

Advisor Sharma, Prof Talat bat for early NEP implementation

KU-HED conference generates healthy discussion among stakeholders

Srinagar, Sep 21: The New Education Policy-2020 will be greatly advantageous for the teachers, researchers and students alike, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kashmir Prof Talat Ahmad has said, and asserted that all the stakeholders will have to work together to ensure its early implementation.

Addressing the valedictory ceremony of a day-long conference, organised by the University of Kashmir in collaboration with J&K's Higher Education Department to brainstorm on the NEP-2020, Prof Talat said: "The New Education Policy envisages large-scale transformational reforms in research across disciplines and focusses on widening the gamut, structure and quality of research in various fields. The NEP-2020 for the first time provides a policy framework emphasising the importance of research for the country's economic growth. The public expenditure on education will go up to six percent, which is a great step and would change the face of the education ecosystem".

Mr KK Sharma, Advisor to the J&K Lieutenant Governor, chaired the concluding session. The inaugural session was addressed by President Ram Nath Kovind (virtually) and Lieutenant Governor J&K UT Mr Manoj Sinha, and attended by Vice-Chancellors and academics from several universities in the Union Territory, apart from faculty members and top officers of the University of Kashmir. Registrar KU Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir delivered a vote of thanks at the inaugural ceremony, which was followed by three technical sessions.

Prof Talat said the conference deliberations will prove to be fruitful in implementing the NEP in J&K's academic institutions at the earliest. "We all will have to work in tandem to translate the provisions of this Policy into a reality at the grassroots level. Difficulties will come, but difficulties will go. We have to work in the right direction."

In his concluding remarks, Advisor Sharma said: "With the NEP-2020, we are addressing all the challenges we face with reference to the new knowledge and evolution of higher education in the country."

"Discussions during this conference have been very good," he said, asserting that such discussions amongst all stakeholders help understand "what the system has been until now, why changes could not take place in the past, and what could be the challenges in the NEP implementation".

"It is good to be aware of those challenges. This policy has come after very wide consultations. About two lakh people gave their suggestions, and these included people from private sector, public academic institutions, students and other stakeholders. It would be wise to go through this policy and start implementing it," Mr Sharma said.

He said the NEP-2020 panel took into account the recommendations of previous committees which were there in public domain. "I feel this (NEP) is an excellent outcome of what's possible in diverse India having outstanding spaces to pursue higher education," he said.

With regard to accessibility, connectivity and affordability provisions in the NEP and any concerns thereof, Mr Sharma said: "The NEP talks of certain content of education to be done in the online mode. What portion can go into the online mode, we have to start working on it. There will have to be regulatory statutes to see how online components can be taught. Lots of new regulations will have to come from the UGC," he said.

"Since this policy is to be implemented in the next one, two or three years, we are not trying to jump on something that belongs to the UGC. Yes, debates have led to 'do and not to do' situations, but we have to overcome the resistance at individual levels first. So college principals in particular, and other stakeholders, will have to have to go through this document (NEP) and become aware."

"Since the policy is there, we need to see how to make it feasible to implement. Any difficulties therein, we will have to discuss and identify them in a nice manner. The Institution Development Plans (IDPs) will have to be formed, and I assure that from the government side we will provide all the support and guidance. With the able support of senior people in the education field, we will take this process forward," he said.

Mr Sharma said the NEP provides for a very close link between the school and higher education systems which "we should understand and bring to focus".

"Lot of B.Ed colleges came, but many of them did not bring a good name to the teacher training. You could get it. Many of them have closed. In the NEP, quality will have to improve in B.Ed colleges and I think universities can give better quality of B.Ed teaching and provide quality human resource for the school system," he said.

He said there are some best universities in India. "We can have some professors visit there to see what has flourished there, and not elsewhere, and have a message from there to share among us. We can see what's happening there. India contributes a significant share of students in some of the world's best universities".

Prof Shabir A Bhat, Director HRDC KU conducted proceedings of the valedictory session.