. The five pillars - Next-Gen emerging education, Multidisciplinary education, Innovative education, Holistic education, and Bhartiya education - will guide universities in shaping their academic environments. He urged Vice Chancellors to embrace the "academic Triveni Sangamam" by celebrating India's rich past, recalibrating the present, and creating a future that positions India prominently on the global stage.

A key goal is raising the GER in higher education to 50% by 2035. This requires curriculum



redesign, digital infrastructure, faculty training, and promoting multidisciplinary learning. Shri Pradhan called on Vice Chancellors to foster a "Students-First" approach, empowering students to become job creators, social entrepreneurs, and ethical innovators.

He urged universities to prepare strategy papers for full NEP 2020 implementation, focusing on multidisciplinary integration, mainstreaming the Indian Knowledge System, tech-driven education, campus innovation, and blending technology with traditional values.

He encouraged organizing similar conferences at university campuses to maintain momentum.

Dr. Hashmukh Adhia, Chancellor of Central University of Gujarat, highlighted the "Six Principles" of karmayoga and stressed the importance of Indian Knowledge Systems. Dr. Vineet Joshi, Secretary of Higher Education, reflected on NEP 2020 as an ambitious yet achievable blueprint for an accessible, equitable, quality-driven, affordable, and accountable higher education system fostering innovation, critical thinking, research, and holistic development.

Additional Secretary Dr. Sunil Barnwal reiterated NEP's foundational pillars - Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability, and Accountability - and emphasized stakeholder partnerships. Prof. Rama Shanker Dubey, Vice Chancellor of Central University of Gujarat, committed to proactive implementation of the vision of Viksit Bharat through the university campuses.



Flexibility and Skill Integration Key to NEP 2020 Implementation in Higher Education



Kevadia. A thematic session at the Vice Chancellors' Conference in Kevadia spotlighted the importance of implementing the National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF), National Credit Framework (NCF), and Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP), with a strong focus on flexibility, academic mobility, and skill-oriented learning.

Prof. Yogesh Singh, Vice-Chancellor,

University of Delhi, emphasized the need to build internal capacity for skill-based education. He highlighted popular value-added and skill enhancement courses at Delhi University such as Digital Empowerment, Financial Literacy, and The Art of Being Happy, which have seen high student engagement. "Today's learners demand flexibility and high-impact skills-universities must adapt," he said.

Dr. N.S. Kalsi, Former Chairman, NCVET,

called for adopting multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, collaborating with industry, and conducting regular workshops to align with NEP goals. He stressed that inclusivity and future-readiness are central to India's higher education transformation.

The session concluded with consensus on the need for greater institutional preparedness and deeper integration of NEP frameworks across Central Universities.

Higher Education Must Prepare Students for Emerging Job Roles, Say Experts



Kevadia. The second thematic session of the Vice Chancellors' Conference underscored the urgent need to align university curricula with the future of work, focusing on skilling, industry collaboration, and technological integration to meet the demands of a rapidly changing job market.

Prof. Basuthkar Jagadeshwar Rao, Vice-Chancellor, University of Hyderabad, cited the India Skills Report 2025, noting that 55% of Indian graduates are now employable. He emphasised the need to integrate AI, critical thinking, and problem-solving into teaching through micro-courses, internships, and industry partnerships. "Higher education must address the skill-employability gap through dynamic curricula and customised student support," he said.

He also highlighted key action points including academic audits of SWAYAM courses, creation of skill centres, use of AI tools, and more interdisciplinary learning. Sectors like healthcare, green jobs, semiconductors, and waste management were identified as high-growth areas.

Prof. Manoj Kumar Tiwari, Vice-Chancellor, TISS and Director, IIM Mumbai, addressed the transformative impact of Industry 4.0. He stressed the emergence of roles in AI/ML, IoT, and blockchain, while traditional jobs like data entry and cashier roles are fading. "Educational institutions must upskill learners for an AI-driven economy, focusing on agentic AI, cloud computing, and ethical adaptability," he said.

The session concluded with a consensus on redesigning courses, faculty training, and digital transformation to equip students with the competencies needed for Viksit Bharat 2047.

Digital Education Must Enhance Engagement and Credit Transfers



Kevadia. The third thematic session, coordinated by IGNOU, highlighted the importance of digital education platforms like SWAYAM, SWAYAM Plus, and APAAR, focusing on credit transfer and enhanced student engagement.

Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, Executive Committee, NAAC, stressed redesigning SWAYAM courses with interactive features such as quizzes and simulations. Despite offering over 4,000 free courses, full adoption of credit transfer policies remains a challenge among Central Universities.

Prof. Uma Kanjilal, Vice-Chancellor (I/c), IGNOU, discussed technical and awareness gaps in implementing the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) and APAAR, proposing mandatory APAAR IDs, data synchronization, and AI-based assessments. Short-term goals include platform improvements and multilingual content expansion, while long-term plans focus on integrating digital platforms for seamless learning.

