

SALIENT FEATURES OF NEP 2020: HIGHER EDUCATION

1. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY:

- **recognizing, identifying, and fostering the unique capabilities of each student**, by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.
- **according the highest priority to achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** by all students by Grade 3.;
- **flexibility**, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests;
- **no hard separations** between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning.
- **multidisciplinarity** and a **holistic education** across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge;
- **emphasis on conceptual understanding** rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams.;
- **creativity and critical thinking** to encourage logical decision-making and innovation;
- **ethics and human & Constitutional values** like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice;
- **promoting multilingualism and the power of language** in teaching and learning;
- **life skills** such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience;
- **focus on regular formative assessment for learning** rather than the summative assessment that encourages today's 'coaching culture';
- **extensive use of technology** in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for *Divyang* students, and educational planning and management;
- **respect for diversity** and **respect for the local context** in all curriculum, pedagogy, and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject;
- **full equity and inclusion** as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system;
- **synergy in curriculum across all levels of education** from early childhood care and education to school education to higher education;
- **teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process** – their recruitment, continuous professional development, positive working environments and service conditions;
- a '**light but tight**' **regulatory framework** to ensure **integrity, transparency, and resource efficiency** of the educational system through audit and public disclosure while encouraging innovation and out-of-the-box ideas through **autonomy, good governance, and empowerment**;
- **outstanding research** as a corequisite for outstanding education and development;
- **continuous review** of progress based on sustained research and regular assessment by educational experts;
- **a rootedness and pride in India**, and its rich, diverse, ancient and modern culture and knowledge systems and traditions.
- **education is a public service**; access to quality education must be considered a basic right of every child;
- **substantial investment in a strong, vibrant public education system** as well as the encouragement and facilitation of true philanthropic private and community participation.

2. THE VISION OF THIS POLICY

- An education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower.

- The curriculum and pedagogy of our institutions must develop a deep sense of respect towards the fundamental duties and Constitutional values, bonding with one's country, and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world.
- To instill a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

3. QUALITY UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES: A NEW AND FORWARD-LOOKING VISION FOR INDIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Quality higher education must aim to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals.
- It must enable an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level, and also develop character, ethical and Constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, creativity, spirit of service, and 21st century capabilities across a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects.
- A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society.
- It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence.
- Some of the major problems currently faced by the higher education system in India include:
 - a severely fragmented higher educational ecosystem;
 - less emphasis on the development of cognitive skills and learning outcomes;
 - a rigid separation of disciplines, with early specialisation and streaming of students into narrow areas of study;
 - limited access particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, with few HEIs that teach in local languages
 - limited teacher and institutional autonomy;
 - inadequate mechanisms for merit-based career management and progression of faculty and institutional leaders;
 - lesser emphasis on research at most universities and colleges, and lack of competitive peer-reviewed research funding across disciplines;
 - suboptimal governance and leadership of HEIs;
 - an ineffective regulatory system; and
 - large affiliating universities resulting in low standards of undergraduate education.
- This policy envisions the following key changes to the current system:
 - moving towards multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with more HEIs across India that offer medium of instruction in local/Indian languages;
 - moving towards a more multidisciplinary undergraduate education;
 - moving towards faculty and institutional autonomy;
 - revamping curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and student support
 - reaffirming the integrity of faculty and institutional leadership positions
 - establishment of a National Research Foundation
 - governance of HEIs by independent boards having academic and administrative autonomy;
 - "light but tight" regulation by a single regulator for higher education;
 - increased access, equity, and inclusion
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4. INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING AND CONSOLIDATION

