

# NORDIC-INDIA SUMMIT ON NORDIC UNIVERSITIES AND INDIA'S NEP 2020

TSSHERING CHONZOM BHUTIA  
BINAY PRASAD



*Jointly organised by*

Unit for International Cooperation (UIC)

**National Institute of Educational Planning  
and Administration (NIEPA)  
and  
Nordic Centre in India (NCI)**

New Delhi, 2021





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**NORDIC UNIVERSITIES  
AND INDIA'S NEP 2020**  
NEW TRAJECTORIES FOR  
INTERNATIONALISATION

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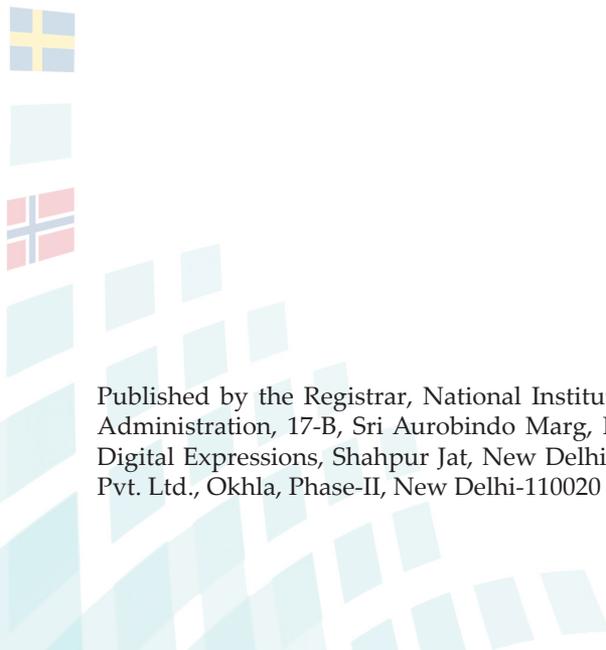
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A decorative graphic on the left side of the page consists of a vertical column of three flags: the Swedish flag (blue with a yellow cross), a light blue square, and the Norwegian flag (red with a white cross). Below these are several light blue squares of varying sizes and orientations, some overlapping, creating a grid-like pattern that extends towards the bottom right of the page.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Unit for International Cooperation (UIC), NIEPA, New Delhi, and the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Government of India, jointly organised the 2nd Nordic -India Summit on the theme “Nordic Universities and India's NEP 2020: New Trajectories for Internationalisation” on 27 April 2021. The first edition of this Summit was held on 31 October 2019 under the theme “the First Nordic-India Higher Education Summit” at NIEPA, New Delhi, and a report titled “Nordic-India Summit on Internationalisation of Higher Education” was published in March 2021.

With the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, India aims to induct a major shift in its education system and revitalise its research ecosystem. The Policy understands the need for linkages with international trends and draws lessons from the best practices globally. There could have been no better time to hold this event, given the coincidence of the fact that Nordic institutions have charted their Vision Plan for the next ten years to meet their international aspirations.

Our sincere gratitude to Shri Amit Khare, the Secretary (Higher Education) and Ms Neeta Prasad, Joint Secretary (Higher Education), Ministry of Education, and the International Cooperation Cell (ICC) of the Ministry of Education for their continued support and guidance.

The Nordic Centre in India (NCI), its Chairman, Professor Uwe Skoda and NCI's Director, Christabel Royan have been our close collaborators during both the events. We extend our heartfelt thanks to them for their partnership.

We are especially thankful to Professor D P Singh, Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC), for kindly agreeing to chair the Discussion. He provided fresh insights into the different themes and how interrelated they are. Further, it is under his guidance that UGC has drafted the regulation to allow joint and dual degrees, as well as twinning programmes that would facilitate closer cooperation between Indian and Foreign HEIs.

We are grateful to Professor Sahashrabudhe, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and Dr Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities (AIU), for not only agreeing to share important insights but also for supporting this dialogue between India and Nordic countries by returning to be a part of the second edition of the event.

We extend our thanks to the other representatives of the Government of India and the representatives of the diplomatic missions of the Nordic countries for gracing the occasion with their valuable presence.

We are hopeful that the sharing of the highlights of India's National Education Policy 2020 in the core areas of internationalisation would prove of utmost value to participants and institutions from the Nordic regions. We would like to thank the Nordic panelists – Ms Kaisa Kurki from Tampere University, Dr Jakob Williams Ørberg from the Royal Danish Embassy in Delhi, and Hilde Haaland-Kramer from the Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), Norway for enriching the discussions.

We thank all representatives of all the institutions who attended the Summit, in particular the heads of the International Offices of the respective institutions.

Professor N V Varghese, Vice-Chancellor, NIEPA, has been the key person behind the Summit, without whose leadership and guidance, the organisation of this event would not have been possible. We remain ever grateful for his mentorship towards the conceptualisation and organisation of the Event, as well as for sharing valuable insights as speaker during the discussion.

We are hopeful that the discussions would foster closer cooperation and increased cross-border mobility, thereby enhancing the pool of Nordic-India network of researchers and experts in the field.

We also thank all the faculty members of NIEPA for participating in the Summit. Our special thanks also go to the NIEPA Administration, headed by the Registrar, Dr Sandeep Chatterjee, the Administrative Officer, Dr D S Thakur, and also the ICT Unit of NIEPA headed by Professor K Srinivas along with Mr Chandra and his team who helped in ensuring smooth organisation and wider dissemination of the Event.

Our thanks are also due to all the participants who took out time to participate in the Summit.

Moving forward, the Unit for International Cooperation (UIC) in NIEPA will be actively engaged with the follow-up activities and future initiatives related to the internationalisation of higher education and research, including Nordic-India cooperation.

Tshering Chonzom Bhutia  
Binay Prasad

# CONTENTS

1. Introduction to the Summit.....	2
2. Introduction to India's National Education Policy 2020.....	8
3. NEP and Internationalisation of Higher Education in India.....	12
• UGC and Internationalisation of Higher Education in India.....	20
• Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and Internationalisation of Higher Education in India .....	21
• Nordic Views on India's National Education Policy 2020 .....	23
4. Nordic-India Cooperation: A General Overview .....	25
5. Emerging Trends in Nordic-India Cooperation in Education .....	27
• Finland-India Cooperation in Education.....	29
• Denmark-India Cooperation in Education.....	31
• Norway-India Cooperation in Education.....	32
6. COVID-19 and Its Impact on Internationalisation of Higher Education .....	35
7. Programme .....	38



# NORDIC UNIVERSITIES AND INDIA'S NEP 2020

## NEW TRAJECTORIES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

The Unit for International Cooperation (UIC), NIEPA, New Delhi and the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) in consultation with the Ministry of Education, Government of India, jointly organised the 2nd Nordic-India Summit on the theme “Nordic Universities and India's NEP 2020: New Trajectories for Internationalisation” on 27 April 2021.

