

Integrating Ancient Wisdom and Modern Pedagogy: Insights from the Faculty Development Program

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ABSTRACT

This article provides the importance and outcome of the Faculty Development Program (FDP) organised and funded by the Inter University Centre for Teacher Education (IUCTE), BHU Varanasi. This initiative aimed to improve educators and faculty members from various disciplines by integrating modern pedagogical methods with the best practices of ancient Indian education systems. It was designed to align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The program's expert-led workshops address a wide range of topics, such as the structural evolution of India's higher education system, the effects of NEP 2020, the integration of technology into the academic process, the utilisation of ancient wisdom of the Indian knowledge in contemporary classrooms, and more. This article provides a concise overview of the program's key themes and explores their potential impact on faculty development and the future of higher education in India, and feedback will be adopted to improve such programs in the future.

Keywords: Faculty Development Program (FDP), NEP-2020, Pedagogy, Indian Knowledge system, Higher Education

1. INTRODUCTION

A new era in Indian education has begun with the implementation of the NEP 2020, which places an emphasis on transdisciplinary, flexible, and comprehensive instructional approaches across all levels of education (Steiner & Posch, 2006; Kumar et al., 2021; Horn et al., 2023). The revolutionary method that is being offered here reflects the ancient Indian conceptualization of education, which was naturally all-encompassing and encouraged not only academic excellence but also the development of moral and ethical principles (Bhatta, 2009; Babbili, 2008; Moorthy et al., 2021). From February 13 to 17, 2023, the IUCTE BHU, Varanasi, hosted a FDP. The stated goal is to blend the complex and technology-driven requirements of contemporary teaching methods with the educational concepts that have been in place for a very long time in ancient India.

The objective of this FDP was to examine the intricate issues prevailing within India's higher education system, specifically in relation to the NEP 2020. The program was specifically created to cater to faculty members from across disciplines. The NEP prioritises the restructuring of the educational system, promoting the use of several languages, ensuring inclusivity, and integrating technology into the educational process (Report, NEP 2020). These goals are closely congruent with the subjects of the program. This FDP is not only a response

to changing educational policy but also a proactive effort to redefine the role of educators in preparing future generations.

The agenda comprised several workshops, interactive debates, and sessions facilitated by highly knowledgeable individuals. The sessions covered various topics, including the development of education in India, the impact of the NEP 2020, the challenges in implementing it, the integration of traditional Indian knowledge systems into modern education, and the crucial role of technology in supporting current educational practices. The aim of this comprehensive approach was to equip participants with a thorough comprehension of the ongoing educational reforms and the requisite abilities to successfully implement these reforms in their respective areas.

This paper aims to succinctly outline the key ideas and discussions that occurred throughout the FDP. It emphasizes the program's contributions to the intersection of ancient wisdom and modern educational practices, as well as its alignment with the goals of the NEP-2020, and its implications for the future of faculty development and higher education in India, and understanding the benefits of amalgamation of best practices of ancient wisdom with modern innovations.

2. METHODOLOGY

Participants were offered a comprehensive educational experience through the FDP, which aimed to equip them with various skills and knowledge. This program was meticulously designed to integrate a diverse range of teaching methods, ensuring that participants would get both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience relevant to their studies.

2.1 Diverse Approaches to Teaching

Specialists in several disciplines gave the interactive talks, guaranteeing a diverse range of perspectives. The purpose of these lectures was to foster interactivity, aiming to motivate participants to actively participate in both the subject matter and the speakers. This was done to establish an atmosphere that facilitates collaborative learning.

- a. **Interactive sessions and discussions in intimate settings:** The training relied on the inclusion of workshops that incorporated interactive exercises and collaborative discussions as vital elements. Participants were provided with the chance to explore specific topics in depth and apply theoretical understanding to practical challenges in these sessions, which were intentionally structured to foster active participation.
- b. **Illustrative Examples and Practical Implementations:** The incorporation of case studies provided valuable perspectives on the practical implementation of the ideas and methodologies examined, specifically regarding the Indian education system and the NEP 2020. It is well known that project-based learning is the best way to impart critical thinking and increasing the learning outcome (Saad & Zainudin, 2022).
- c. **Feedback and reflection sessions** were scheduled regularly to allow participants to process and contemplate the information they had acquired. The efficacy of the sessions in the FDP was assessed through feedback sessions, which facilitated real-time modifications to both the schedule and content of the program.

