

Consultative Meeting on State Higher Education Councils
March 18-19, 2021

Concept Note



Centre for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE)
National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg
New Delhi-110016

February, 2021

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Background

Higher education in India has been expanding at a rapid pace in the recent decades. Consequently, there are multiplicity of providers offering courses and study programmes especially in the domains of technical and professional education. India has reached a stage of massification of higher education with a gross enrolment ratio (GER) of 26.3 per cent. In this expanded and diversified system governance and management of higher education institutions is becoming increasingly a challenging task.

One of the important developments has been strengthening of the state initiatives through the establishment of State Higher Education Councils (SHEC). Following the recommendations of the National Policy on Education, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued guidelines to set up SHECs in 1988. The centrally sponsored programme of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) relies on SHECs for the planning and implementation in each of the states.

Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) Scheme, launched by the MHRD, requires that states form a State Higher Education Council and envisaged that state planning would be carried out by SHECs. It also necessitated that multiple funding streams i.e. Central and State would be aligned with SHEC planning. SHECs were created to carry out the functions of planning, monitoring and evaluation, quality assurance, advisory and funding.

Some of the key functions involve (i) preparing the State Higher Education Plan (Perspective Plan, Annual Plan and Budget Plan) and gathering state institutions' inputs that will contribute to the State Higher Education Plan; (ii) monitoring the implementation of State Higher Education Plans; (iii) creating and maintaining the Management Information Systems (MIS); (iv) evaluating state institutions on the basis of norms and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) developed; (v) protecting institutional autonomy of all state institutions; advising the state government on strategic investments in higher education; (vi) advising universities on statute and ordinance formulation and (vii) disbursing public funds to universities and colleges on the basis of the State Higher Education Plan and transparent norm-based funding methodologies.

New Initiatives in higher education

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) envisages to set up a Higher Education Council of India (HECI) with four verticals.

“The functioning of all the independent verticals for Regulation (NHERC), Accreditation (NAC), Funding (HEGC), and Academic Standard Setting (GEC) and the overarching autonomous umbrella body (HECI) itself will be based on transparent public disclosure, and use technology extensively to reduce human interface to ensure efficiency and transparency in their work”
- National Education Policy 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to restructure the higher education system, create world class multidisciplinary higher education institutions across the country, increasing the

Gross Enrolment Ratio to 50% by 2035. The policy supports faculty and institutional autonomy with *light but tight* regulations.

Moreover the policy recommends strengthening and empowering the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) which will have a much greater mandate of working in close collaboration with Ministry of Education (MoE) and corresponding apex bodies in the States.

The Policy aims to establish a new National Research Foundation with the goal to enable a culture of research to permeate through universities with an annual total funding of Rs. 20,000 crores. Researchers from both public and private research institutions will be eligible to compete for NRF funding. Other funding agencies will continue to independently fund research according to their priorities and needs.

Leadership and governance influence all aspects of institutions. All other efforts can be brought together for developing good institutions by strong governance and effective leadership. Further, technology in higher education is transforming the landscape. Use of Information Communication and Computation Technology (ICCT) in various processes of teaching-learning of Education must be encouraged. Use of SWAYAM must be promoted for both students and faculty.

Vocational and adult education must be accorded the importance they deserve thereby providing avenues of lifelong learning for students. NEP 2020 has suggested many techniques to be implemented to realize liberal education like multi-disciplinary, and cross disciplinary education. A liberal arts education enables students to develop both sides of the brain –both the creative/artistic side and the analytic side. Aesthetic, social, and moral capabilities can enhance one’s scientific capabilities.

The HECI will be responsible for developing, articulating, implementing, evaluating and revising the vision of education. Thus in this new scenario the SHECs will have to play an important buffer role between universities and colleges and the State level bodies.

However it remains to be seen how such a complex structure as envisaged by the National policy will be implemented. Keeping this context in mind the consultative meeting strives to initiate a national dialogue on the role of SHECs in governance and management of universities and colleges in India in this new and emerging scenario.

The present workshop

Center for Policy Research in Higher Education (CPRHE/NIEPA) has been organizing consultative meetings with the Chairperson/Vice Chairperson of the SHECs from 2014. The present consultative meeting is the fourth in the series. The major objective of these consultative meetings has been to discuss issues concerning the role of state higher education councils in state level planning for higher education.

The present Consultative meeting being organized on March 18-19, 2021 plans to bring together Chairman/Vice Chairman of SHECs from states across India to discuss the new initiatives in higher education in India as reflected in the NEP 2020 and the effect of the Covid pandemic on the higher education sector.

Objectives

The major objectives of the proposed consultative meeting are:

- To discuss the role of SHECs in planning for implementation of the National Education Policy 2020
- Planning for higher education at the institutional level
- To discuss activities carried out by SHECs in 2020-21 and the activities planned for the year 2021-22

In addition to the above, the meeting will create an excellent opportunity to form a national network of policy makers from the states for sustainable knowledge building.

Themes

- Higher education policy and planning at the state level in the light of NEP 2020
- Research initiatives of SHECs
- Activities of SHECs in 2020-21 and 2021-22

Venue and date

The meeting will be organized online through Google meet platform on March 18 and 19, 2021. The meeting will start at 0930 hours on both the days.

Organization of the meeting

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