The Event was a follow-up to the First Nordic India Higher Education Summit that was jointly organised by NIEPA and the Nordic Centre in India on 31 October 2019 at NIEPA, New Delhi. The Summit in 2019 brought together more than 70 educationists and policymakers from India and Nordic countries, including 33 international participants from the five Nordic countries, and involved extensive day-long discussions between Indian and Nordic bureaucrats, policy makers, university leadership,



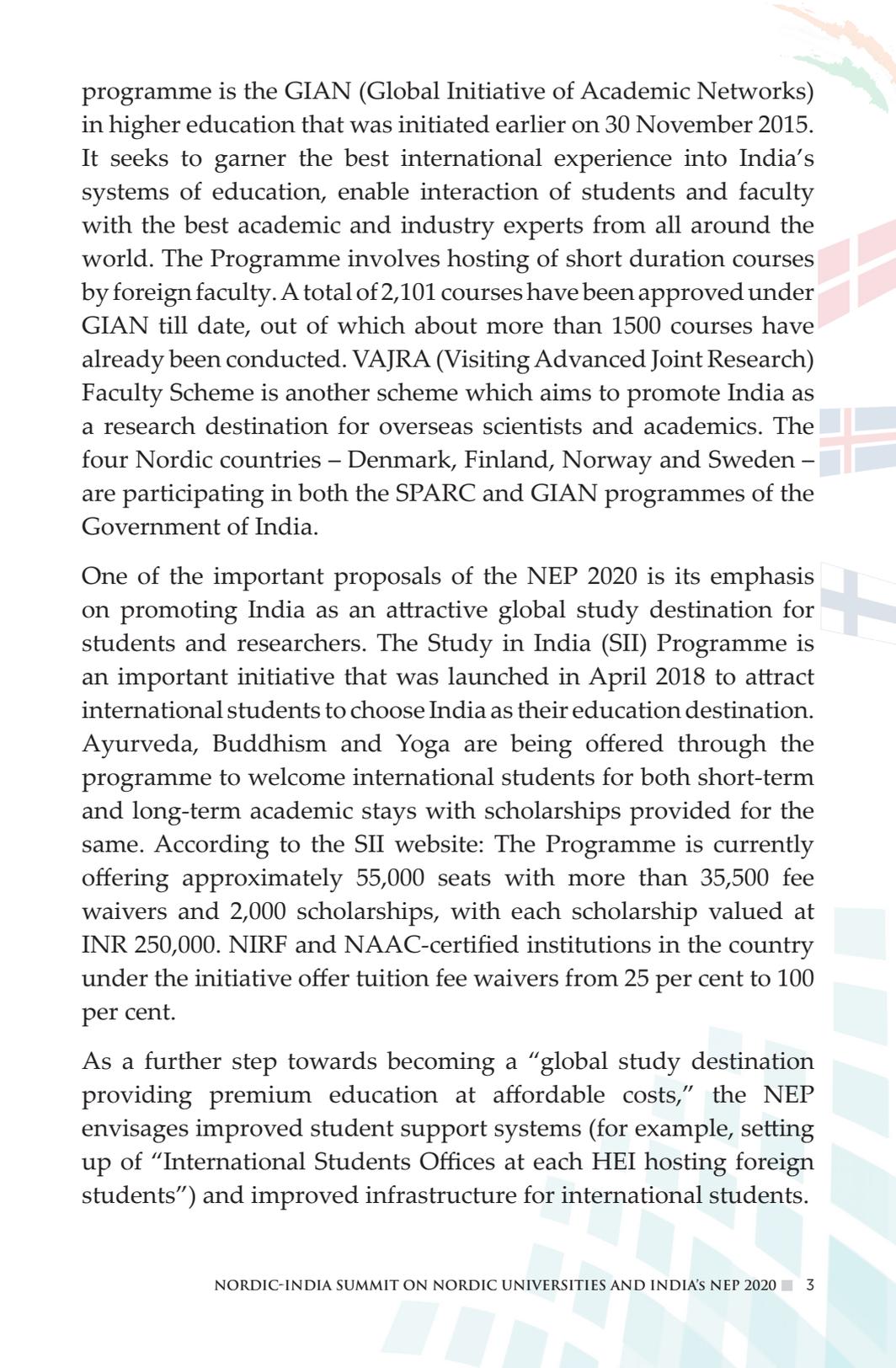
international office representatives, Nordic embassy representatives, and researchers.

With this Summit we take forward the tone that was set in the previous Summit where we underscored the need to accelerate Nordic-India higher education and research cooperation. The Event aimed to renew this discussion by contextualising the complementary internationalisation goals of both the Nordic region and India against the background of the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that was released by the Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Government of India (GoI) last year, on 29 July 2020.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SUMMIT

Internationalisation of higher education in India has been an important policy focus area of the Ministry of Education (formerly Ministry of Human Resource Development - MHRD). India understands the important role played by internationalisation in enhancing the quality of its students as well as that of its higher education institutions (HEIs). Its role in enhancing a country's global image and soft power has also been recognised for long and reiterated in the NEP. The Policy is especially cognisant of the role of internationalisation of higher education in building a knowledge economy and society and in achieving global standards of quality in all respects.

In the past few years, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has launched several flagship schemes to promote and facilitate international academic research collaborations and student and faculty exchanges. For instance, SPARC (Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration) was established on 13 August 2018 wherein 28 countries were identified as partner countries for carrying out various research collaborations under the scheme. The Programme also involves student, researcher and faculty exchanges, workshops and publications. 394 projects have been approved under the Scheme till date. Another important



programme is the GIAN (Global Initiative of Academic Networks) in higher education that was initiated earlier on 30 November 2015. It seeks to garner the best international experience into India's systems of education, enable interaction of students and faculty with the best academic and industry experts from all around the world. The Programme involves hosting of short duration courses by foreign faculty. A total of 2,101 courses have been approved under GIAN till date, out of which about more than 1500 courses have already been conducted. VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) Faculty Scheme is another scheme which aims to promote India as a research destination for overseas scientists and academics. The four Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden – are participating in both the SPARC and GIAN programmes of the Government of India.

One of the important proposals of the NEP 2020 is its emphasis on promoting India as an attractive global study destination for students and researchers. The Study in India (SII) Programme is an important initiative that was launched in April 2018 to attract international students to choose India as their education destination. Ayurveda, Buddhism and Yoga are being offered through the programme to welcome international students for both short-term and long-term academic stays with scholarships provided for the same. According to the SII website: The Programme is currently offering approximately 55,000 seats with more than 35,500 fee waivers and 2,000 scholarships, with each scholarship valued at INR 250,000. NIRF and NAAC-certified institutions in the country under the initiative offer tuition fee waivers from 25 per cent to 100 per cent.

As a further step towards becoming a “global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs,” the NEP envisages improved student support systems (for example, setting up of “International Students Offices at each HEI hosting foreign students”) and improved infrastructure for international students.

The NEP envisions India taking a lead role in quality research and innovation in the 21st century, whereby it transforms itself into an “enlightened knowledge society and one of the three largest economies in the world.” In this context, the Policy understands the need for linkages with international trends and draws lessons from the best practices globally. With this in mind, the Policy sets the stage for the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF). The NRF is expected to “enable a culture of research” and innovation in the country through the competitive funding of research in all disciplines.

The role of “knowledge creation and research” in the economic and social upliftment of not just the given country but also others around the globe is acknowledged by the NEP. Based on this understanding, a number of changes to enhance the existing system of higher education and research in India have been proposed. It particularly calls for equal emphasis on arts and innovations along with innovations in the sciences and social sciences as it underscores the importance of “multidisciplinary university settings” as well as “holistic education.” The aim eventually is to achieve broader goals like imbibing interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches both in the curricula as well as the orientation of the institutional structure. The same would lead to dissolution of discipline-led barriers that divide the fields of study, namely natural sciences, with those of arts, humanities and social sciences. This may fall within the ambit of “internationalisation at home” that is mentioned in the NEP.