The whole FDP was a journey from the ancient education system and its implementation to the modern era, while covering the major aspects of NEP 2020, such as Holistic, Comprehensive, Multidisciplinary, Access & Equity, Fostering Innovation, Critical Thinking, Imparting Ethical and Moral Values, with the inclusion of technology in higher education. In addition, understanding the importance of continuous formative assessment to improve learning out

comes in the higher education, which is indeed a very crucial objective of NEP 2020. The major themes of the FDP are illustrated in Figure 1. The detailed analysis was done on the Indian higher education system and its restructuring. Table 1 discusses in short about the various sessions held in the conference

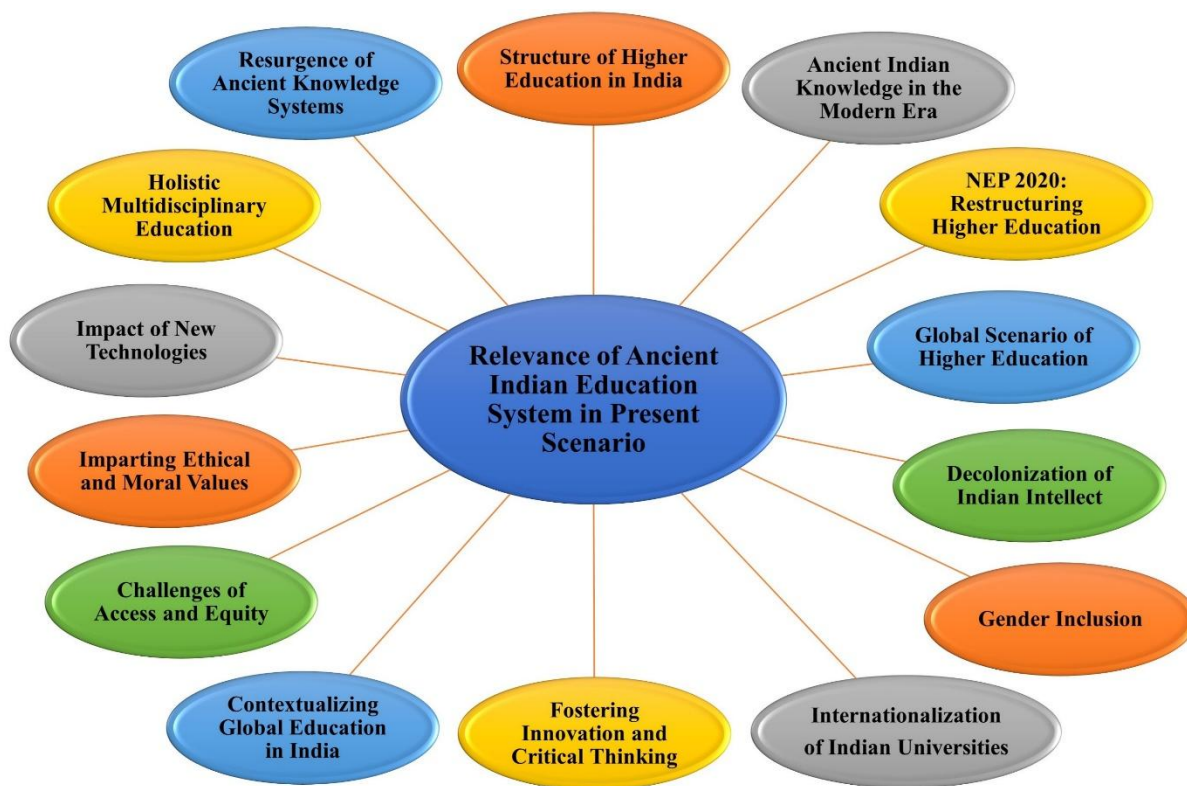


Figure 1. Major themes of the FDP discussion

Table 1: FDP various session and their key feature

S. No.	Themes	Key points of the Lecture
1	Relevance of the Ancient Indian Education System in the Present Scenario	Emphasized on integrating ancient Indian educational wisdom with modern pedagogy, highlighting the Guru-Shishya bond's holistic growth and the need to adapt these timeless values to contemporary education for global relevance and self-reliance.
2	Structure of Higher Education in India: An Introduction	The lecture traced India's history of higher education, from ancient centers like Nalanda and Takshashila to modern universities, highlighting the evolution influenced by social and political factors, and emphasizing the interconnectedness of education and economic development.
3	Ancient Indian Knowledge in Context with the Modern Era	Relevance of ancient Indian wisdom in modern education, advocating for a holistic approach that combines traditional knowledge with critical thinking and creativity, aligning with NEP 2020's vision for quality education.