- By 2040, all higher education institutions (HEIs) shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions, each of which will aim to have 3,000 or more students.
- There shall, by 2030, be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district.
- The aim will be to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in higher education including vocational education from 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035.
- Growth will be in both public and private institutions, with a strong emphasis on developing a large number of outstanding public institutions
- A university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement.
- The definition of university will thus allow a spectrum of institutions that range from those that place equal emphasis on teaching and research i.e., Research-intensive Universities. Those that place greater emphasis on teaching but still conduct significant research i.e. Teaching-intensive Universities.
- Autonomous degree-granting College (AC) will refer to a large multidisciplinary that grants undergraduate degrees and is primarily focused on undergraduate teaching though it would not be restricted to that.
- A stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges, through a transparent system of graded accreditation, will be established. HEIs will have the autonomy and freedom to move gradually from one category to another, based on their plans, actions, and effectiveness.
- These three broad types of institutions are not in any natural way a rigid, exclusionary categorization, but are along a continuum.
- HEIs will support other HEIs in their development, community engagement and service, contribution to various fields of practice, faculty development for the higher education system, and support to school education.
- Institutions will have the option to run Open Distance Learning (ODL) and online programmes, provided they are accredited to do so.
- Single-stream HEIs will be phased out over time, and all will move towards becoming vibrant multidisciplinary institutions or parts of vibrant multidisciplinary HEI clusters.
- The system of 'affiliated colleges' will be gradually phased out over a period of fifteen years through a system of graded autonomy, and to be carried out in a challenge mode.
- The overall higher education sector will aim to be an integrated higher education system, including professional and vocational education.
- The present complex nomenclature of HEIs in the country such as 'deemed to be university', 'affiliating university', 'affiliating technical university', 'unitary university' shall be replaced simply by 'university' on fulfilling the criteria as per norms.

5. TOWARDS A MORE HOLISTIC AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION

- A holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner.
- Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines.
- Even engineering institutions, such as IITs, will move towards more holistic and multidisciplinary education with more arts and humanities. Students of arts and humanities will aim to learn more science and all will make an effort to incorporate more vocational subjects and soft skills.
- Imaginative and flexible curricular structures will enable creative combinations of disciplines for study, and would offer multiple entry and exit points.
- Departments in Languages, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Dance, Theatre, Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Sciences, Sociology, Economics, Sports, Translation and Interpretation, etc. will be established and strengthened at all HEIs.
- Curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education.
- The undergraduate degree will be of either 3 or 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate certifications, e.g., a certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline or field including vocational and professional areas, or a diploma after 2 years of study, or a Bachelor's degree after a 3-year programme. The 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programme, however, shall be the preferred option.
- An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned.
- The 4-year programme may also lead to a degree 'with Research' if the student completes a rigorous research project in their major area(s) of study as specified by the HEI.
- Model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, at par with IITs, IIMs, etc., called MERUs (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) will be set up and will aim to attain the highest global standards in quality education.
- HEIs will focus on research and innovation by setting up start-up incubation centres, technology development centres, centres in frontier areas of research, greater industry-academic linkages, and interdisciplinary research including humanities and social sciences research.

6. OPTIMAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- Institutions and faculty will have the autonomy to innovate on matters of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment within a broad framework of higher education qualifications
- All assessment systems shall also be decided by the HEI, including those that lead to final certification. The Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) will be revised for instilling innovation and flexibility.
- HEIs shall move to a criterion-based grading system that assesses student achievement based on the learning goals for each programme
- HEIs shall also move away from high-stakes examinations towards more continuous and comprehensive evaluation.

- Each institution will integrate its academic plans ranging from curricular improvement to quality of classroom transaction - into its larger Institutional Development Plan (IDP)
- High-quality support centres and professional academic and career counselling will be made available to all students.
- Norms, standards, and guidelines for systemic development, regulation, and accreditation of ODL will be prepared, and a framework for quality of ODL that will be recommendatory for all HEIs will be developed.
- All programmes, courses, curricula, and pedagogy across subjects, including those in-class, online, and in ODL modes as well as student support will aim to achieve global standards of quality.

7. INTERNATIONALIZATION

- Larger numbers of international students studying in India, and greater mobility to students in India visit, study at, transfer credits to, or carry out research at institutions abroad, and vice versa.
- India will be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs
- An International Students Office at each HEI hosting foreign students will be set up to coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting students arriving from abroad.
- Research/teaching collaborations and faculty/student exchanges with high-quality foreign institutions will be facilitated
- High performing Indian universities will be encouraged to set up campuses in other countries
- Similarly, selected universities e.g., those from among the top 100 universities in the world will be facilitated to operate in India.
- A legislative framework facilitating such entry will be put in place, and such universities will be given special dispensation regarding regulatory, governance, and content norms on par with other autonomous institutions of India.