A number of enabling regulations are also being envisaged under the aegis of NEP 2020 to facilitate internationalisation goals. The NEP specifically mentions that “relevant mutually beneficial MOUs with foreign countries will be signed.” Currently, the Ministry of Education (MoE) is working towards putting a system of International Credit Transfer mechanism in place to reduce the barriers in academic mobility. The proposed Academic Bank of Credits would serve as a repository of qualifications acquired

and prior learning, reinforcing flexible pathways to learning with multiple entry and exit points. Further, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has recently placed in the public domain a notification on 17 February 2021 inviting suggestions on the “Draft UGC (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions to Offer Joint Degree, Dual Degree and Twinning Programme) Regulations, 2021.” The budget announcement of 2021 has interestingly proposed for a regulatory mechanism to permit dual degrees, joint degrees and twinning arrangements.

An important policy intervention of the NEP with long lasting implications for internationalisation is the proposal to promote institutional mobility. The NEP 2020 states that “High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries, and similarly, select universities (e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world) will be permitted to operate in India.” Currently, the Indian government does not allow setting up of independent branch campuses in India. India’s commitment under the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS) also does not support delivery of education through Mode 3. NEP-2020 specifies that “A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India.”

The NEP 2020 envisions new governing structures and highlights the importance of institutional autonomy. The emphasis is on “light but tight regulation” through creation of new structures for governance under a new body, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). The new structure will have four verticals under the HECI, namely, National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), National Accreditation Council (NAC), Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) and General Education Council (GEC).

Furthermore, the NEP resolves to shift the orientation of school and higher education mainly from the existing approaches to teaching and learning at all levels to new approaches with an emphasis on global standards. Notably, one of the major focusses of NEP is on improving quality and enhancing the achievement levels of students at the school level. Improving access to education through open access resources and acknowledging the need of providing access to digital resources form an important element in the NEP 2020. The expectation is to blend traditional teaching processes and online teaching methods to enhance quality of delivery and focus on global competencies. The development of curricula that is internationally relevant would be a step in that direction.

It is noteworthy that many Nordic countries have also outlined their priorities for the next five to ten years in order to overcome the present as well as future challenges. Nordic countries recognise the important role of universities in contributing to knowledge creation and promoting ground-breaking research. The overall goal of academia has been defined to respond to the needs of society and promote well-being. Nordic institutions, as outlined in their strategic goals, expect the universities to be a key player in enhancing competitiveness in the economy. At the individual level, the aim is to provide flexible and personalised student paths to suit the requirements of all concerned. For many Nordic institutions, leadership development and achieving a status wherein they can play a global role, is a defined target in order to make universities an attractive study and research destination.

Given the complementary interests shared by both the Indian and Nordic institutions, the Summit was an opportunity to revisit and renew the discussion that started as a part of the Nordic-India Higher Education Summit in October 2019. Both the Nordic region and India have a lot to learn from each other, and the scope

for cooperation in the field of higher education and research is immense.

*The major objectives of the Summit were:*

- To introduce the NEP 2020 to policy makers in Nordic countries
- To analyse how NEP 2020 makes India a preferred destination for international cooperation in higher education and research
- To understand how the NEP 2020 will affect management of technical education and how it would enable promotion of innovation and partnerships
- To comprehend the realignments of the Indian universities in internationalisation goals and ambitions in the context of the NEP 2020

*The major themes of the Summit were:*

- Highlights of India's National Education Policy 2020
- Internationalisation in the context of NEP 2020
- International Collaboration in Technical and Vocational Education (TVE)

One of the expected outcomes from the Summit was the hope that it would enable better cooperation between Indian and Nordic policymakers at one level and between the higher education institutions (HEIs) at another level. Further, equipped with a broad and comprehensive understanding of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it is hoped that the Nordic institutions would be able to chart a more effective course in fostering cooperation with India as the latter overhauls its higher education and research ecosystem within the ambit of NEP 2020.

# INTRODUCTION TO INDIA'S NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is geared towards revamping India's education system, making way for large scale transformational reforms both in the school and the higher education sector. The changes are an attempt to keep pace with the quickly changing global education ecosystem and employment landscape. The Policy envisions a higher education system that focuses on how to learn, encourages learners to think critically, to be able to analyse and solve problems, to be creative, innovative, and to be able to adapt. NEP 2020 envisages the evolution of India's higher education institutions (HEIs) into multi-disciplinary HEIs and research universities. It provides for multiple entry and exit points for undergraduate courses, which is currently in the process of being formalised. Teaching and learning in one's mother tongue is being encouraged and use of technology in various facets of education is being promoted. The NEP further emphasises institutional autonomy and their freedom over curriculum framing. It accords value to the Indian knowledge system and emphasises the need to incorporate the same into the current teaching-learning processes. Most importantly, the NEP envisages creation of an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), which lays down a mechanism through which exchange of credits may take place. Accordingly, a student is empowered to opt for courses from more than one institution and a degree may be conferred attributing all course modules. The modalities related to transfer of credits and definition of credits is being worked out by a committee appointed by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The Vice-Chancellor, NIEPA, is the Member Secretary of the Committee.

NEP 2020 is a game-changer and transformative in many ways, and it is particularly relevant given the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that has disrupted all forms of education. The proposed changes in the NEP may also be understood in the context of the overall

developments taking place in the higher education sector globally. As compared to the developed countries, in developing countries, it has been found that the enrolment ratios and the progress that has been made in higher education are lagging much behind those of the developed world in reference to primary schooling. The gap has narrowed down partially with respect to secondary schooling. The same trend is, however, not reflected in the higher education arena where the gap has further widened. Therefore, NEP reflects India's aspiration to play a global role. Playing a global role implies bringing India's higher education institutions at par with those in the developed world. This aspect emerges clearly in the NEP 2020.

India's higher education is currently in a stage of massification and, going further, the Policy aims for the universalisation of higher education in India by 2035, which the Nordic nations have already achieved. This is the first key dimension of the NEP 2020, as it seeks to bring India at par with the developed higher education systems in the world.

The second dimension is that India is moving away from the traditional norms and format of higher education that equates higher education with university education or links higher education only with college education. The post-secondary level of education system is being transformed in such a way that all forms of instruction and all forms of certification at the post-secondary level will be treated as tertiary education or higher education.

There are various ways to view the institutional arrangements being discussed to enhance India's higher education. The focus is not limited to research universities. The teaching universities are also being considered under the various forms of institutional arrangements being put in place under the new NEP. Attempt is to do away with a highly fossilised unified structure of higher education. The introduction of flexible pathways to learning is another important dimension which has major implications for educational mobility, including internationalisation.

One of the major outcomes of the new National Education Policy is going to be the 'ease of governance' in education. Currently, there are a lot of bottlenecks in governance of education in the country. The presence of multiple regulatory bodies poses difficulties for Indian HEIs in launching new programmes. In this context, the NEP 2020 envisions new governing structures and highlights the importance of institutional autonomy. The emphasis is on "light but tight regulation." Regulatory barriers are being removed with the establishment of Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) and four verticals, namely, the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC), the National Accreditation Council (NAC), the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) and the General Education Council (GEC). With the establishment of HECI, there would be a single regulatory body in place responsible for all approvals.

In addition to the above, there are two significant developments taking place in the context of the NEP 2020, namely, the emphasis on teacher education and reforms in the format of the prevalent examination system. Teachers are the fulcrum of the reform processes. A teacher enters the education system roughly at the age of 28-30 and exits at the age of 60-65, serving the system for more than three decades. Therefore, grooming of the faculty members during the formative stage and facilitating their professional growth is of utmost importance. This is reflected in the new National Education Policy. Teacher education and training has to be a continuous process in order to ensure the development of the individual teacher, as well as of the society, and the institution.

