

## The New Education Policy (NEP-2020) - Introduction of Universal Human Values (UHV) In Technical Institutions of India: Reflections from Visvesvaraya Technological University

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### Abstract

Education is the fundamental parameter for the human capital. The adoption of the New Education Policy-2020 (NEP, 2020) for both primary and higher education will be the new paradigm shift in education system after 34 years to bring unity and quality education. Universal Human Values (UHV) is included as a part of curriculum in the various universities and institutions. It is important to imbibe human values within engineers so that they can contribute to the society and address the social issues and live happily in the family. Universal Human Values (UHV) will bring the concept of individual conscience and ethics in technical education.

**Keywords:** Universal human values (UHVs), National Education Policy (NEP), Human values, Quality Education

### I. Introduction

*“Education is not just academics but understanding and improving other life skills and be a useful good citizen”*  
- Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, Chairman, AICTE

“India has a history of well-thought-out and well-intentioned policy initiatives, guided by principles of access, equity and quality, and implemented with thought and care” (Draft NEP, 2019, p. 426). The National Education Policy 2020 (henceforth referred to as NEP 2020) is the latest policy framework that is intended to transform education in India. The preamble for NEP 2020 is set on the lines of defining the expectations of education. It states – “education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development” (National Education Policy, 2020, p.3). The policy recommends Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) to include flexible and innovative curriculum in various areas, comprising value-based education, towards attaining holistic and multidisciplinary education. Through credit-based courses and projects, the value based curriculum is expected to include “the development of humanistic, ethical, constitutional, and universal human values of truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life skills” (NEP, 2020, p. 38).

The curriculum will shape the graduates by imbibing in them realistic and measurable attributes categorised into common attributes (holistic vision of life, socially responsible behaviour, ethical human conduct, respect for excellence and gratitude for all, etc.) and specific attributes (problem analysis, investigation, design, communication skills, professionalism, etc.). Towards continuous fulfilment of aspirations and attainment of full

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human potential, the Universal Human Values (UHV) will take the individuals on a journey filled with self-inquiry, self-exploration, and self-discovery. Attainment of the full human potential will entail individuals reaching the level of human consciousness and ethical human conduct, resulting in lasting happiness and prosperity. A collection of such individuals will, in turn, contribute to the development of a humane society, which is equitable and just and ensures the well-being of all (UHV Team, 2021). The curriculum has been conceived and developed by the Universal Human Values (UHV) team. The team has implemented the model successfully in more than 40 universities spanning 2 ten states over the last 15 years. Since 2017, AICTE has been successful in implementing the curriculum across the nation. The team has developed the content, process, and teaching learning material and conducts teacher training workshops frequently. AICTE administers the UHV curriculum to engineering students via two modules. UHV-I provides an introduction to Universal Human Values and is mandated to be a core module in the three-week Student Induction Program (SIP) for all professional and diploma colleges. The pedagogy adopted during this module enables students to engage in self-exploration and discover their intrinsic values. The stated objectives of UHV-I (UHV Team, 2021) are:

- To help the student to see the need for developing a holistic perspective of life
- To sensitise the student about the scope of life – individual, family (inter-personal relationship), society and nature/existence
- Strengthening self-reflection
- To develop more confidence and commitment to understand, learn and act accordingly.

Thus, AICTE plays very crucial role to bring the quality and diversity education in India to create a talent pool with value system.

Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belagavi has undertaken this unique mandate to bring excellence in human development and unlocking the new paths for better future. Hence research lens provides the overview of NEP 2020, significance of UHVs with the collaboration of AICTE taking forward for long term to benefits the students and academicians by incorporating curriculum / learning aspects with their progressive reflections.

### **Overview of New Education Policy (NEP), 2020 in Higher Education**

India is on the rising path of betterment to achieve developing economy in terms of sustainable and high-rate economic growth to minimize poverty and gender inequality and termed as Incredible India. Literacy is the major component at national and global level. The various universities include private and public and higher education systems realized to play an important role to build a strong, diversified, vivid and vibrant higher education system to bring the symbol of eminence of intellectual prosperity to our country (Tilak, 2020). Since, India has long history about well thought and planned policies directed by the principles of access, equity and quality which was incorporated with deliberation and care (Draft NEP, 2019, p.426). The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) is the recent policy structure brings education transformation to India as a outcome.