4	Restructuring of Higher Education as envisaged in NEP 2020	Discussed NEP 2020's transformative goals for higher education, emphasizing expanding access, embracing multidisciplinary, and supporting regional languages to enhance inclusivity, competitiveness, and cultural pride in the Indian education system.
5	Decolonization of Indian Intellect	Merged ancient Indian wisdom with modern educational practices, highlighting Sanskrit's role in understanding science and architecture, advocating for play-based learning, and emphasizing integrating real-world skills into higher education to address contemporary challenges.
6	Global Scenario of Higher Education	Emphasized revitalizing Indian higher education by aligning academic goals with societal needs, advocating for mother-tongue instruction, holistic education, autonomy in universities, and a global perspective, aiming for an inclusive, research-focused, and modern infrastructure.
7	Gender Inclusion in Higher Education	Focused on achieving gender equality in higher education by 2030, advocating for curriculum inclusivity, financial support for women, and challenging stereotypes to foster a diverse and equitable academic environment.
8	Internationalization of Indian Universities: Challenges & Possibilities	Focused on Indian universities' global rankings, emphasizing research output, academic reputation, and student-to-faculty ratios. He advocated for mother-tongue instruction and integrating traditional Indian educational practices to enhance India's global academic standing and cultural ethos.
9	Fostering Innovation and Critical Thinking in Students	Emphasized the critical role of innovation and critical thinking in modern education, advocating for teaching freedom, embracing uncertainty, and rigorous analysis. He envisioned education as a dynamic process shaping creative thinkers and nation builders for the 21st century.
10	Contextualizing the Global Higher Education in the Indian Scenario & Challenges & Complications of Access and Equity in Higher Education	Analyzed the global framework of higher education, emphasizing the need for a balance between traditional knowledge and disruptive technologies, and exploring how evolving educational paradigms are shaped by factors like globalization, ICT, and the knowledge economy.
11	Impact of New Technologies on Higher Education	Emphasized the critical role of technology in modernizing Indian higher education, highlighting innovative tools like AR, VR, blockchain, IoT, and AI, and advocating for

		teachers' digital skills development to lead this digital transformation effectively.
12	Imparting Ethical and Moral Values	Integrating values into education, outlining steps for value awareness, appraisal, selection, and commitment. He emphasized the importance of ethics, family values, and balancing desires, aiming to shape educators as bearers of ideals for a balanced and meaningful society.
13	Holistic, Comprehensive, Multidisciplinary Education	the transformative potential of the NEP for Indian higher education, emphasizing its comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach, alignment with market needs, and the crucial role of educators and policymakers in realizing its vision for an inclusive, innovative educational future.
14	Resurgence of Ancient Knowledge System	Integration of moral and ethical principles in higher education, drawing on ancient Indian literature and education systems to demonstrate a harmonious blend of knowledge, values, and life skills, advocating for holistic development and spiritual consciousness.

Study methods included interactive workshops engaging participants through discussions, problem-solving, and collaborative learning, thematic lectures by subject-matter experts on integrating ancient wisdom with modern pedagogy under NEP 2020, and feedback mechanisms where participants shared insights and suggestions for improvement. Participant demographics revealed that 43 educators attended the program, with 23 male (53.5 per cent) and 20 female (46.5 per cent) participants representing 11 states, showcasing diverse cultural and academic backgrounds. Figure 2 (a) shows the pie chart for the gender-based representation, and Figure 2(b) shows the pie chart for the state-based participation.