With regards to the discussion on examination system, there is a need for major changes in the pattern of examination system in India. For example, foreign students experience great difficulty in taking examinations in comparison to Indian students who are used to sitting in an examination for three hours duration and writing lengthy answers running into more than 25-30 pages. It is important to test a student for critical thinking, analytical ability,

innovation as well as creativity rather than their ability for rote learning and cramming the content in the curriculum. Question papers based on bloom's taxonomy would be a good start to the changes being envisaged.



*Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE*

There are also many issues with regards to vocational education and skill education that needs due attention. One of them pertains to the compartmentalisation and separation of the latter from higher education. Every graduate must acquire some skill and every skilled person must have a general education. In this context, there is a need for the marriage of skills and general education. In terms of guiding frameworks, previously there was the National Vocational Qualification Framework (NVQF), which was subsumed under the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF). Discussions are currently on with regard to the framing of National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) and the establishment of National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) which would enable easy migration between the two domains. The option of multiple entry and exit points being offered by the NEP would allow a student to easily move between vocational education and a degree programme in professional education seamlessly. The status and the impact of these changes would become clearer in about a year's time.

With regards to the aspect of language policy or medium of instruction that NEP touches upon, there is a need to highlight the need for equal emphasis on the native language as well as on English. Elementary education should preferably be delivered in the mother tongue. Some may opt for English if it is their mother tongue. Otherwise, there are 22 constitutionally recognised languages to choose from. Furthermore, the NEP indicates that students may also be allowed to pursue higher education in their native language. Adequate facilities need to be provided to realise those goals. Although challenging, textbooks and reading materials in the native language need to be made available. There is a philosophical dimension behind these imperatives: to ensure that students from remote and tribal areas educated in non-English medium schools are not left out.

In this context, efforts are being made by the AICTE to create a translation tool through which 3000 plus MOOC courses available in English on the SWAYAM portal can automatically be translated into around 11 Indian languages. The AICTE may be expanding the number of Indian languages in the future to facilitate the availability of academic resources for students to read and study in their own mother tongue.

At the same time, the study of English as mandatory during the three-four years undergraduate programme is important in order to ensure the students don't face any difficulty in dealing with the outside world when they complete their degree programmes. This would also equip the students when they go outside the country for better employment opportunities.

## NEP AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

The new National Education Policy 2020 has for the first time placed so much importance on the process of internationalisation of higher education, which in a way reflects India's aspiration to

play a global role in the field of education in general, and higher education in particular.

A notable feature of the Indian higher education sector is that for a very long time, it has been chiefly state-funded, state-controlled, and state regulated. However, currently more than 78 per cent of the institutions and more than 66 per cent of the enrolment in higher education are in the private sector. Even so, when private sector institutions discuss internationalisation, it is not in the context of trade or as a market-mediated process of internationalisation. This is a key differentiator with regards to the internationalisation agenda of India. For example, India is trying to establish its role as a global leader in the field of education, not with the motivation of profit but by offering scholarships to attract foreign students to come to India. In this context, there is a striking similarity in the approaches of Nordic countries and India towards internationalisation. Both do not visualise it as a market-mediated process and, hence, do not discuss higher education within the framework of the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS), which considers mobility of programmes, teachers and students, and institutions as cross-border trade.

Today, India has more credibility globally, as it is the second largest sending country for students. Top preferences of Indian students are the United States, United Kingdom and Australia. All these nations are highly priced and have high fee levying educational institutions in the world. In return, India receives only a very limited number of students, that is, around 47,000. The fact is that India is not considered as an attractive education destination. Conversely, as per inscriptions and writings from the 7th century AD, Nalanda University, which was established in the 4th century BC, hosted more than 2,000 teachers and 10,000 students from various countries. A majority of the students were from China, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Russia, and Turkey. There are many values of Indian culture which can be shared with the whole world via courses and programmes in Indology, Indian languages, systems

of medicine like Ayurveda, Yoga, etc. India's achievements in the field of internationalisation were remarkable during the said period and hence, India is not new to the process of internationalisation. However, the current scenario is not as impressive since India receives roughly 47,000 international students as compared to around one million outbound mobile students who go out of the country. There is a huge difference in the numbers of international students coming into India and the ones going abroad to pursue their studies. For a long time, student mobility to India has chiefly been facilitated by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarships. Notwithstanding, the number of students going out of India far outnumber those coming in. Such an imbalance in student mobility was an important factor leading to the adoption of internationalisation as an important goal. There is a critical need to promote India as a global study destination that provides premium education at an affordable cost.

In this context, there are a number of preconditions to be fulfilled to make India a reliable hub or a long-term hub for education for foreign students to pursue their studies. Firstly, there is a need to improve the overall quality of education being offered apart from the infrastructure facility in Indian HEIs that cater to international students. The problems faced by international students studying in India generally remain unaddressed, primarily because of the absence of International Students Offices/ International Offices in the given institutions. In that regard, the Policy mandates that every university which has international students should have an International Office on its campus to look after each and every issue of international students. Such a measure ensures that the international students studying in India have access to a single point of contact to register their grievances and get proper redressal. Under the NEP 2020, standard residential facilities and campus support programmes would be created to attract greater numbers of international students. These initiatives would help achieve the goal of internationalisation and global facilitation of higher education.

Moving forward, International Students Offices need to be established where there are none, and the existing ones made more responsive and efficient. Furthermore, accommodation facilities for international students need to be of a good standard and quality. A single portal or an information window for international students need to be created, providing relevant information about what programmes are being offered, and which universities are offering them. In essence, there is a need for streamlining of current measures and putting in place of some new initiatives to support international students to help in their decision with regards where to enrol and what to study during their academic stay in India. In this context, the NEP would also allow foreign students in India to complement their study period with internship programmes. Similarly, Indian students going abroad for a semester or two, can earn the credits at foreign HEIs which would be transferable to the Indian HEI. At the same time, international students are being facilitated to pursue their studies through the Study in India (SII) Programme sponsored by the Ministry of Education.



*Prof. N. V. Varghese, Vice-Chancellor, NIEPA*

The Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education approved by the UNESCO General Conference in 2019 October would play an important role in facilitating student mobility as NEP 2020 discusses developing a National Higher Education Qualification Framework along similar

lines. The University Grants Commission has initiated new steps to move towards that direction. Another important highlight of NEP 2020 is the creation of an Academic Bank of Credits (ABCs). In the past, the lack of facility to transfer credits used to be the primary cause of difficulties for Indian students seeking to study abroad. On many occasions, the credits acquired from the foreign universities were not transferable into Indian universities. The NEP 2020 makes it very clear that the credits earned in the foreign universities can now be transferred to the Indian universities. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has appointed a committee to work out the modalities related to transfer of credits and definition of credits. The Vice-Chancellor, NIEPA, is the Member Secretary of the Committee. The regulations are in the process of being notified soon and it would help in facilitating student mobility between HEIs within the country and abroad, including student mobility between India and the Nordic countries.

The NEP 2020 would also enhance programmes such as semester exchanges and twinning programmes or dual degree programs. Joint degrees and dual degrees, about which discussions have been going on for a long time, are now being permitted, not only between Indian HEIs, but also between Indian and foreign universities, as it appears clearly from the NEP 2020. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has already uploaded the regulation for dual degrees, joint degrees and training programmes for academic collaborations.

The flexibility in norms governing twinning programmes or dual degree programmes, including those already being conducted, will be positively impacted by the new changes. In all likelihood, there may be further relaxation in visa norms for foreign faculty members coming into India to conduct their academic and research activities. Further, the Government of India has been encouraging the appointment of foreign faculty members at the Institutions of Eminence (IoE). There are many additional issues that require attention, such as standardisation of curriculum to international

standards, and aligning the academic calendar with what is followed in other countries, and so on.