8. STUDENT ACTIVITY AND PARTICIPATION

- Plenty of opportunities for participation in sports, culture/arts clubs, eco-clubs, activity clubs, community service projects, etc.
- In every education institution, there shall be counselling systems for handling stress and emotional adjustments.
- Increasing hostel facilities as needed.
- All HEIs will ensure quality medical facilities for all students in their institutions.

9. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

- Efforts will be made to incentivize the merit of students belonging to SC, ST, OBC, and other SEDGs.
- Private HEIs will be encouraged to offer larger numbers of free ships and scholarships to their students.

10. MOTIVATED, ENERGIZED, AND CAPABLE FACULTY

- All HEIs will be equipped with the basic infrastructure and facilities, including clean drinking water, clean working toilets, blackboards, offices, teaching supplies, libraries, labs, and pleasant classroom spaces and campuses.
- Every classroom shall have access to the latest educational technology that enables better learning experiences.
- Faculty will be given the freedom to design their own curricular and pedagogical approaches within the approved framework.
- HEIs will have clearly defined, independent, and transparent processes and criteria for faculty recruitment.

11. EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- Actions that are specific to higher education shall be adopted by all Governments and HEIs.
- Steps to be taken by Governments
 - (a) Earmark suitable Government funds for the education of SEDGs
 - (b) Set clear targets for higher GER for SEDGs
 - (c) Enhance gender balance in admissions to HEIs
 - (d) Enhance access by establishing more high-quality HEIs in aspirational districts and Special Education Zones
 - (e) Develop and support high-quality HEIs that teach in local/Indian languages or bilingually
 - (f) Provide more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs
 - (g) Conduct outreach programs on higher education opportunities and scholarships among SEDGs
 - (h) Develop and support technology tools for better participation and learning outcomes.
- Steps to be taken by all HEIs
 - (a) Mitigate opportunity costs and fees for pursuing higher education
 - (b) Provide more financial assistance and scholarships
 - (c) Conduct outreach on higher education opportunities and scholarships
 - (d) Make admissions processes more inclusive
 - (e) Make curriculum more inclusive
 - (f) Increase employability potential of higher education programmes
 - (g) Develop more degree courses taught in Indian languages and bilingually
 - (h) Ensure all buildings and facilities are wheelchair-accessible and disabled-friendly
 - (i) Develop bridge courses for students that come from disadvantaged educational backgrounds
 - (j) Provide socio-emotional and academic support and mentoring
 - (k) Ensure sensitization of faculty, counsellor, and students on gender-identity issue and its inclusion in all aspects of the HEI, including curricula
 - (l) Strictly enforce all no-discrimination and anti-harassment rules
 - (m) Develop Institutional Development Plans that contain specific plans for action on increasing participation from SEDGs.

12. REIMAGINING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

- Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade.
- By 2025, at least 50% of learners through the school and higher education system shall have exposure to vocational education, for which a clear action plan with targets and timelines will be developed.
- Higher education institutions will offer vocational education either on their own or in partnership with industry and NGOs.
- The B.Voc. degrees introduced in 2013 will continue to exist, but vocational courses will also be available to students enrolled in all other Bachelor's degree programmes, including the 4-year multidisciplinary Bachelor's programmes.
- 'Lok Vidya', i.e., important vocational knowledge developed in India, will be made accessible to students through integration into vocational education courses.
- The possibility of offering vocational courses through ODL mode will also be explored.
- MHRD will constitute a National Committee for the Integration of Vocational Education (NCIVE), consisting of experts in vocational education and representatives from across Ministries, in collaboration with industry, to oversee this effort.
- Incubation centres will be set up in higher education institutions in partnership with industries.
- Indian standards will be aligned with the International Standard Classification of Occupations maintained by the International Labour Organization.
- The credit-based Framework will also facilitate mobility across 'general' and vocational education.