The outcome of higher education is common across nations this includes individual and collective context (Marginson, 2020). The impact of NEP 2020 enriches individuals to become domain expert, scientific literacy, fosters the graduates with new subject. The collective students or academicians influences the different culture, norms, family and society (Marginson et al., 2021). Perhaps globe requires the academic excellence in higher education in the context of dynamic leadership, continuous teaching, learning, research and novel innovation to satisfy the society to bring the quality initiatives and socio and economic productivity in our country (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Thus, it is obvious that our nation must achieve the greater position in the globe with economic and academic excellence through.

### **NEP 2020**

NEP 2020 in India has deep origin in the culture and values of ancient India. The vision of the policy signifies that envisions of education system is based on culture that bestow to sustainable in equity and develop vigorous knowledge society by providing high quality education to everyone and to create India as a knowledge superpower (Naskar et al., 2021). The embracing change in several education policy mainly focus to up surge state expenses on education approximate 4% - 6% of the gross domestic product (GDP) (Naskar et al., 2021). Policy debrief that individual were not forced to study specific language and it's up to the each states, institutions and schools to take a decision on implementation. The policy initiates that contemporary language institutions are Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation and the National Institute / Institutes for Pali, Persian and Prakrit along with the establishment of other bodies which includes the National Mission for Mentoring, National Book Promotion Policy, National Mission on Fundamental Literacy and Numeracy (Naskar et al., 2021).

Each individual will have their own ambitions. To fulfil this humans are trying to work hard or making certain career shifts/change decisions in learning aspects to become more happy and valuable to the society. Further, values are the pillar of thoughts, behaviour, action, process, success and fulfilment (Mishra, 2021). By linking this individual aspirations will be the whole reason for valuable to their education based on his/her skills, competencies and their values. Hence, education aligns all the dimensions of an individual personality by creating global human values (Kolte et al., 2018).

The New Education Policy, 2020 was framed on July 2020. The policy is a broad, holistic and inclusive framework for vocational training, elementary and higher education in both rural and urban India. With respect to higher education, policy advises the establishment of Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) as a stand-alone umbrella body for whole higher education except medical and legal education. Public and private/autonomous higher education institutions will be governed by the same norms for regulations, accreditation and academic standards. Governance will involved to develop a phases of NEP to all the institutions from last 15 years and granting the graded autonomy to be provided the colleges in ideation stage (Naskar et al., 2021; newleam.com; mindler.com; NEP 2020; Jha & Parvati, 2020; Aithal & Aithal, 2020).

At higher education in engineering courses UG programs will have various exit options to bring more flexibility in the education system to minimise the overburden for students. Hence governance developed an Academic Bank of Credit(ABC) for students to earn these at Higher Education Institutions(HEIs) for their degree completion. The process applied for professional and vocational domains offers a certificate completion first year, earn a diploma finishing of second year, bachelor's degree close to third year and fourth year integrated bachelor's degree. Also, policy affirms to higher education that there is a resilience to offer post graduate programmes which is integrated to five years bachelors/ master's programme (Naskar et al., 2021). The Higher education falls on four verticals to increase the admissions are:

- a. National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC)
- b. National Accreditation Council (NAC)
- c. AICTE, University Grant Commissions
- d. General Education Council

The main highlights of NEP 2020 are:

- a. Notifying, recognising and enriching individual potentialities by sensitizing academicians and parents to encourage students' progress in academic and non-academic.
- b. The priority is given to attain Foundational Education to all the students.
- c. Flexibility will be based on the students competencies and interests.
- d. There is no comparison of various learning subjects like sports, science arts, music, etc.
- e. Encouraged multidisciplinary and holistic approach for both rural and urban India with assuring integrity.
- f. Focused on conceptual analysis.
- g. Promoting wide range of design and critical thinking, analytics based logical reasoning for making decisions and continuous innovation.
- h. Promoted highly ethics and human values in professional and vocational programmes.
- i. Encouraged diversity in teaching by regional programmes.
- j. Prominence given to skills education.
- k. Extensive utilization of technology in hybrid or blended teaching.
- l. Curriculum and Pedagogy development based on regional, national global level.
- m. Promoting equity and inclusions for all the students (no disparity).
- n. There is synergy in content development for primary to higher education.
- o. Academicians should have continuous mindset on acquiring new skills and knowledge or focus on professional development.
- p. Scholars, faculty and practitioners focus on research on long term perspective to establish National Research Foundation to bring the research at global standards to minimize plagiarism.

NEP 2020 will be one of the game changer in India to bring the quality and uniform education to both rural and urban areas. NEP 2020 admit that faculty quality is also important for higher education. This policy encourages and motivates the faculties for professional development emphasised with human values in both private and public institution (Tiwari & Anjum, 2014). Professors and teachers are the assets for developing nation to nurture the several skills to multidisciplinary professions (Saravana Kumar & Devi, 2020). Hence this made a modest try to make systematic structure and regulation more agile towards welfare of students and their learning aspects (Pathak, 2021).

## Overview of Universal Human Values across the global scenario

Curriculums are an important path to encourage a hybrid process both in universality and particularity in values. The curriculum ignites the minds of learners to understand on their own about the values able to study the relevant issues on social consciousness and cultures (Marope, 2020). The International Bureau of Education (IBE)- Geneva (Switzerland) integrated with UNESCO's Global Citizenship Education (GCED) initiated a strategic curriculum work at the global Education 2030 Agenda which is aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7: By 2030, assures that all the academicians /practitioners have a knowledge and skills need to foster the knowledge and skills required to promote sustainable development indicators are among others, sustainable development through education and their lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, nurture the culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and cultural diversity (Marope, 2020). Thus, GCED focused to build values, soft skills and attitudes among the individuals to stimulate social transformation at international scenario to bring the human values in education directly engaging the social justice, gender parity, environment sustainability, etc, (UNESCO, 2017). Subsequently, in turbulent world the research examined in higher education integrated the universal human values to understand the cross cultures to attain diversity and peace at University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia (Alshammary, 2019).

Further this curriculum plays an important role in postcolonial societies in South Africa. Mostly, in this country faced inequalities and the programmes addresses the social justice through the universal human values as curriculum to bring the social reformation (Blignaut, 2021).

In Australia, the curricula address the issues on social, civil, political and cultural rights in their education systems and the students are aware about the human rights through value based education (Phillips, 2016). In United States, education systems always represents the national identity and patriotism context in the curriculums which favours the nationality. Hence student will learn this through global citizenship education as a part of social studies which emphasised on human rights (Myers, 2006). Since, Universal Human Values (UHV) brings the multicultural education to bring the quality education for sustainable development and build the knowledge and social capital across the sphere.

## Importance of Universal Human Values (UHV) in India

Values are revealed as a well structured form of human cognition (Ives & Kendal, 2014) on redefining decisions and behaviour. Value refers to the concept related to something is worth or will do estimation or measurable. The basic concepts of value was life eventually followed by happiness. United Nations provided the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which emphasis human values are considerate as peace, freedom, social, progress, equal rights and human dignity (Annan, 2003). Subsequently, Universal human values, quite a complex nature of values which connects an individual with the society and to bring a unity of humans across the globe with development civilisations (Kostina et al., 2015, p. 1019). Several dimensions of values narrates the different meanings such as societal system values – determines relations with family, work, social and technical creativity and interaction among the groups, communities, nations, states and civilisations (Kalandia, 2004). Teaching of UHVs is consider to be natural laws of reality (Gaur et al., 2010) where anyone can understand depends on their own acceptance through introspection of self-realisation. The path leads the humans to live an informed, purposeful, happy and being responsible life which applies to individuals, family, society to be considered as unit (Sangal, 2007). The term UHVs are defined in to two faces of coin as happiness and prosperity. Happiness is a harmony state with individual consciousness. Since humans have ability to understand and introspect with inner mind and tendency to agree. Competence is collaborated and share with another phase of living in family, society and universe (Gaur et al., 2010). Prosperity is the feeling of having to understand / recognise needs in the education system to enrich eminence (Sharma, 2001). So the final goal to be humans to be happy and peaceful at work in the community. Also, the education system able to develop the students competence and self-discipline leads to good human conduct in the society to contribute many works (Sharma, 2001). Universal Human Values (UHVs) in education ensures that students should have potential on right understanding/clarity on the reality, attaining to mutual happiness, figuring out individual need of physical facility, skills and practice for sustainability to bring prosperity in the society (Tshering et al., 2015).