Further, in its efforts to promote internationalisation and to make India's higher education system globally competitive in offering quality higher education, there is a need to improve the global outreach of Indian HEIs through institutional and programme mobility. This is essential in order to develop a global mindset among Indian faculty members and students and to shape Indian learners as global citizens. A global citizen is aware of the wider world, respects and values diversity, possesses competencies to work in a multicultural environment, contributes towards making the world a more sustainable place and, most importantly, contributes to the development of a more tolerant and compassionate society at the global level.

In this context, an important dimension of the NEP 2020 is that it proposes allowing top ranking foreign universities to set up their branch campuses in India and well performing Indian institutions to set up their campuses abroad. With regard to the latter, Indian HEIs can choose areas like Yoga, Ayurveda and many of the niche areas where Indian institutions are very good and have comparable advantage over others. Currently, the Indian government does not allow setting up of independent branch campuses in India. India's commitment under the GATS also does not support the delivery of education through Mode 3. The Indian parliament has been discussing the issue of establishment and operation of campuses of foreign universities in India for the last 10-15 years. NEP 2020 marks a departure from the past and, with it, the Indian government has committed that "A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India." Currently, the regulatory provisions for the ease of operation of foreign branch campuses in India are being worked out and regulations are being framed and would be out in the near future. Notwithstanding, there

would be some universities like Harvard who, as a matter of policy, do not set up campuses anywhere in the world, as they believe “if you have to experience Harvard come to Harvard.” However, there are many international universities willing to set up their offshore branch campuses. A Research Survey conducted by the Unit for International Cooperation (UIC), NIEPA,<sup>1</sup> has indicated that there are a few universities in Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom who are willing to come and establish their campuses in India.

There are many positive implications of the NEP on internationalisation. The recommendations of the new National Education Policy 2020 have several implications for the various stakeholders in India, including the community of learners and educators, as well as educational institutions, vis a vis internationalisation. NEP 2020 aims to make the young generation of learners aware and understand global issues and make them truly global citizens who are committed to human rights, sustainable development, and global well-being. Furthermore, it is likely to develop academic as well as economic soft power, in addition to social, cultural impact on Indian higher education. There is a need to view India’s internationalisation policies and programmes against the backdrop of the country’s socio-economic circumstances and needs, as well as the current state of the Indian higher education system. A global higher education ecosystem must foster growth, reduce poverty and contribute to shared prosperity of the future generation of universities. This is to ensure that the institutions are inclusive, that education being imparted is objective, that ethical standards are adhered to during the teaching process, that the curriculum is relevant and able to address the global challenges, and that India is actively contributing to global cooperation.

As a result, a true global perspective seems likely to be emerging from the NEP 2020. This provision would have long-lasting implications for internationalisation and the Nordic countries too may demonstrate their interest in the new opportunities opening

up in India. It is likely that enhancing India's global outreach by establishing relationships and partnerships abroad with individuals as well as institutions will build a positive national image among the international academic community.

While new trajectories are being drawn and developed with respect to India's internationalisation goals, India's internationalisation targets were being fulfilled even prior to the unravelling of the new National Education Policy (2020). The Government of India has launched various schemes to realise the goals of internationalisation, such as the Study in India, GIAN (Global Initiative of Academic Networks) and SPARC (Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration) programmes. GIAN has resulted in closer partnerships between Indian and foreign universities and the SPARC programme has acted as an incentive for Indian universities to participate in competitive funding. This has in a way also provided an incentive for Indian universities to promote collaboration, without which such institutions would not be able to obtain funding.

NEP 2020 aims to equip the students, teachers, and educational institutions with the right competencies and capabilities, in creating an enabling and re-invigorated education ecosystem for a vibrant new India. India has an emerging, young and diverse population increasingly seeking out access to higher education. In this context, there is a need for a judicious balance between the global outreach and local expansion. Both local and global need to be paid attention to.

The Ministry of Education and the UGC are working together to formulate an Action Plan for the implementation of NEP 2020. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) are a part of the initiative of developing the implementation plans and operationalisation of the Action Plan.

## UGC AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has already initiated many important steps to facilitate the various recommendations of the NEP 2020. With respect to the recommendation of creating a legislative framework that allows foreign universities to operate in India and similarly encouraging high performing Indian universities to set up their campuses abroad, the enactment of the legislative framework facilitating the entry of foreign universities will be put in place and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory governance and content norms that are at par with other autonomous institutions in India. To facilitate the same, the University Grants Commission (UGC) recently amended its Institutions of Eminence (IoE) related regulations, thereby allowing India's top ranked universities with IoE status to set up offshore campuses.



*Dr. D. P. Singh, Chairman, UGC*

NEP 2020 also calls for student and faculty mobility by establishing international partnerships for research, and cross-border delivery of higher education programmes by changing the processes through which Indian institutions can enrol international students as well as the feasibility of carrying credits across institutions in multiple countries. It is an important step towards promoting academic

cooperation and increasing synergy between Indian and foreign academic institutions.

In this context, the UGC has released the draft regulations for establishing an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC). The UGC will also be introducing enabling provisions to facilitate joint degrees and training programmes between Indian and foreign HEIs. Furthermore, the UGC has already directed all the universities to set up an Office for International Affairs on their campuses to promote India as a global study hub. These offices will be responsible for extending all possible help to the foreign students studying in India. It would also act as a liaison between the foreign students and the sponsoring agency.

The Indo-Norwegian Cooperation Programme (INCP) in higher education and research was signed in 2014 between the UGC and the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education, Norway, for a period of five years. The Agreement aimed at promoting intense cooperation between the two countries in the well-defined areas of mutual interest, particularly, energy, climate change, health, information technology, etc, and was very successful.

## **ASSOCIATION OF INDIAN UNIVERSITIES (AIU) AND INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA**

The Government of India is working hard to implement the provisions laid out in the NEP 2020 in order to realise the various aforementioned recommendations of the policy.

In the field of internationalisation, the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) is playing a key role in India. The three notable initiatives undertaken by the AIU are as below.

First is with regards to mutual recognition of degrees. The Ministry of Education has mandated the AIU to assess the equivalence of

foreign degrees with the Indian degrees. Previously, this was being done by comparing the duration of the programmes under consideration. Of late, in line with the global practices, AIU has replaced the duration-based approach with a credit-based approach while comparing two or more degree programmes. This mechanism has been approved by the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Hence, at present, a Masters Programme of two years in India can be considered equivalent to one-year Masters in other countries, if the credits correspond. However, the definition of credits varies from country to country. Hence, the AIU is currently conducting a credit mapping exercise so that it can map the credits from Indian and foreign universities in order to decide whether the degrees being compared are equivalent or not.

Secondly, foreign partners interested in collaborating with Indian HEIs experience difficulties in accessing information with regard to the Indian HEIs, their subject specialisation, and about ranking of institutions, etc. Different forms of ranking like those of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) adds to the difficulty being experienced by them. The AIU is preparing a Collaboration Portal to deal with the said problem and to facilitate international cooperation. The portal requests the member universities, numbering roughly 850, to upload the required details. The Collaboration Portal reflects the information on the strengths of the individual institutions, fields of specialisation, departments and research opportunities or facilities that highlight their best qualities/offerings and so on. The portal is also expected to perform the role of a repository of credentials like faculty research publications, patents, and awards.