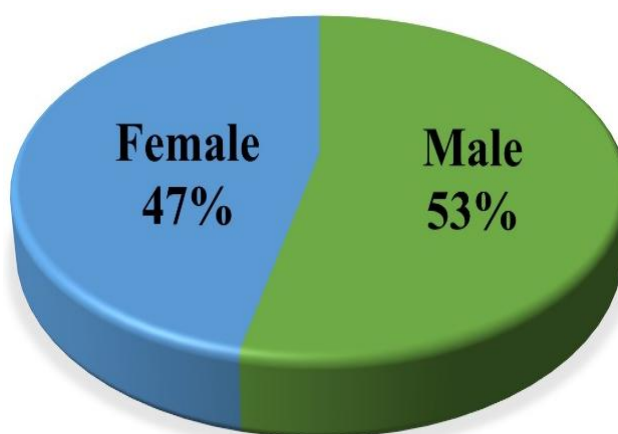


Figure 2 (a). Pie chart for the Gender Ratio

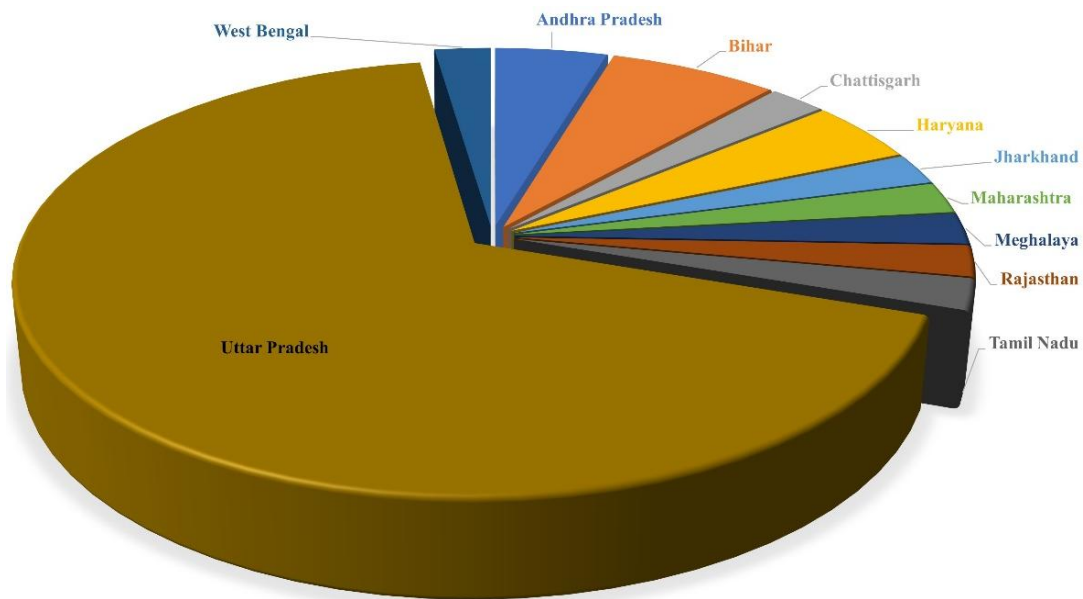


Figure 2 (b). Pie chart for the States of the Participants

The diversity of participants greatly enhanced the FDP through geographic representation from 11 states, which provided regional perspectives and cultural insights. Gender inclusivity promoted discussions on equity and inclusivity in accordance with NEP 2020 objectives, while interdisciplinary collaboration among educators improved the overall FDP experience. This diversity fostered a comprehensive approach to tackling educational difficulties and improvements.

3. DISCUSSION

The program transcended information dissemination, empowering participants to effect change through a comprehensive comprehension of the opportunities and risks in the contemporary educational milieu. Participating in this immersive experience went beyond simply absorbing information; it served as a means to become an empowered educator, ready to spearhead a transformative shift in higher education.

Significant outcomes of the FDP are discussed below:

- 3.1 **Enhanced Proficiency:** Through an exploration of the ancient Indian education system and its relevance to NEP 2020, participants gained a more profound understanding of the instructional methods employed in higher education. It also enhanced their knowledge about how ancient Indian universities, such as Taxshila, Vikramshila, Nalanda, and other City universities, maintained quality and contributed to India becoming an economic powerhouse (Iyer, 2023; Mahesh et al., 2023).
- 3.2 **An Analytical Perspective on the Global Landscape of Higher Education:** The program examined the intricacies of the Indian system in relation to the global context, specifically focusing on the developing regions highlighted by NEP.
- 3.3 **Academic Networking and Interdisciplinary Approaches:** The FDP served as a platform for individuals from many regions to connect with each other and experts in related fields, fostering the exchange of knowledge and expertise across multiple disciplines.