The session underscored the need for flexible, engaging digital education with smooth credit mobility to align with evolving academic and industry demands.

SAMARTH Platform Enhances University Governance



Kevadia. The fourth thematic session, coordinated by Central University of Rajasthan focused on SAMARTH, a digital governance platform aligned with NEP 2020.

Prof. Anand Bhalerao, Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Rajasthan, highlighted SAMARTH's role in modernizing university administration by automating workflows, improving transparency, and enabling real-time data access. The platform supports integration with NAD, ABC, CUET, and DigiLocker, offers self-service portals, and includes a mobile app. Challenges include integration gaps and delayed reporting. Strong

leadership and dedicated resources are key for smooth implementation.

Prof. Sanjeev Singh, Institute of Informatics and Communication, University of Delhi, discussed SAMARTH's development as a swadeshi, AI-enabled platform offering KPI dashboards and governance monitoring tools. He recommended expanding implementation, enhancing automation, and integrating accreditation support with AI-driven assistance.

The session concluded that SAMARTH is essential for efficient, transparent, and technology-driven university governance.

Promoting Equity and Inclusion in Higher Education

Kevadia. Prof. Shambhu Nath Singh, Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University, led the fifth thematic session focusing on fostering equity and an inclusive environment in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The session addressed key challenges such as regional imbalances, caste-based discrimination, infrastructural deficiencies, and curriculum rigidity affecting marginalized groups. It highlighted the importance of affirmative action and government initiatives like NEP 2020, PM Vidyalakshmi, and One Nation-One Subscription (ONOS) in ensuring equitable access to education.

Prof. Manish R. Joshi, Secretary, UGC, stressed the importance of active interventions and inclusive policies,



including scholarships, multiple entry-exit options, regional language education, and special education

zones. He also outlined UGC's draft regulations for promoting equity in higher education. Financial inclusion



schemes under PM Vidyalakshmi were discussed in detail, including education loans with interest subsidies, credit

guarantees, and merit-based scholarships targeting economically weaker sections. The need for universities to promote awareness and simplify access to these schemes was emphasized.

Recommendations called for institutional leadership to establish equitable policies, build empowering campus cultures, and engage stakeholders continuously. The session underscored the importance of leveraging digital platforms and government support to achieve inclusive and quality higher education.

Advancing Indian Languages and Knowledge Systems in Higher Education



Kevadia. The sixth session, led by Central Sanskrit University, Delhi, focused on promoting Bharatiya Bhasha and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in line with NEP 2020. Prof. Shrinivasa Varakhedi emphasized overcoming challenges like English-only instruction and faculty readiness, advocating for campus culture, resource creation, and financial support to boost IKS. Prof. Ganti S. Murthy called for genuine interdisciplinary research and faculty training in IKS. Prof. Chamu Krishna Shastri highlighted the Bhartiya Bhasha Pustak Scheme, offering multilingual course materials with quality assurance. Together, the aim is to integrate Indian languages and knowledge systems into higher education for cultural preservation and inclusive learning.

Central Universities Urged to Lead India's Research and Innovation Drive

Kevadia. In Session Seven, Prof. Sanjay Kumar, Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU), emphasized the crucial role of Central Universities (CUs) in advancing India's research and innovation ecosystem. Despite having young and dynamic faculty, CUs face challenges such as limited internal funding, heavy faculty workload, and weak collaboration across departments.



and thematic funding focused on regional priorities including AI, climate, health, and agriculture.

Prof. Kumar highlighted the need to leverage government initiatives like the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF),

Dr. Shivkumar Kalyanaraman, CEO of ANRF, outlined the foundation's vision to position India as a global research powerhouse. He presented key

programs such as the PAIR hub-and-spoke model, early career research grants, and mission-mode projects addressing electric mobility, medtech, semiconductors, and sustainable agriculture. ANRF also promotes research democratization through

AI tools like SARAL. The discussion concluded with a call for greater autonomy, improved governance, open access to research infrastructure, and a collaborative innovation culture to strengthen India's position in global research.

India Poised to Become Global Hub for International Students



Kevadia. In Session Nine, Prof. M Jagdish Kumar, Former UGC Chairman, highlighted India's potential to emerge as a top destination for international students. The session was coordinated by Central University of Himachal Pradesh.

Prof. Kumar called for increasing foreign student numbers from 50,000 to 5 lakh, citing India's affordability, academic reputation, and cultural diversity as strengths. He proposed a strategic approach focused on global branding, a unified portal for central universities, and flexible, innovative curriculum and evaluation methods.

Prof. Satya Prakash Bansal, VC of CU Himachal Pradesh, outlined NEP 2020's vision to make India "Atma Nirbhar" by attracting international students, allowing foreign universities to operate in India, and opening offshore campuses for Indian HEIs. He emphasized setting up International Affairs offices across 700 HEIs to boost enrollment.

Addressing the imbalance-49,000 foreign students in India vs. 1.32 million Indians abroad-Prof. Bansal stressed the need for adaptive policies, stronger collaborations, faculty mobility, and global partnerships.