The third initiative being carried out by the AIU is to establish a network of international educators similar to NAFSA.<sup>2</sup> Currently, even though India now has over 1,000 universities, with around 40-50 universities already quite active in the field of internationalisation,



*Prof. Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, AIU*

there is no such network of international educators. Among the remaining 950 universities, there are many universities that wish to embark on their internationalisation journey, but they do not have a roadmap to proceed in that direction. Therefore, the AIU, by setting up an Indian network of international educators, will facilitate knowledge and resource sharing. The AIU intends to hand-hold reputed universities in India to achieve their global aspirations. The concept paper on the theme is ready and the same has been approved by the Governing Council of AIU. The same will be shared in the public domain to enable a wider debate and discussion on the initiative. It is likely that such a network would really advance the internationalisation of higher education and of the Indian universities.

## **NORDIC VIEWS ON INDIA'S NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020**

The National Education Policy 2020 offers a lot of opportunities for internationalisation, as well as for Nordic-India cooperation. The key potential areas of cooperation are in the fields of quality assurance, promotion of mobility at all levels, and credit transfer that would provide expanded opportunities for research and teaching alike.

The flexible pathways of learning that has been highlighted in the new National Education Policy resonates well with the Finnish Education Sector as the Finnish system supports and facilitates flexible pathways. In Finland, students can shift from vocational education to the programmes under higher education very easily. Therefore, in Finland, when a student chooses a path of study, he or she is not bound to it forever. This is basically the practice of continuous education or lifelong learning, wherein one can choose different paths, while also being able to complete one's education.

Some other aspects that resonate well are the multiple opportunities for collaboration with the Finnish institutions in the field of mobility so as to achieve balanced mobility. The initiatives like the possibility of creating joint degrees, establishment of branch campuses in India, the transfer of credits, and in particular, establishment of International Offices in the Indian universities for facilitating international students and international collaboration are being welcomed by the partner institutions in Finland and other Nordic countries.

The NEP 2020 is also a very exciting toolbox given that Denmark and India have matching visions for their respective higher education systems. The NEP 2020 is a wide-ranging policy document with long term implications for India. The goals and visions of the NEP are also similar to those of the Danish institutions and other institutions in the Nordic region. Institutions in the Nordics aspire to a higher education system which has a better integration of the vocational, the academic and the research spaces. India and the Nordic region are both on the same path, but maybe in different stages in that path. Further, India is simultaneously experiencing numerous stages on the same path, all at the same time.

The discussion on global citizen mentioned in India's new National Education Policy resonates with the Nordic views about the need to look beyond the individual citizen and how a global citizenry may be developed for realisation of the idea of global community. There

is a need to aspire towards a Nordic-Indian Community through higher education collaboration, one which would strengthen all forms of exchange and strengthen ways of working together.

## **NORDIC-INDIA COOPERATION: A GENERAL OVERVIEW**

An important dimension which has so far not been adequately highlighted is that Nordic countries have always demonstrated a friendly attitude towards India. The developmental cooperation and the support through other means extended by the Nordic countries towards India's development since 1952 is remembered with great honour and respect. Many of the Indian Prime Ministers ranging from Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi to the current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, all have visited the Nordic countries. The chief reasons for the long-standing relationship between India and Nordic countries are both cultural as well as shared commitment towards democracy, liberal education and attitude towards equity.

Just as India has a lot to learn from the Nordic countries, similarly Nordic countries also have a lot to learn from India, simply owing to the fact that India is the largest democracy and one of the oldest democracies in the world. It is imperative that both India and the Nordic countries come together, as both are proponents of democracy and liberal studies. From an Indian perspective, collaboration with Nordic countries is likely to benefit India in a positive way as the Nordic countries are also a cluster of happiest countries in the world. Experience has shown that liberal, democratic regimes, values of coexistence and their attitude towards the deprived groups, towards equity and inclusion in education, and so on, are some of the cardinal values that are promoted by the Nordic countries in general. This does not refer to any particular country in the region, but generally apply to all the countries in the region. To mention just one aspect, the social safety arrangement in place in all the Nordic countries is a "neighbour's envy and owner's

pride,” and is not found in any other region. Conversely, in all other parts of the world, one finds that once the income levels rise, inequalities also widen. The only exception to this trend are the Nordic countries wherein there is high income and low inequality.

Therefore, there is a lot to learn from the region in the field of student exchange programmes and research programmes. In the context of research, their achievements with reference to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be a great learning opportunity for India. The ongoing research collaborations between India and the Nordic countries will continue vigorously and gain further momentum hereafter. These collaborations are not-for-profit in nature, and not geared towards revenue generation. Therefore, the Nordic-India collaboration for internationalisation needs to be viewed very differently from the internationalisation and collaboration that takes place in other regions.

The Nordic region comprises the best non-native English-speaking countries, which is considered as an important factor drawing international students to the region. Anybody who is university educated, or even secondary school educated, possesses the ability to converse in the English language. Comparatively, the higher education system in India and a majority of the mobile Indian students are English speakers. An analysis of the mobility pattern of Indian students shows that they are comfortable going to a country with better non-native English speakers. An additional reason may be that Indian students find it easier to compete with non-native English speakers than with native English speakers.

There is an increasing trend in the number of inbound international students opting to study in Nordic countries, especially for research studies and postdoctoral studies. The positive fellowship arrangements, laboratory facilities and other infrastructure which are extended by the institutions in the Nordic countries are contributing substantially to the globalisation and internationalisation processes in the Nordic region.

## EMERGING TRENDS IN NORDIC-INDIA COOPERATION IN EDUCATION

International collaboration between India and Nordic countries on mutually beneficial terms started in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Several member universities had programmes focussing on India and South Asian Studies, especially in the field of Area Studies. And at the same time, India has been studied in subjects like history, political science and anthropology, and in the study of religions, linguistics, and so on.



*Dr. Uwe Skoda, Chairperson, NCI*

The Nordic Centre in India (NCI) has been playing an important role in advancing international cooperation in the field of higher education and research. The Nordic Centre in India (NCI) has 18 member universities spread across the five Nordic countries and with one member university in the Baltic region. It was established about 20 years ago, and since its inception it aimed to foster closer academic ties with India and Indian institutions. The role and effort of many institutions were crucial in setting up the Nordic Centre in India and in helping students from the Nordic countries to study in India. Crucial shifts have been taking place over the last two decades in the demands from the member universities that are funding the NCI and also in terms of their internationalisation goals in general.

First is the approach and shift towards the STEM disciplines, that is, the Science and Technology programmes dealing with sustainability issues, such as green technology, smart cities, etc. There is a huge potential in this field that has been discussed at the political level. Also, at the university level, the NCI had a discussion with the University of Bergen recently to advance cooperation in this field. These initiatives have been chiefly spearheaded by the innovation centres.

Secondly, there is a focus on a balanced exchange in terms of student mobility, and the number of students from India in Nordic universities is gradually increasing. However, it remains an issue of concern for many Nordic countries who understand the associated challenges in realisation of that goal. One of the reasons is that a part of students in the Nordic region, especially in the field of Science and Technology or medicine, etc, are less mobile than those in the field of humanities or social sciences. Hence, there is a need to develop a mechanism under which inbound and outbound students may be balanced. There are a number of Nordic universities, like those in Finland, interested in the recruitment of students from India, and the same is being facilitated by NCI.

Thirdly, and more significantly, there are new fields emerging in terms of the content of academic programmes. For example, promotion of Nordic studies at Indian universities is one among them. Recently, the Nordic Centre in India (NCI), in association with the Centre for European Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, organised a Summer School. This was part of an ongoing set of initiatives, and efforts are on to enlarge these initiatives in the years to come.