- 3.4 **Interactive Learning:** The interactive discussions with specialists provided participants with an opportunity to inquire, receive responses, and enhance their comprehension of NEP 2020, its various aspects, and the significance of ancient Indian knowledge systems in the contemporary world, among other subjects.
- 3.5 **Emphasising Digital Education:** The primary focus of the conversation revolved around online and digital education, specifically highlighting the advancements in this domain and its pivotal role in modern pedagogy, as emphasised by NEP 2020.
- 3.6 **New Frontiers in Higher Education:** The event shed light on growing aspects in higher education, such as the impact of technology, the Internationalisation of Indian universities, the promotion of gender inclusivity, challenges related to access and fairness, the fostering of creativity and critical thinking, and the multidisciplinary approach advocated by NEP.
- 3.7 **Practical Problem-Solving Skills:** Attendees honed their capacity to analyse and resolve real-world problems by engaging in group work and practical activities. This enabled them to cultivate fresh perspectives and effective strategies for addressing the challenges now faced by universities.

Feedback was taken from the participants regarding the quality of the program and various facilities, which are presented below by three self-explanatory graphs shown in Figure 3(a)-3(c). The following are the questions asked in the feedback:

a. Overall quality of the program

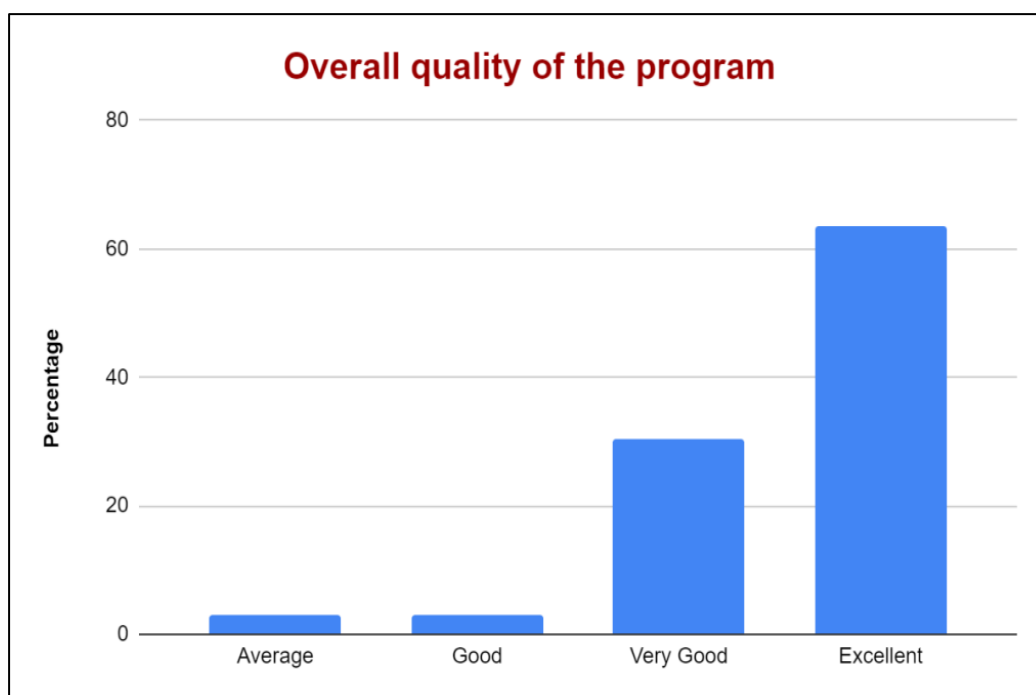


Fig. 3 (a)

- b. Whether the expectations of the participants have been achieved or not through this FDP.

