

Decoding FAP...way forward on What, Why and How?

Prof Unnat P Pandit¹

The National Education Policy 2020 offers us an opportunity to explore a Flexible Academic Program (FAP) for graduation to doctoral research level offering flexibility in multi-institutional, multi-entry and lateral entry, multi-exit, multi-disciplinary, multi-mode, and multi-lingual features. IITA Prayagraj will host a two-day conference from December 3 wherein an academicians, and intellectual community will brainstorm on FAP. It is most unfortunate for me that I am unable to attend. However, I am sharing my thoughts on the same, which may help define the strategy for what? Why? And How? Offerings for FAP.

A concrete strategy will be required to realise the fruits of NEP 2020 to recognise the academic, administrative, and financial rules for FAP, which shall be piloted over the next four years, forming the consortium of institutions and universities (initially for technical education). I learnt that the IITA will set up a non-profit section 8 company by the academic year 2022 to implement the FAP. This company shall facilitate a consortium among different Indian and foreign institutes to participate and collectively strengthen the FAP initiative. Accordingly, this consortium will consist of a premier institution that will provide technical education from graduate to doctoral levels. There are various silent features of FAP wherein few are highlighted below:

- The input and execution process largely determines the quality of a FAP initiative's output. The quality of faculty employed by the university is a significant source of input. The course offerings shall encourage the recognition of faculty affiliated to their institution and being recognised among the consortium institutions to allow enrolling students of other institutions. Such optional teaching among the teaching force shall be hand-picked by students to enrol for their course to learn from their experiences, ideas and expertise.
- The upcoming consortium shall require all member institutions to send their student entry standards to harmonise their next level admission and registration process every year, including the subjects the student has studied in their institutions. The students fulfil the minimum subject requirements for the programs they offer. The education system needs an improvement in the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment process the FAP shall offer, bringing such standardisation. The consortium shall help

the institutions achieve the same and collectively handhold each other to improve their academic and administrative merits.

- Covid era offers us a novel academic design that improves our online learning environments and provides new possibilities for various subjects that can be explored virtual/online or through MOOCs over Swayam. To teach us how technology can offer students a different teaching experience and measure student learning to provide a rich, multi-media, online experience for off-campus education. Student experience based on more flexible learning options according to their choice among the broader range of options will require an initial handholding to explore the selection for students and consortium institutions. An initial framework for selecting choice-based courses and institutions for non-technical teaching experience shall begin the collaboration to standardise the FAP in its operations.
- It is high time to explore the effective utilisation of institutional infrastructure and academic resources. The consortium of the institution shall also offer optimum use of the resources and facilities. The RoI of such an establishment will be rapid and optimised. Under this pull, the up-gradation of such an establishment may be quick. The institution shall leverage the benefits of FAP and NEP, offering improved resources for research. In establishing the academic expertise for knowledge sharing through the exchange of academic resources across multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary features of FAP, the consortium shall facilitate the collaboration for a joint research guideship and establish a foundation for collaborative research to fulfil domestic needs.

Its time for all of us to explore realising the motive of ‘*वसुधैव कुटुम्बकं*’ to explore realising “*आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतोऽदब्धासो अपरितासउद्भिदः । देवा नो यथा सदमिद् वृधे असन्नप्रायुवो रक्षितारो दिवे दिवे ॥*” In reference to FAP, this may empower auspicious thoughts to each atom (here all ecosystem enabling elements) coming in touch from every side, never deceived, unhindered, and victorious. That the soul energy of thoughts and commitment to deliver shall strengthen the blessings of Gods ever may be with us for our gain, our guardians’ day by day unceasing in their care for such novel thought.

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ⁱ Professor Unnat P Pandit (office@unnatpandit.com) is a faculty at Jawaharlal Nehru University and teaches intellectual property, innovation and entrepreneurship. He is also actively engaged in Medicinal Chemistry research which makes it multi-disciplinary. Prof Pandit served as Program Director of Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and served for over 20 Yrs with rich experience in corporate, academic and governance.