Among others, there is the need for strengthening of the Indian language courses at the HEIs in Europe. At present there are limited opportunities and there are very few programmes offering languages such as Bengali, Tamil or others. Focus on other Indian languages could result in an interesting collaboration. The Indian

Government could provide support in promoting Indian languages in Nordic institutions.

## FINLAND-INDIA COOPERATION IN EDUCATION

With regards to internationalisation trends in the Finnish higher education institutions (HEIs), the state plays a significant role in the higher education system of Finland with over 70 per cent of the funds being contributed by the Government of Finland. Finland as the happiest country in the world, its institutions may be able to share their experiences and good practices with their counterparts in India.



*Kaisa Kurki, Tampere University, Finland*

The Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture introduced a new programme in the field of internationalisation in the beginning of 2021. Eight new alliances or consortia have been created under this programme, out of which three networks are due to collaborate with Indian institutions, demonstrating a high degree of interest towards India in Finland.

A few key networks among the universities and universities of applied sciences are: Global Innovation Network on Teaching and Learning (GINTL), INFICOR led by Aalto University, and Educase. The Global Innovation Network on Teaching and Learning (GINTL)

consists of seven universities and three universities of applied sciences. The Network is being led by the University of Jyväskylä, a member institution of the NCI. The objective of the Network is to collaborate in the field of education and is dedicated to teacher training and research-based development of teaching and learning. The Network seeks to deal with problems related to the global learning crisis and also to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. Under the framework of the Network, there is an increased interest to foster genuine and principled collaboration between Finnish and Indian institutions to share best practices and lessons learned. The focus is on activities related to research-based innovation, development of learning and teaching curricula, understanding learning environments and educational systems.

The second network of universities interested in closer collaboration with India is INFICOR; it is led by Aalto University. It will be focussing on partnerships with over 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The Network consists of 11 universities and 15 universities of applied sciences. The flagship collaboration projects are in areas of artificial intelligence, materials, bio-sciences, next generation networks 5G to 6G, and other prospective areas of research. One important activity relates to the development of entrepreneurship in education.

A third network is called Educause, an education platform which comprises 11 universities and 15 universities of applied sciences. The Network's focus is on problem-based learning methods and joint projects with partner institutions and other stakeholders. The intended goal is to find new and innovative ways of tackling day to day problems and finding research-based solutions, wherein participation of students is encouraged.

Tampere University, from the institutional point of view, has increased its partnerships with India. The University has demonstrated a strong interest towards talent recruitment, student

recruitment and researcher recruitment from India. Roles of various institutions are crucial in facilitating partnership activities. For example, the Made in Finland Webinar series that was organised last autumn by Business Finland, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish national agency for education and NCI. Indian researchers and students account for the largest group of non-Finnish researchers and teachers at Tampere University.

## DENMARK-INDIA COOPERATION IN EDUCATION

Danish institutions are deeply interested in India and there is a huge potential for collaboration as both have matching visions for their respective higher education systems. Denmark and India are in the process of setting up projects and enhancing partnerships between each other's universities in the area of smart cities, water quality, carbon capture, sustainable agriculture, etc. Denmark is keen on carrying out research collaboration, student exchanges as well as joint teaching programmes with India.



*Dr. Jakob Williams Ørberg, Royal Danish Embassy, Denmark*

Furthermore, there is a strong undercurrent in Denmark towards transforming its university system. At present, the focus is on themes such as climate change and green transitions in society. As a result, the international activities of the universities are mostly focused on these issues.

In respect of internationalisation, profit is seldom a driving force for Nordic countries including for Denmark, which makes Denmark and all the Nordic countries good partners for India. Denmark provides scholarships to make education affordable to the Indian students. The option of paid education is also available for interested candidates. Notwithstanding, internationalisation in Denmark is not geared towards profit for universities, nor to sustain the economy of its universities, but towards enhancing the quality of the university degree programmes and student recruitment. The expectation is that it would lead to more collaboration with the home country, India. With regards to the question of integration of Indian students into the Danish labour market, Denmark would benefit not only from the talent of the students but also their network back in India during the process of collaboration.

In this moment of transition, mutually beneficial programmes may be developed that present a win-win for both sides. Denmark is willing to deepen the relationship with India without trying to extract extra value from it. An integrated approach both in the Nordic universities and Indian universities towards their respective priorities is essential. Erasmus Programmes and other calls by agencies from the EU side, that invite Call for Proposals on a regular basis, may include India as one of the partner countries. The Danish Innovation Network Programmes, which is supposed to set up the network of researchers from India and Denmark, may involve other countries as well. This would certainly benefit both sides.

## NORWAY-INDIA COOPERATION IN EDUCATION

Norway is a small country and, therefore, internationalisation has always been very important to it as it has always looked outwards. Throughout its history, Norway has maintained a long-standing relationship with India. Both Norway and India are in the process of transforming their education sector. The coincidence presents a great opportunity for even more and better Norway-India collaboration.

Norway has formulated a Panorama Strategy which identifies a set of nine countries it deems as important for cooperation. The nine countries identified are Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the USA. India has been listed in the Strategy document as a priority country in the field of educational and research related cooperation. The Strategy was in place in the period 2016-2020, it has been recently renewed for the period 2021-2027. The goal of the Strategy is to create better interaction between higher education, research and innovation. Further, it seeks to attain better work-life balance in the public, as well as in the private sector. The Strategy seeks to enhance student mobility and synergy between Norwegian and European Union (EU) programmes in the field of higher education and research. The Strategy also aims to produce research-based knowledge, education and innovation that promotes the attainment of United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



*Hilde Haaland Kramer, Diku, Norway*

The Panorama Strategy is based on the principle of quality, relevance, reciprocity directed towards a long-term and responsible international collaboration. The rationale for internationalising higher education is that it contributes to the better quality of higher education both in the host country as well as in the country that sends the students.

The Norwegian Government has also released a White Paper on student mobility that was published in October 2020 and the same has been approved by the Norwegian Parliament in February 2021. The White Paper has an ambitious goal that in future at least 50 per cent of all the Norwegian students pursuing higher education should have a mobility stay during their academic career, irrespective of whether it is a full degree programme or a short-term / long-term exchange programme. Currently, only 16-17 per cent of the students fulfil this criterion. This provision in the White Paper also reflects the Government of Norway's seriousness towards encouraging the higher education institutions in Norway to induce a change in the culture of exchange programmes.

Furthermore, the White Paper refers to inbound international students in Norway as a "resource." This is primarily owing to Norway according immense importance to "internationalisation at home." Even if Norway is able to reach the goal of sending 50 per cent of its students outside the country, there would still be a substantial 50 per cent of students who would remain in Norway. Therefore, international students coming from all over the world to Norway would help to enrich the student communities and the learning environments at Norwegian HEIs.

Student mobility needs to be a part of institutional collaboration; it should be a part of an institution's strategy for internationalisation. There should be a connection between the research projects, student mobility and educational programmes. While Norway welcomes international students, currently its focus is on the Erasmus Programme of the European Union which is the biggest mobility programme in the world. Norway also wants more students to go to countries which are among its priorities and also countries in the non-English speaking world.

The imbalance in mobility between Norway and India may face some respite following the changes envisaged in the NEP 2020 and some funding opportunities jointly sponsored by the Indian

and Norwegian government. Some of the obstacles include the differences in the educational system, the credit transfer mechanism and administrative challenges.