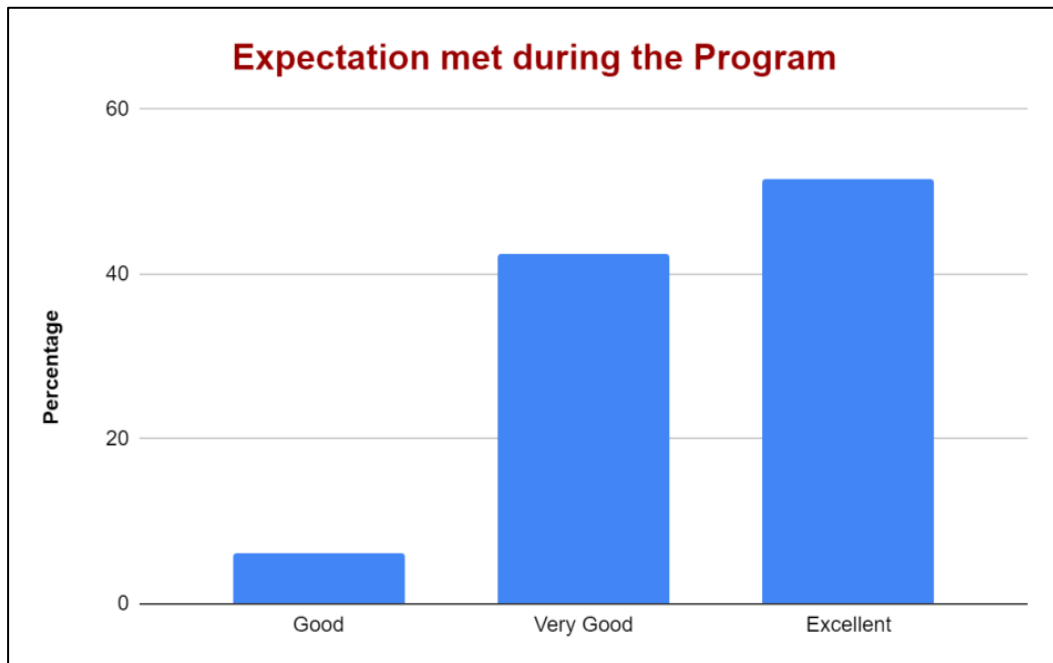


Fig. 3 (b)

- c. The support from the Organizers and Resource persons was provided during the FDP.

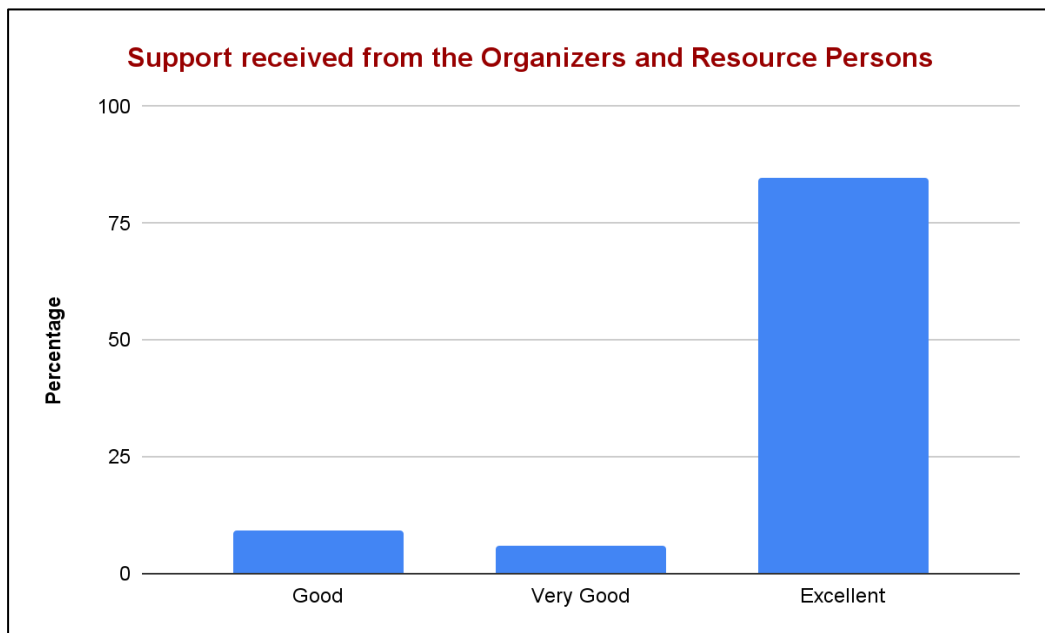


Fig. 3 (c)

Figure 3(a) – 3(c). Represents the bar graphs for the feedback taken from the participants

There was a comprehensive debate about the successful implementation of NEP 2020, as well as the numerous difficulties that faculties participated in program encountered during the process of putting the plan into action. There were a substantial number of participants who said that their organisation has reached the implementation stage of the NEP 2020,

while other participants stated that the process of implementation has not yet begun. It has been suggested that there are several possible explanations for this phenomenon. Some of these explanations include the following: a lack of coordination and cooperation at the administrative level; a lack of human resources and technology; differences in the curricula of various universities; the absence of orientation programs at the institute level; a complex structure and formality; and a limited number of faculty members who have read the policy. All new disciplines and themes are included in the training courses on NEP 2020; however, there is no clarity on entry and exit from the course. The university does not provide any kind of financial aid to students who seek to enroll in training courses on NEP 2020. The idea that there is a lack of grasp on the part of both instructors and students regarding the concept of blending traditional knowledge with contemporary ideas has been raised by a number of individuals. Additionally, with regard to the incorporation of new technology into educational environments, a sizeable part of students do not have access to the aforementioned devices and technologies.