It is the basic and foundation course to motivate both faculties and students in constructive purpose. This mainly focus on self-exploration where students recognize their hidden talent/ interest what they want to become and which work/study brings more happiness in both personal and professional life. This course boosts the students confidence, deep dive of morale values, self-discipline with commitment. Also, the course cascade brings the essence of understanding on their own for students rather than any influencers. This program helps the engineering students to develop and cultivate humanity with moral values. The institutions provide this opportunity for students on holistic and thoughtful growth in their career (Patil et al., 2016). This curriculum helps the Gen Z/millennials to know about individual potential, family, society and nature to maintain harmony forever

with minimising stress on certain extent. Ganesh Bagaria revealed in his article the vision of UHV programs in India is as follows:

1. People's Education Program (Lok Shiksha Yojna): In this process, each individual must understand the basic needs, self-aspirations, self-explorations and self-satisfy the needs.
2. Education Sanskar Program (Shiksha Sanskar Yojana): Academicians, family and society are more responsible to provide knowledge sanskar to live with right justice and integrity.
3. Undivided Family and Universal Human Order Program (Akhanda Parivar aur Sarvhaum Vyavasatha Yojna): The two programs provides the nuances of moral values, ethics and how to be good to live in society. In this program happiness families can make world harmony.

Ganesh Bagaria suggests that to ideate this program each institutions has to frame a road map to incorporate the course in engineering colleges in eight phases:

- Phase 1 : Introduce a UHVs as a foundation course in all technical universities/ institutions encourages students self-exploration and right understanding abilities. In the academic curriculum can synergise with social internships or projects, conducting a workshops, social issues related hackathon which taps the students to understand easily.
- Phase 2 : Align this program in academic curriculum in universities/ colleges and purpose to establish Value based education.
- Phase 3 : Majorly promote value based living environment in the education sector.
- Phase 4 : The institutions creates an environment model of happiness and prosperity which leads to the diversity in education and academic excellence.
- Phase 5 : The universities / institutes to become nodal centres to share value base teaching. Parallely faculties must be trained or empowered on this course for teaching.
- Phase 6 : Collaborative teachings is encouraged from other institutions.
- Phase 7 : The institutions can become resource depository/ centre for national level.
- Phase 8 : Lastly institute can become a centre for Undivided Human Society and Universal Human Order.

Ganesh Bagaria also revealed about implementation of this course that from the past eight years, there was lots of efforts made to introduce this Value Education as a part of curriculum for technical education. This education initiative started with IIT - Hyderabad in 2005 and 2013 subject was introduced in 28 universities, 5 states in India and Bhutan. The outcome after introducing this course was accepted by all universities, institutions, academicians and students. Based on this feedback curriculum development is mainly depends on recent tools like workshop, roleplays, social internships/projects, simulations to teach and made them understand concepts to become a good student and professional.