With regards to funding opportunities, Norway has several instruments within the Panorama Strategy, such as INTPART, UTFORSK, etc. INTPART is a cooperation between the Norwegian Research Council and Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation (Diku). It aims to develop world-class research and education groups through international cooperation. UTFORSK is a funding scheme that promotes educational cooperation, mutual student and staff mobility, etc, and is targeted at the nine countries that have been prioritised under the Panorama Strategy.

Norway has a specific programme also; that is targeted towards teacher education. Opportunities are also available under the Erasmus Programme. Norway is open to the possibility of establishing synergy between some of its national funding schemes and the Erasmus Programme through international credit mobility and through EU-sponsored programmes like Horizon Europe (2021-27), to foster the connection and the coupling between education and research.

## COVID-19 AND ITS IMPACT ON INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

COVID-19 has impacted education and it has posed new challenges as well as created new opportunities for internationalisation in the future. Significant shifts have occurred in the mode of teaching and research over the last three semesters at Nordic universities as well as in Indian higher education institutions that have raised critical questions about the way internationalisation may be pursued in the time to come. That implies both contradictory and complementary tendencies that appeared during the crisis. On the one hand, the technical advances in the form of online meeting platforms made it

possible to reach far more students than in a regular format, thereby enhancing accessibility. For example, during the Summer School conducted virtually, it was possible to admit students irrespective of their geographical locations. The recorded lectures from these sessions are also helpful in creating databases of online courses. Although many of these trends are not necessarily new, they just underwent a process of acceleration over the last semester under the changed circumstances.

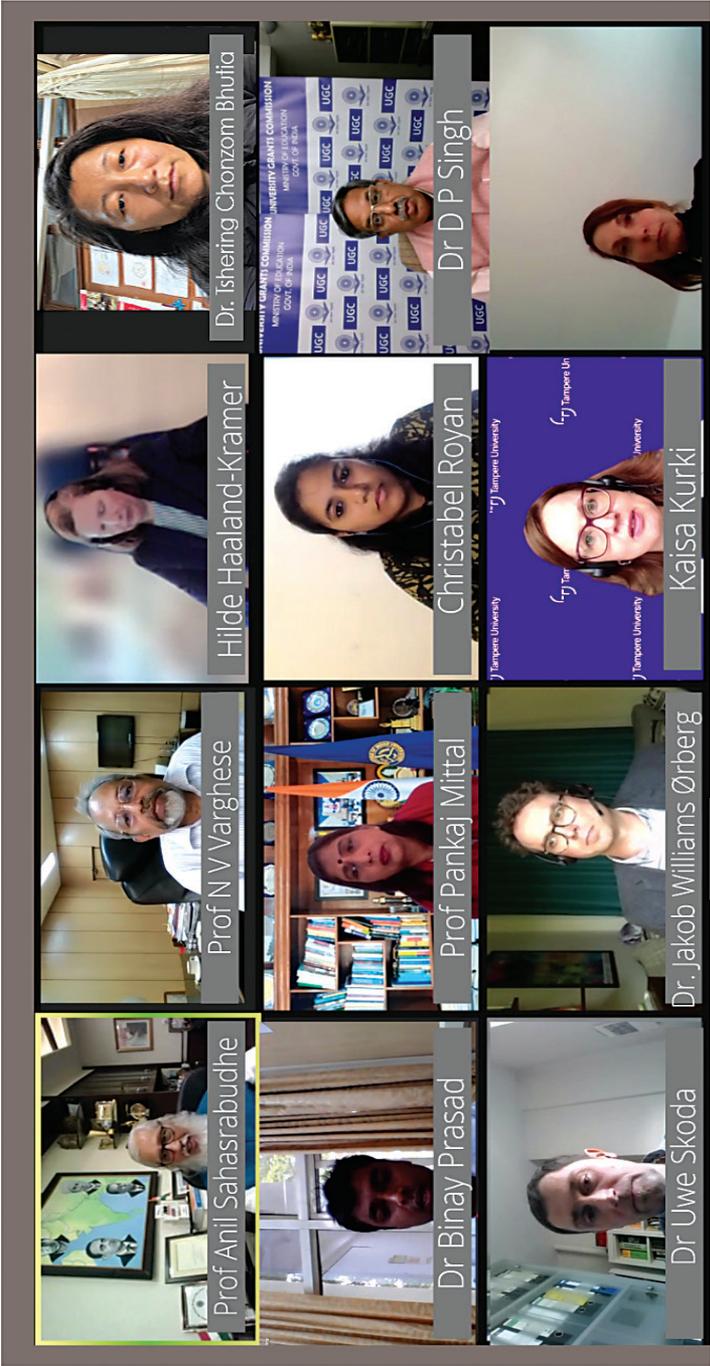
Notwithstanding the advantages, it was noticed that face-to-face interactions and on-campus interactions are valued by students and teachers alike. Therefore, there are limits to the digital mode or online teaching. Shifting all aspects of the teaching learning process to online mode has its own set of challenges. Therefore, there are two tendencies pulling all in two different directions and this needs to be deliberated upon.

All these realities and shifts impact internationalisation, and these elements call for new forms of internationalisation at home. Virtual internships that many students are doing now will be seen in a new light. These tendencies should be balanced in a meaningful way depending on the needs and requirements of the subject areas. Online teaching might not be as equally meaningful and beneficial to students of engineering and those studying languages.

In this light, there is a need to align recent experiences with the given priorities, particularly the priorities of the universities. Methodology towards achieving sustainable internationalisation, institutionally as well as ecologically, needs to be evolved.

### *Endnotes*

- 1) Eldho Mathews, "Establishing International Branch Campuses in India: A Survey among 'Top 200' Universities," July 2021, NIEPA.  
[http://www.niepa.ac.in/download/IBC\\_Survey\\_Final\\_Report\\_15\\_July.pdf](http://www.niepa.ac.in/download/IBC_Survey_Final_Report_15_July.pdf)
- 2) NAFSA: Association of International Educators <https://www.nafsa.org/>



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# NORDIC UNIVERSITIES AND INDIA'S NEP 2020

## NEW TRAJECTORIES FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

27 April 2021

### Programme

Schedule	Theme and Objectives	Speakers
1530 hrs	Welcome remarks	Christabel Royan, Director, Nordic Centre in India (NCI)
1535 hrs	Introductory Remarks by the Chair	Prof D P Singh, Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC)
1540 hrs	National Education Policy 2020 (Higher Education)	Prof Anil Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE
1550 hrs	National Education Policy and Nordic-India Cooperation	Prof N V Varghese, VC, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)
1600 hrs	Internationalisation in context of NEP 2020	Prof Pankaj Mittal, Secretary General, Association of Indian Universities (AIU)

Schedule	Theme and Objectives	Speakers
1615 hrs	Discussion	<p><b>Nordic Representatives:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Uwe Skoda, Chairperson, Nordic Centre in India (NCI)</li> <li>• Ms Kaisa Kurki, Manager of International Affairs, Innovation Services and Partnerships, Tampere University, Finland</li> <li>• Dr Jakob Williams Ørberg, Counsellor, Innovation, Research and Higher Education, Royal Danish Embassy, Delhi</li> <li>• Hilde Haaland-Kramer, Head of Section for Global Cooperation, Norwegian Agency for International Cooperation and Quality Enhancement in Higher Education (Diku), Norway</li> </ul>
1645 hrs	Concluding Remarks by the Chair	Prof D P Singh, Chairman, University Grants Commission (UGC)
1655 hrs	Vote of Thanks	Dr Binay Prasad, Deputy Advisor, Unit for International Cooperation (UIC), NIEPA







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