13. CATALYSING QUALITY ACADEMIC RESEARCH IN ALL FIELDS THROUGH A NEW NATIONAL RESEARCH FOUNDATION

- Establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF).
- The overarching goal of the NRF will be to enable a culture of research to permeate through our universities.
- The NRF will be governed, independently of the government, by a rotating Board of Governors consisting of the very best researchers and innovators across fields.
- The primary activities of the NRF will be to:
 - fund competitive, peer-reviewed grant proposals of all types and across all disciplines;
 - seed, grow, and facilitate research at academic institutions
 - act as a liaison between researchers and relevant branches of government as well as industry; so as to allow breakthroughs to be optimally brought into policy and/or implementation; and
 - recognise outstanding research and progress

14. TRANSFORMING THE REGULATORY SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- Regulatory system of higher education will ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting will be performed by distinct, independent, and empowered bodies.
- These four structures will be set up as four independent verticals within one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI).

- The first vertical of HECI will be the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC). It will function as the common, single point regulator for the higher education sector including teacher education and excluding medical and legal education.
- The second vertical of HECI will, be a ‘meta-accrediting body’, called the National Accreditation Council (NAC). Accreditation of institutions will be based primarily on basic norms, public self-disclosure, good governance, and outcomes, and it will be carried out by an independent ecosystem of accrediting institutions supervised and overseen by NAC.
- The third vertical of HECI will be the Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC), which will carry out funding and financing of higher education based on transparent criteria.
- The fourth vertical of HECI will be the General Education Council (GEC), which will frame expected learning outcomes for higher education programmes, also referred to as ‘graduate attributes’. A National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) will be formulated by the GEC.
- The functioning of all the independent verticals for Regulation (NHERC), Accreditation (NAC), Funding (HEGC), and Academic Standard Setting (GEC) and the overarching autonomous umbrella body (HECI) itself will be based on transparent public disclosure, and use technology extensively to reduce human interface to ensure efficiency and transparency in their work.
- The professional councils, such as the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), Veterinary Council of India (VCI), National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), Council of Architecture (CoA), National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) etc., will act as Professional Standard Setting Bodies (PSSBs).
- The separation of functions would mean that each vertical within HECI would take on a new, single role which is relevant, meaningful, and important in the new regulatory scheme.

15. CURBING COMMERCIALIZATION OF EDUCATION

- All education institutions will be held to similar standards of audit and disclosure as a ‘not for profit’ entity. Surpluses, if any, will be reinvested in the educational sector.
- There will be transparent public disclosure of all these financial matters with recourse to grievance-handling mechanisms to the general public.
- The accreditation system developed by NAC will provide a complementary check on this system, and NHERC will consider this as one of the key dimensions of its regulatory objective.
- All fees and charges set by private HEIs will be transparently and fully disclosed, and there shall be no arbitrary increases in these fees/charges during the period of enrolment of any student. This fee determining mechanism will ensure reasonable recovery of cost while ensuring that HEIs discharge their social obligations.

16. EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

- Through a suitable system of graded accreditation and graded autonomy, and in a phased manner over a period of 15 years, all HEIs in India will aim to become independent self-governing institutions pursuing innovation and excellence.
- Upon receiving the appropriate graded accreditations that deem the institution ready for such a move, a Board of Governors (BoG) shall be established. Equity considerations will also be taken care of while selecting the members.
- The BoG of an institution will be empowered to govern the institution free of any external interference. It is envisaged that all HEIs will be incentivized, supported, and mentored during this process, and shall aim to become autonomous and have such an empowered BoG by 2035.

- The BoG shall be responsible and accountable to the stakeholders through transparent self-disclosures of all relevant records. It will be responsible for meeting all regulatory guidelines mandated by HECI through the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC).

17. PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Stand-alone agricultural universities, legal universities, health science universities, technical universities, and stand-alone institutions in other fields, shall aim to become multidisciplinary institutions offering holistic and multidisciplinary education.
- All institutions offering either professional or general education will aim to organically evolve into institutions/clusters offering both seamlessly, and in an integrated manner by 2030.
- Both capacity and quality of agriculture and allied disciplines must be improved in order to increase agricultural productivity through better skilled graduates and technicians, innovative research, and market-based extension linked to technologies and practices.
- Institutions offering agricultural education must benefit the local community directly; one approach could be to set up Agricultural Technology Parks to promote technology incubation and dissemination and promote sustainable methodologies.
- Legal education needs to be competitive globally, adopting best practices and embracing new technologies for wider access to and timely delivery of justice.
- Healthcare education needs to be re-envisioned so that the duration, structure, and design of the educational programmes need to match the role requirements that graduates will play.
- Given that people exercise pluralistic choices in healthcare, our healthcare education system must be integrative meaning thereby that all students of allopathic medical education must have a basic understanding of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), and vice versa.
- There shall also be a much greater emphasis on preventive healthcare and community medicine in all forms of healthcare education.
- Technical education will also aim to be offered within multidisciplinary education institutions and programmes and have a renewed focus on opportunities to engage deeply with other disciplines.
- India must also take the lead in preparing professionals in cutting-edge areas that are fast gaining prominence, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), 3-D machining, big data analysis, and machine learning, in addition to genomic studies, biotechnology, nanotechnology, neuroscience, with important applications to health, environment, and sustainable living that will be woven into undergraduate education for enhancing employability of the youth.