AICTE plays an important role to mandate UHVs course across India. This course was introduced in last year 2020 during lockdown due to pandemic Covid-19. AICTE has introduced three week induction program offered for all regular students from the 2017 with the ratio of one faculty for 20-25 students mapped to teach this course. This helps to technical students to indulge the universal human values. Secondly the objective of three week induction programmes to engage the students in to various domains like liberal arts, yoga, poetry, literature etc. Further all the faculty members to train this course to provide healthy mindset to the students. Subsequently AICTE created a model based curriculum introduced the Handbook 2020-21 on each colleges to begin to teach this course next three years. During unprecedent situations AICTE conducted workshop on Vision for Education and the role of Universal Human Values from April 2-6, 2020. The participants attended this workshop all over country includes 60 officials, Vice Chancellors, Principals/ Directors. Then each college mandatory to prepare one faculty in each department to teach this for 25 students. AICTE till now prepared more than 17,000 faculty members.

### **Reflections from Visveswaraya Technological University (VTU)/Actions initiated by VTU**

“Modalu Maanavanaagu” meaning “Be a Human first” are the words inscribed on the Visveswaraya Technological University (VTU) logo. This University is very strongly and deeply committed to the cause of Universal Human Values(UHV) which has been a highly emphasized topic by the New Education Policy. Holistic Value Based Education to the students will be the prime focus of VTU. To strengthen the efforts of AICTE, 3500 faculty members from VTU and its affiliated colleges participated in the online FDP's from May 2020. Universal Human Values(UHV) are a mandatory component of Student Induction Programmes (SIP) at VTU. Universal Human Values(UHV) course is a compulsory credit course. UHV Cell is constituted at Bengaluru Regional Office of VTU and four nodal centres are activated at four Regional Centres of Belagavi, Mysuru, Kalaburgi and Bengaluru.

Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU) encouraged and conducted a webinar on National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020): Making India a Global Knowledge Superpower on 05.11.2020. Further VTU initiated several webinars, faculty development programmes, workshops, symposiums etc in various platforms to stakeholders like faculties, research scholars, parents, industry practitioners, etc to sensitize to know about NEP - 2020 policy. Also conducted webinar on 21.05.2021 Implementation of NEP -2020. The university initiated technical undergraduate courses in regional language kannada. Hence VTU affiliated colleges started their courses in regional language for the students growth.

VTU is organising workshops on incorporating Universal Human Values(UHV) in Education for Principals, Deans, faculty members and UHV coordinators. By end of 2023 all the faculties from various institutions trained this course able to teach the students in the ratio of 1: 20/25 (1 faculty: 20/25 students). This is the major milestone initiated by VTU to create holistic environment with Value based education to academicians and students community to achieve SDG Goal 4: Quality Education.

## II. Conclusion

The National Education Policy (NEP-2020) was in place now from the after 34 years of discussions and finally implementation on July 2020 to various universities and institutions. This has evolved as a policy document to bring several transformations and flexibility to create research universities, extensive use of technology to enrich quality education, encouraging vocational programs, promoting regional languages to learn various courses, supporting budding entrepreneurs in various multidisciplinary courses. Now the education has become the most vibrant and organic entity to meet the societal needs to bring diversity, equity and inclusion for progressive path. Thus NEP 2020 is promising the faith to enhance individual capabilities of researchers and academia to contribute for global standards to have various educational collaborations from outside India. Further NEP 2020 acknowledges the faculty to create a legacy on deliverables and supports the performance oriented growths and opportunities for faculties to learn new course / certification / training programs helps to value in Indian higher education.

Upon the one year completion of NEP, AICTE requested all the institutions to conduct webinar on eight dimensions/themes are equity and inclusion; multidisciplinary and holistic education; skills entrepreneurship development and employability challenges and opportunities; effect of NEP on youth empowerment and sports development; Indian knowledge systems, languages, arts and culture; quality education, accreditation and teacher development; research innovation and ranking; use of technology in education from 30.07.2021 to 10.08.2021. In this way nation will get to know about the impact of NEP 2020 from last year to till date to build a *Knowledge India* both rural and urban regions.

UHV program highlights the significance of education with moral values and ethics. Academicians will be the catalyst to change the millennials to bring and emphasise the reality, values and self-introspection. UHVs provides proper foundation base to the youngsters to achieve their professional and personal life in positive context and right path. Subsequently this course creates a gamut of intellectuals with deep roots of moral values and self-empowerment.

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