

# **National Seminar**

## **Higher Education in Post-Colonial World: New Normal in Post-COVID Situation**

**10-12<sup>th</sup> March, 2022**



**Department of Higher and Professional Education**

**National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration  
New Delhi-110016**

## **National Seminar**

### **Higher Education in Post-Colonial World: New Normal in Post-COVID Situation**

In a long journey of over one and a half century of modern education, the country now witnesses over 70 years of post-independence university education. The questions related to the post-colonial developments in higher education have revolved around the inter-related concepts of modernity, democracy and development. This has also been envisaged by Radhakrishnan Commission, 1948-49, Kothari Commission, 1964-66, the National Policy on Education, 1986 and Programme of Action 1992 and several other Commissions. The results of past developments have created controversies on a large number of issues which were related to tensions between general, professional and vocational education, disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge, equity and excellence, teacher and student centric pedagogy, grants and loan-based funding. In the background of post-colonial developments in higher education, an assessment of public universities with respect to decolonialization, modernization, egalitarianism and nation building assumes an importance. Hence, postcolonial developments in higher education are intrinsic to the frame of this national seminar.

There are two current triggers – pandemic uncertainty and national education policy, 2020 - in the conceptualization of national seminar in an assessment of post-colonial developments. The recent developments point to the formation of a new relationships. They relate to the technology, market and the role of State. The deeper understanding of the dynamics of the trinity is important to analyse as they define new ways in which higher education may be transformed – whether it relates to teaching learning, governance, finance, internationalization, research.

Moreover, the National Education Policy, 2020 has posed challenges regarding large affiliating system by proposing a new multi-disciplinary institutional framework. The University Grants Commission, the regulating and funding body, is said to be inefficient by National Knowledge Commission. Indeed, the NEP, 2020 has proposed its abolition and the replacement by Higher Education Commission of India along with its four vertical institutions. It proposes institutional governance in terms of new board of management and institutional development plan. There are large scale reforms to maximize choice of learners in the new policy.

There is a discussion taking place around new normal in HEIs in post pandemic world. What will be the new normal is difficult to conjecture, yet it certainly needs a critical reflection?

The commitment of the state during the first three decades of post-colonial period seems to have waned and a gradual shift to privatization has been taking place. All India Survey of Higher Education, 2019-20 indicates sharp decline in the rate of growth of enrolment in past 5 years and Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is estimated to touch a figure of 35 % in 2030 as opposed to the NEP target of 50% by 2030. This indicates a deeper crisis of some of the reforms proposed in higher education and begs larger questions regarding the future of higher education in India. In particular, the technology led reforms paving the way for online education may falter, given the sharp digital divide. The future of social sciences and humanities is becoming uncertain. Students, mostly first-generation learners' competitive entry is impacting campus environment. As a result, higher education is emerging as a site of conflict. The fundamental premise of the

public good character of higher education and the role of state in steering higher education for an inclusive and egalitarian system as mandated by the Indian Constitution has remained elusive in the past education policies. In the last two decades market, technology and state had formed a trinity that determined developments in higher education. This complex trinity has been taking place in pre covid period and the hypothesis is that this new normal has a tendency to further strengthen it. The privatization has once again brought together the market forces and technology in education wherein state is going to be instrumental. This new normal may further intensify the new relationships forming the trinity.

This National Seminar attempts to pose some of the following questions for an in-depth deliberation:

The post-colonial developments raised hopes and aspirations in independent nation thereby calling for State supported inclusive development. Large scale expansion of higher education within a regulatory framework of State and quality mandate from University Grants Commission determined the course of development in the initial three-four decades of post-independent India. Thereafter, the trajectory of development moved in favor of privatization of higher education. It gave rise to antinomies of public and private, elite and mass, equity and quality which were considered as conflicting and unresolvable. Questions arising from such antinomies become important to understand the post-colonial developments in higher education.

Post-colonial developments raise the question of social justice as nation confronts the inequality in various socio-economic dimensions. The development paradigm was broadened to mitigate not only economic inequality but also to raise the opportunities for everyone. Higher education is considered to raise the freedom of opportunities to give justice to each and everyone. How can higher education be truly inclusive is an important point of deliberation, amidst the constraints and contradictions?

Humboldtian unity refers to the unity of teaching and research, teachers and students and that of administrators. Without this unity, university cannot ideally function properly to generate and disseminate knowledge. The post-colonial developments in higher education have been challenging above unities. The bureaucratization and politicization of higher education are considered necessary, yet such developments have also impacted the direction of development. It is important to understand the role of teachers in emerging eco system of higher education. How the autonomy was restricted in an increasing regulatory space and further subordinated to the market forces?

Market is an ally of technology. Technology thrives when market process supports it in terms of demand for education technology. This means that marketization of technology, product and services will have to be promoted as a matter of policy. Will a new normal further promote privatization? Who shall be the new beneficiaries? How will the commodification shape knowledge development? How will the intensification of technology and market affect diverse learners? How new forms of governance shape the autonomy and accountability of teachers?

An important aspect of a new normal will be the role of the state. Caught amidst the contradiction, university may witness a site of conflicts as new generation learners create

competitive demand for resources. They challenge curricula which resists change. Accommodating new generation learners in the university campus demands increasing voices of students. How does state respond to the conflicts? How does state create new ways of support to the vulnerable sections? How does state fulfill the commitment of 6% GDP on education?

While the disruptive effect of pandemic is necessary to understand, transition to a ‘new normal’ needs to be analyzed. Some of the important questions are: What is new normal? What will be the modes in which new technology will express itself in teaching, learning, assessment? Will education lose touch with human interaction? Will the questioning, debating and discussion give way to confirmation? How will then knowledge generation process be shaped? How will then technology shape both teachers and students in the absence of social environment of an educational institution? This National Seminar will attempt to explore the trinity of technology, market, state and their inter-relationships in a post-COVID scenario.

In this backdrop, the objectives of this seminar are as follows:

1. To understand post-colonial developments in higher education in India.
2. To analyze the questions of social justice in higher education.
3. To understand the role of teachers in an eco-system of dominant bureaucracy and politics.
4. To understand the impact of technology on teaching, research and service functions of higher education.
5. To reflect on the role of new voices from new generation learners.
6. To conceptualize the role of state in “new normal” in post Covid scenario with respect to the role of technology and market.

**Seminar Themes:** In the backdrop of above objectives of the national seminar, papers may focus on post-colonial developments with respect to institutional developments and structures of governance, affirmative action policies of state, regulation and governance at different levels, the progress of science and technology, social sciences and humanities, vocational education, online/blended education, language, role of teachers and teaching-learning. The seminar has special focus on covid and disruptions in post-colonial developments in higher education. The papers may critically address the new directions of change in the light of past developments.

The thematic sessions will be tentatively under the following heads

- Post-colonial Developments in Higher Education
- Social Justice in Higher Education
- Role of Teachers in Emerging Eco System of Higher Education
- Question of Technology in Higher Education
- Students’ voices in higher education
- New Directions of Reforms in Higher Education

Each thematic session shall begin with a key note presentation by an expert followed by paper presentations by authors.

**Proposed Dates:** Seminar will be held on 10, 11 and 12 March, 2022 in face-to-face mode. If the situation has not become normal, an online/blended mode of presentation shall be adopted.

**Venue of the Seminar:** India International Centre, New Delhi during 10-11<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 and on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 at National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)

**Open Invitation:** Teachers and Researchers working in the area of higher education are invited to contribute a paper in the National Seminar. You may send your abstract in 350 to 500 words latest by **30<sup>th</sup> September, 2021** on the following email (sudhanshu@niepa.ac.in)