3.8 Revival Analysis of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Teacher Training Practices

The Revival Analysis of CPD and Teacher Training Practices opens with an exploration of national and international efforts to enhance professional development for educators.

National Level Practices in India:

Teacher training programs in India conform to NEP 2020 by prioritizing multidisciplinary methodologies and the incorporation of regional languages for inclusivity, utilizing digital platforms such as SWAYAM and DIKSHA to enhance teachers' digital competencies, and cultivating leadership and strategic planning skills through specialized Faculty Development Programs (FDPs) endorsed by institutions like IIMs, IITs, and IUCTE (Walia & Walia, 2022; Swargiary & Roy, 2023).

International Trends in CPD:

Global teacher training programs prioritize reflective practices, mentoring, and ongoing professional development in nations such as Finland and Singapore. Meanwhile, the UK and Australia incorporate evidence-based pedagogies and action research into continuing professional development. Countries such as the USA and Canada implement advanced CPD methodologies utilizing AI, AR/VR, and learning analytics for individualized training (Mills et al., 2023; Tan & Low, 2023; Childs et al., 2023). Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) facilitate peer cooperation and collective problem-solving, while global CPD encompasses intercultural competency training to address diversity and cultivate global citizenship.

At the national level, difficulties include resource inequality, restricted access to sophisticated technology, and inadequate infrastructure. Internationally, the adaptation of global frameworks to local requirements remains a significant concern. Innovations such as hybrid training models, MOOCs, and gamified learning systems are being implemented worldwide to overcome these obstacles. National programs can gain advantages by integrating international approaches, like immersive technologies, collaborative models, and competency-based learning, while also implementing comprehensive evaluation frameworks for CPD programs to assess their enduring effects on educators and learners. This examination of resurrection underscores the revolutionary capacity of CPD in promoting globally pertinent, inclusive, and technologically sophisticated teacher training methodologies.

4. CONCLUSION

The FDP at IUCTE, BHU Varanasi served as a significant platform for combining historical knowledge and innovative pedagogical approaches, surpassing the conventional format of academic workshops. The integration of ancient knowledge with contemporary teaching methods, under the framework of NEP 2020, has significantly contributed to the rejuvenation of India's higher education sector. Throughout the five-day duration, the FDP extensively addressed a wide array of significant matters pertaining to higher education, meticulously combining theoretical concepts with practical applications.

The FDP considerably aided the recognition and utilisation of the academic community's inherent potential. The entity insisted on the recognition of its historical significance and its active participation in shaping the future of higher education. The FDP empowered educators to include foresight, dedication, and intentionality in order to facilitate a transformative change in higher education, aligning with the dynamic and comprehensive vision of the NEP 2020 (Nissen et al., 2022). This program not only educated the participants but also enabled them to bring about a new era of educational innovation, diversity, and grandeur in Indian universities.

Future trajectories for analogous FDPs, especially within the framework of India's swiftly changing educational terrain and the execution of the NEP 2020, ought to be comprehensive and visionary. Future FDPs should prioritise the integration of interdisciplinary approaches, acknowledging that the multifaceted problems of the contemporary world necessitate expertise and competencies that transcend conventional academic disciplines. In light of the ongoing digital change in education, it is crucial for FDPs to prioritise the development of educators' advanced digital abilities. Research and innovation in pedagogy should be a central component of future FDPs. To effectively respond to NEP 2020 and its subsequent developments, upcoming initiatives should adhere to its aims, specifically by establishing a multidisciplinary educational framework, advocating for the utilisation of regional languages, and guaranteeing fair and equal educational opportunities for all. Ensuring inclusivity and accessibility in education is crucial for addressing the obstacles associated with access and fairness in higher education. This includes promoting gender inclusivity and providing support for socially and economically disadvantaged groups. Subsequent programs ought to incorporate instruction in institutional leadership, change management, strategic planning, and effective communication, equipping educators to assume increasingly intricate responsibilities within their institutions.

Implementing a strong feedback system from participants to evaluate the efficacy of each FDP and pinpoint areas for enhancement is essential for continuous progress. This feedback should be utilised to consistently enhance the program's content and distribution methods.

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