

Editorial



The NEP 2020 marks a paradigm shift in Indian education, particularly with the flexibility of student entry and exit points into academic programs. While doing so, it gives more autonomy to students over their learning journeys but crucially leaves various problems for educational institutions. The biggest problem is the multiple entry-exit system, where they are permitted to be out of programs at various stages with the ability to come back into the same or another program. Besides that, institutions should rethink their curricula toward a more modular approach with each exit point being identified through a certificate, diploma, or degree and being as useful and applicable as possible at that level. It also implies the management of seamless transfer of credits, which is going to be increasingly more complex especially in light of institution of the Academic Bank of Credits. It is also significant to mention that some institutions are still not set ready to have the digital infrastructure for tracing and keeping track of credits undertaken across universities, thereby creating delay or even discrepancies at one point. The students are bound to drop out early, and the issue here is the fact that a student who drops out after a year may not have been fully equipped with practical knowledge and skills to enable him or her to get employment easily. This will put pressure on the institutions to ensure that even the shortest programs are creating outcomes that have meaningful, industry relevance. Furthermore, resource and faculty management will be added pressures as the institutions will have to manage different timelines for the students and ensure that the support services to the fullest extent of academic and support services are available for those students at points of education. Administratively, this is complex. New processes must be identified in processing re-admissions and coordinating credits with the ABC system. New processes will burden most existing administrative systems, allied with a risk of inequity. Flexible learning pathways will clearly advantage many students, but those from more marginalized backgrounds will be unable to seize the fullest potential for a variety of financial or social reasons. It is henceforth upon the educational institutions to ensure that adequate support systems like scholarships and mentoring programs are in place to enhance effective implementation of inclusive education. Lastly, ensuring that short programs be akin to what industry expects is challenging. The flexibility put across by the NEP is well-intended, but the employers might not see certificates or diplomas as valuable as a regular degree and would weigh adversely on students' employability prospects. Needless to say, institutions will have to work close with industries to ensure that the market relevance level of each degree in certification exists. Probably, the accreditation process itself must also change because the requirements for evaluation would not serve justice to this level of flexibility that such a

new type of academic program avows. In short, NEP 2020 promises considerable opportunities in the transformative potential for education, but it will be difficult for institutions not to navigate these headaches with great care so that this flexibility promised does not compromise either the quality or the equity of education.

Dr. (Mrs.) Sushma S. Kulkarni

Editor, JEET