Challenges include accreditation, regulatory hurdles, infrastructure, faculty shortages, funding, language barriers, visa issues, and student safety.

The session ended with a roadmap focused on better management, collaboration, tailored curricula, and affordability to enhance research, promote Indian values, and attract global talent through inclusive digital education.

Central Universities Focus on Improving Rankings and Accreditation



Kevadia. In Session Eight, Prof. R.P. Tiwari, Vice Chancellor of Central University of Punjab, stressed the critical role of ranking and accreditation in elevating university standards and global recognition. He compared major ranking frameworks such as QS, Times Higher Education, Shanghai, and NIRF, pointing out gaps in teaching quality assessment, innovation, and student outcomes.

Challenges highlighted include language barriers, inconsistent evaluation standards, and weak alumni databases, particularly affecting new and rural institutions. Key reform measures involve curriculum strengthening with industry collaboration, interdisciplinary education, infrastructure upgrades, and integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman of Executive Committee, NAAC, outlined ongoing reforms to align accreditation with NEP 2020, focusing on outcome-based evaluation, transparency, and trust. Dr. G. Kannibaran, Director of NAAC, reported that 43 of 54 Central Universities are accredited, emphasizing the importance of maturity-based assessment and diversity in quality assurance.

The session concluded with a call to map academic programs with national priorities, foster innovation ecosystems, and enhance community engagement to build a robust higher education quality framework.



Faculty Development - Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme



Kevadia. In the final technical Session, Prof. Naima Khatoon, Vice Chancellor of AMU, outlined the progress of the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Programme (MMTTP) in enhancing faculty skills across India. Starting with 48 Academic Staff Colleges in 1987, the programme now has 116 MMTTC centres, with 20 more planned in IITs and IIMs by 2025. The university group was led by Aligarh Muslim

University. A survey of faculty development programme participants showed improved understanding of NEP goals, academic rejuvenation, and better student outcomes. MMTTC promotes interdisciplinary teaching, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and blended learning. Challenges include limited post-training support, infrastructure gaps, and lack of



incentives. Prof. Khatoon urged for more engaging sessions, offline programmes, and incentives like National Teachers Awards. Prof. Rishikesh T Krishnan, Director, IIM Bangalore, emphasized continuous faculty development, innovation, leadership, and digital skills, highlighting IIMB's mentoring and doctoral diversity programmes. Ms. Rina Sonowal Kouli, Joint Secretary,

MoE, reported 144 MMTTC centres conducting over 3,900 programmes benefiting nearly 2.5 lakh faculty. She noted challenges with online engagement and recommended better monitoring, multilingual inclusivity, and a global best-practices repository. The session ended with calls for zonal MMTTCs, increased funding, and improved impact assessment to support NEP goals.



Unity, Discipline and Education: Towards a Viksit Bharat through NEP 2020



Kevadia. The two-day Vice Chancellors' Conference of Central Universities ended on July 11, 2025, with over 50 Vice Chancellors and officials renewing their pledge to implement NEP 2020 fully, advancing India's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Minister of State, Shri Sukanta Majumdar, urged unity, discipline, and education, echoing Sardar Patel's vision. He praised NEP 2020 for preparing students globally while rooted in Indian values. Highlighting growth in women's education, technology integration through SWAYAM, and India's rise in global university rankings, he noted over 2.75 crore students registered in the Academic Bank of Credits.

Additional Secretary, Shri Sunil Kumar Barnwal, thanked participants and commended Prof. Rama Shanker Dubey for organising the conference. He stressed teamwork, ecosystem building, and cross-learning as key outcomes. Prof. Ravinder Nath emphasized inclusive,



LOCF-aligned curricula with Indian Knowledge Systems and interdisciplinary research, advocating digital pedagogy and skill



development. Secretary Dr. Vineet Joshi called the event a model of collective leadership, urging integration

of NCF, FYUG, SWAYAM, and APAAR platforms, with a focus on equity, multilingualism, STEM research, and continuous faculty development.

Prof. Rama Shanker Dubey thanked all stakeholders, stressing the need to instill nationalism alongside global readiness in students, inspired by great Indian thinkers. The conference ended with a tour of the Statue of Unity, symbolising national pride and educational progress. The two-day conference was moderated by Prof. Pallavi Sharma (Dean, SESD), while the ten thematic sessions were coordinated by Prof. Manish (Dean, SIS) and Prof. Tapas Kumar Dalapati (Dean, SSS). The event report was prepared by Prof. Atanu Bhattacharya (HoD, DES), Dr. Dhananjay Rai (HoD, DGTPS), and Dr. Ishmeet Kaur Chaudhary (Associate Professor, DES).

Glimpses of the Yoga session led by Dr. Alok Pandey following AYUSH Ministry's Yoga protocol



Folk Artists Showcased Gujarat's Rich Culture and Tribal Dances on Stage

