

Repurposing Agricultural Education NEP 2020 through NAHEP Interventions



Dr RC Agrawal
Deputy Director General (Agricultural Education) and National Director, National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi.
Dr Anuradha Agrawal is National Coordinator, NAHEP, ICAR, New Delhi

NAHEP is a flagship program of the ICAR supported by GOI and World Bank on a 50:50 funding basis, aimed at transforming agricultural education in India. NAHEP focuses on several key areas such as student and faculty capacity development, infrastructure development, and experiential learning.

'Out-of-Box' initiatives under NAHEP

To make agricultural education more "aspirational", some new initiatives undertaken by NAHEP since 2020 are enumerated.

International Conference on Blended Learning Ecosystem for Higher Education in Agriculture (ICBLE 2023)

This global event was organized by ICAR and World Bank at New Delhi during March 21-23, 2023. It brought together policy makers, educators, academics, researchers and practitioners from the field of agriculture education from 10 nations, to discuss and exchange ideas on the use of blended learning in higher education.

Blended learning refers to a teaching approach that combines traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning. The conference explored the challenges and opportunities of implementing blended learning in the agriculture sector, and to share best practices and innovative strategies for enhancing the quality of higher education in agriculture through technology-mediated instruction.

A 'Delhi Declaration on Modernisation of Agricultural Education System' was issued jointly by ICAR and the World Bank, as the major output of the conference, in alignment with the NEP 2020. The document highlights the need to incorporate digital resources and tools for effective and accessible teaching and learning in agriculture.

ICAR 75 Lecture Series

The Azadi ka Amrit Mahautsov (India@75 celebrations) during 2021-22 commemorated the hard work, innovations and enterprises of Indians and served as a platform to collectively plan for creating a better tomorrow.

ICAR held a massive outreach campaign entitled 'ICAR 75 Lecture Series' supported by NAHEP, under which lectures were delivered by the eminent experts from various domains related to agriculture, science, spirituality, sports and several others.

The lecture series were held during Covid pandemic period, and delivered through virtual or hybrid mode and were attended by > 1.1 lakh participants. A publication covering useful recommendations and strong points from the best minds which would help the country to progress towards 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India) has also been brought out.

(<https://nahep.icar.gov.in/pdf/NAHEP-LectureSeries.pdf>)



NAHEP has brought about significant changes in the agricultural education system, particularly in the areas of curriculum reform, faculty development, infrastructure development, experiential learning and promoting industry-academia collaboration

Brainstorming Session on Mainstreaming Agricultural Curriculum in School Education (MACE)

ICAR organized this meeting on June 14, 2022 with an aim to deliberate on the need and modalities to mainstream and scale-up agriculture as a core subject at primary, secondary and higher secondary school levels. Discussions were also held on the requirement of the desired policy support required to promote agricultural education through State and Central education boards, as well as the framework for development of vocational teaching pedagogy at school level. The meeting was graced by Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, who applauded the initiative. He mentioned that this is a first but firm step towards development of students' knowledge and understanding of agricultural enterprises, practices and skills required in refining the "farm to fork" value chain. and creation of employment opportunities in the times to come. The brainstorming session witnessed representation from key educational bodies like Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), State Council of Educational Research & Training (SCERT), Principals and Teachers from public and private schools from National Capital Region, Delhi, subject matter experts from ICAR and its research institutes. Subsequent to MACE, a committee has been formed by the government for developing curriculum

for agriculture in school education. Details about MACE and proceedings can be seen URLs below.

(<https://nahep2.icar.gov.in/MACE.aspx> <https://nahep.icar.gov.in/pdf/MACE%20Proceedings%20and%20Recommendations.pdf>)

KRITAGYA Hackathons

To provide an opportunity and encouragement to students, faculty, entrepreneurs, innovators and other stakeholders to showcase their innovative approaches and technology solutions in various domains of agriculture, three KRITAGYA hackathons were organized by ICAR. The acronym KRI-TA-GYA denotes KRI for Krishi (Agriculture), TA for Taknik (Technology) and GYA for Gyan (Knowledge). The hackathons facilitate enhancing the learning capabilities, disruptive solutions, employability and entrepreneurial drive amongst the participants. All the three hackathons received tremendous response across the country, and 1,189 teams (3,884 participants) actively participated in the events. Each year four teams have been awarded cash prizes of Rs 9 lakhs each (for year 2022 prize distribution is awaited). The hackathons have infused greater spirit of innovation and brought to forefront, some disruptive technologies developed by youth which will go a long way in contributing to significant improvement in Indian agricultural ecosystem.

(<https://nahep.icar.gov.in/Kritagya.aspx>)

Year	Topic	Objective
2020	KRITAGYA 1.0 Promoting innovation in farm mechanization	To promote potential technology solutions for enhancing farm mechanization with special emphasis on women friendly equipment
2021	KRITAGYA 2.0 Innovations for precision and economical animal farming	To give boost to technology adoption in livestock sector
2022	KRITAGYA 3.0 Speed breeding for crop improvement	To promote speed breeding for crop improvement to ensure overall sustainability and resilience in crop production

Promoting Industry-Academia Collaboration

NAHEP is striving to remodel and invigorate agricultural education in India to align with recommendations of NEP 2020 and address the changing needs of the sector. Overall, NAHEP has brought about significant changes in the agricultural education system, particularly in the areas of curriculum reform, faculty development, infrastructure development, experiential learning and promoting industry-academia collaboration.