18. PROMOTION OF INDIAN LANGUAGES, ARTS, AND CULTURE

- The promotion of Indian arts and culture is important not only for the nation but also for the individual. Cultural awareness and expression are among the major competencies considered important to develop in children, in order to provide them with a sense of identity, belonging, as well as an appreciation of other cultures and identities.
- Indian arts of all kinds must be offered to students at all levels of education, starting with early childhood care and education.

- Teaching and learning of Indian languages need to be integrated with school and higher education at every level.
- For languages to remain relevant and vibrant, there must be a steady stream of high-quality learning and print materials in these languages including textbooks, workbooks, videos, plays, poems, novels, magazines, etc.
- Languages must also have consistent official updates to their vocabularies and dictionaries, widely disseminated, so that the most current issues and concepts can be effectively discussed in these languages.
- A number of initiatives to foster languages, arts, and culture in school children: greater emphasis on music, arts, and crafts throughout all levels of school; early implementation of the three-language formula to promote multilingualism; teaching in the home/local language wherever possible; conducting more experiential language learning; the hiring of outstanding local artists, writers, craftspersons, and other experts as master instructors; accurate inclusion of traditional Indian knowledge including tribal and other local knowledge throughout into the curriculum, across humanities, sciences, arts, crafts, and sports etc.
- Strong departments and programmes in Indian languages, comparative literature, creative writing, arts, music, philosophy, etc. will be launched and developed across the country, and degrees including 4-year B.Ed. dual degrees will be developed in these subjects.
- Every higher education institution and even every school or school complex will aim to have Artist(s)-in-Residence to expose students to art, creativity, and the rich treasures of the region/country.
- More HEIs, and more programmes in higher education, will use the mother tongue/local language as a medium of instruction, and/or offer programmes bilingually.
- High-quality programmes and degrees in Translation and Interpretation, Art and Museum Administration, Archaeology, Artefact Conservation, Graphic Design, and Web Design within the higher education system will also be created.
- Touring by HEI students to different parts of the country, which will not only give a boost to tourism but will also lead to an understanding and appreciation of diversity, culture, traditions and knowledge of different parts of India.
- Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI) will be established. The IITI shall also make extensive use of technology to aid in its translation and interpretation efforts.
- Sanskrit will be mainstreamed with strong offerings in school - including as one of the language options in the three-language formula - as well as in higher education. Sanskrit Universities too will move towards becoming large multidisciplinary institutions of higher learning.
- India will similarly expand its institutes and universities studying all classical languages and literature, with strong efforts to collect, preserve, translate, and study the tens of thousands of manuscripts that have not yet received their due attention.
- Sanskrit and all Indian language institutes and departments across the country will be significantly strengthened

- Classical language institutes will aim to be merged with universities, while maintaining their autonomy, so that faculty may work, and students too may be trained as part of robust and rigorous multidisciplinary programmes.
- Universities dedicated to languages will become multidisciplinary
- National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit will also be set up within a university campus.
- For each of the languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, Academies will be established consisting of some of the greatest scholars and native speakers. These Academies for Eighth Schedule languages will be established by the Central Government in consultation or collaboration with State Governments. Academies for other highly spoken Indian languages may also be similarly established by the Centre and/or States.
- All languages in India, and their associated arts and culture will be documented through a web-based platform/portal/wiki, in order to preserve endangered and all Indian languages and their associated rich local arts and culture.
- Scholarships for people of all ages to study Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture with local masters and/or within the higher education system will be established.
