

## **Press Release**

A policy dialogue on "Developing Inclusive Blended Learning Practices for Universities and Colleges in Jammu and Kashmir", the first of its kind was held today 24th May 2024. The initiative was organized by the P.G. Department of Education, University of Jammu in collaboration with the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Jammu. The event began with a welcome address by **Dr. Ana Bali**, Lecturer P G Department of Education in which besides a formal welcome she gave a brief of the day's activities. **Dr. Sayantan Mandal**, Assistant Professor and Principal Investigator of the Integrating Teaching and Learning with Digital Education Project, provided a brief of the policy document highlighting the intensity of the research project including the partnership with the University of Jammu lead by **Prof. Renu Nanda** Head, P.G. Department of Education. This was followed by in house discussion emphasizing the need to integrate or even blend digital technologies with higher education for effective learning and development of the educated and skilled youth, contributing towards **Atamnirbhar Bharat**.

In his presidential address, **Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice-Chancellor University of Jammu**, underscored the importance of adaptive learning technologies, teacher training, and infrastructural development to support a seamless transition for impactful blended learning across disciplines and different levels of learning. He initiated his address by quoting Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo and a book written by Acharaya Vinoba Bhave wherein he tried to make everyone understand the meaning of education. He focused more on experiential learning and not classroom learning. He added we need teachers for generating interest among the students rather than focusing on what mode is required to transact knowledge. He emphasized the need for a collaborative environment where stakeholders can share best practices, innovate, and implement strategies tailored to the specific needs of students not only in Jammu and Kashmir but all over Bharat. Such efforts, he stressed, will contribute to a more equitable and resilient education system.

The **Chief Guest, Sh. Alok Kumar, IRS, Principal Secretary of the Higher Education Department, UT of J&K**, highlighted that fostering collaboration between academia and industry and tailoring strategies to local needs are crucial for creating an inclusive learning environment that benefits all stakeholders in the region's education sector across four stages as indicated in NEP 2020, School Education i.e. Foundation, Preparatory, Middle and Higher Secondary and also the colleges and Universities. He stressed on the importance of access and equity in order to attain the objectives of blended learning. He also spoke about the importance of teachers in executing the journey of teaching-learning process through experiential learning. He gave importance to forty percent content transaction through blended approach and the focus should be on instructions only, whereas, rest sixty percent teaching-learning pedagogy should focus on experiential learning involving problem-solving method, project-method, field visits, etc. He further added that we need to look into the recommendations of NEP 2020 & NCF 2022 for restructuring the teaching-learning pedagogy. According to him, the designations of teachers to be replaced by mentors and senior mentors and we should adopt a flipped model of teaching-learning.

**Prof. Pankaj Srivastava**, Director, Directorate of Distance and Online Education, University of Jammu, highlighted two major concerns as barrier to digital teaching

learning and that is, non-uniform syllabus and importance of digital infrastructure to curb the issue of digital divide. **Dr. Shashi Prabha**, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of Jammu, cited examples of students of rural government colleges facing difficulty in attending the classes during the harvest season and hence highlighted the importance of blended learning and developing institutional based digital technology policies for teaching learning pedagogy. **Ms. Ashima Kaul**, Founder of YAKJAH NGO raises the concerns about emotional and psychological issues while adopting digital teaching-learning pedagogy and stressed that while making digital policy. **Mr. Rajeev Khajuria**, President, National Development Foundation, focused on student engagement and diversity along with fostering partnership among stakeholders, community colleges and NGOs while framing such policies. **Dr. Alka Sharma** from School Education Department highlighted on experiential learning and stressed that while framing the digital teaching learning policies importance of teachers should be focused. **Prof. B.B. Anand**, Principal, M.A.M. College raised concerns about the availability of digital infrastructure in rural higher education institutions wherein basic infrastructure is not there and also be aware about the end product as to are we using digital technologies to empower the students or are we using it just for the sake of implementing the policies.

Finally, the vote of thanks was proposed by **Prof. Renu Nanda**, Head, P.G. Department of Education wherein she reiterated that the roadmap for effective implementation of NEP 2020 has been given a special impetus through the discussions held this day wherein Sh. Alok Kumar IRS Principal Secretary Higher Education UT of J&K himself has come forward to ensure that digital technologies get implemented and augmented as has been the vision of Sh. Manoj Sinha ji, Hon`ble Lt Governor UT of J&K and that of Hon`ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi ji.

Prof. Meena Sharma, Dean Planning, Prof. Rajeev Rattan Sharma, Dean, Faculty of Education and Director CDC, Mrs. Sita Anand, Liaison Officer, General Zorawar Singh Auditorium Complex, University of Jammu, Dr. Malay Dey, Centre for Studies in Museology, University of Jammu, Dr. Bhat Iqbal, Central University Jammu, Dr. Rupinder Kour, Cluster University Jammu, Prof. Bijoy Borouah, IIT Jammu, Dr. Gourav Bhaduri, IIT Jammu, Ms. Sheriya Sareen, research scholar, IIT Jammu, Mrs. Rakhi Attri, School Education Department, Sh. Sunil Kumar Sharma, Senior Academic Officer, SCERT, Jammu, Sdr. Ravinder Singh ji, Prof. Mubarak Singh, Former Head and Dean, Department of Education, University of Jammu, Dr. S.K. Panda & Dr. Kajal Devi Manhas, Faculty Department of Education, Ms. Rishika, Mr. Surjeet students of M.A. Education and research scholars of Department of Education, University of Jammu were among the delegates who were present on the occasion.



