



# STRATEGIC PLAN **2020-2030**

**SAFI INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY (SIAS)**  
VAZHAYOOR, MALAPPURAM, KERALA  
[www.siasindia.org](http://www.siasindia.org)





# SAFI INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY



## MISSION 2030 (Strategic Plan)

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## Overview Of Current Situation

Social Advancement Foundation of India (SAFI) was established in the year 2001 with a vision to *create leaders who are deeply committed to moral and ethical values, and can help the society*. Envisioned to touch the frontiers of knowledge, SAFI started off with a very good vision and leadership at the helm, and was well placed to create a great impact for the community and society. Notwithstanding the acquisition of a large parcel of land, and setting up of a self-financing college with reputation, the Trustees realize that SAFI has not been able to achieve the lofty goals with which it was established. The Board of Trustees felt that there is a requirement for introspection and course-correction by creating a road map, to take SAFI to the original cherished dream. It was suggested that the institution should have a 10-year horizon for a meaningful medium-term plan being developed for an educational institution like SAFI, destined to serve future generations for many centuries. A subcommittee was set up to discuss the present status of SAFI and to understand the aspirations of the Trustees, and then to explore ways in which the journey for next 10 years is to be strategized. Thanks to the members of the subcommittee who participated in a very fruitful brainstorming session on July 11, 2020, and contributed with constructive ideas and views about the future of SAFI.

Looking at the wish list of the Trustees and Executives, there are many common themes, which revolve around the Vision, Mission, Values and Culture. There have been views expressed about the leadership, governance and infrastructure of SAFI along with excellent and relevant suggestions on areas of improvement and the way forward.

Given below are the gists of the suggestions in 3 Groups:

## VISION, MISSION, VALUES

1. Cradle for Higher Education & Leadership
2. Ethics, Integrity, Tolerance,
3. Source of Inspiration – Values
4. Increase access to under privileged

## GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE, RESOURCES

1. Governance - Command Chain/Ownership
2. Reconstitute Trust - Bring young blood
3. Resources – Funding Availability
4. Creating Infrastructure

## WAY FORWARD

1. Build on what is created already
2. Aim for Deemed University status
3. Create Centers of Excellence
4. World Class Leadership Institute
5. Focus on New Gen Course
6. Digital & Online / Hybrid Models
7. Focus on Skill development courses
8. Quality - not quantity - benchmark against best
9. Improve Student Enrollment / Faculty improvement
10. Be an Incubator for Research
11. Become a Pioneer for Industry Collaboration

## SWOC Analysis

<p><b>Strength</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great and noble 'Vision and Mission'</li> <li>• Progressive Proactive management</li> <li>• Competent faculties recruited purely on talent basis</li> <li>• SAFI Civil Service Academy and Leaders' academy to support educational leadership.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weakness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of hands-on leadership</li> <li>• Leadership with Ownership</li> <li>• Lack of Government funds</li> <li>• Lack of representation in University curriculum designing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Become an Autonomous Degree Granting College</li> <li>2. Create COE in Education and Leadership Development</li> <li>3. On Line and Open Distance Learning</li> <li>4. Industry Partnership</li> <li>5. International Associations</li> <li>6. Upgrade to Teaching and Research University</li> </ol>	<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Governmental &amp; Statutory Restrictions</li> <li>2. Complacency with Status Quo</li> <li>3. Inability to create empowered, on ground Command and Control for Effective Leadership.</li> </ol>

On the basis of the various internal and external discussions, a broad concept paper for SAFI for a period of 10 years is presented below.

It is very important that this is being executed after deliberation in a time-bound manner. While this gives an outline of the overall concept and shows the various pillars on which the strategy and execution has to rest.

## 1. Establishing the SAFI Autonomous degree-giving College

It is very important that we make use of what has been created over the last 20 years. SIAS has 16 courses, 64 faculty and 1300 students, with a good reputation as a self-financing Arts & Science College in the region. The list of courses at SAFI is given below:

### Graduate programs

- B.A. English
- B.A. Economics
- B.A. Islamic finance and computer applications
- B.Sc. Food Technology
- B.Sc. Biotechnology
- B.Sc. Microbiology
- B.Sc. Computer Science
- BCA
- B.Com (finance)
- BBA
- B.Sc. Psychology is sanctioned.
- B.Sc. Physics is under consideration of government.

### Post graduate programs

- M.A Journalism and Mass Communication
- M.A. Islamic studies
- M.Sc. Food Technology
- M.Sc. Biotechnology
- M.Sc. Microbiology
- M.Com

One of the greatest issues SIAS is facing now is the inability to start the degree courses we want to cater to the students' demands, due to the challenge of NOC by Government of Kerala and affiliation by the Calicut University. This becomes a much bigger challenge when we want to start new generation and unconventional courses in various streams, which are not currently offered at the university. Our longing for having the status of a Deemed University to overcome this has stumbled upon the policies and political climate prevailing in the state.

However, there is a ray of hope and I see a light at the end of tunnel closer now. The New Educational Policy 2020 (NEP 2020- copy attached) is a forward-looking overhaul that will produce far-reaching and mostly salutary changes, in the educational structure and delivery of the country. It is being envisaged to convert present pre-school education, Graduation, Post-Graduation and Research to a comprehensive package.

This new education policy brings a major shift from the rote-learning educational system to application and practical-based learning by focusing on 'liberal education' as the foundation for the overall development of students.

As per the NEP 2020, the undergraduate degree will be of 4-year duration, with multiple exit options within this period, with appropriate qualification:

1. A certificate after completing 1 year in a discipline
2. A Diploma after 2 years of study
3. A Bachelor's degree after a 3-year program
4. The 4-year program with Research in the area of study

The Academic Bank of Credits being proposed in NEP 2020 is a path-breaking concept. A student can start a course, acquire the credit in a semester and transfer this to another college of his liking and continue study there. He/she can discontinue the course after 1 or 2 years and take it up further in same or another college after a gap. Credits acquired in foreign universities are also permitted if it fits into the requirements set by HEI, to be counted towards the degree.

The plan is to gradually phase out the present affiliation system within a period of 15 years completely. During this period, the existing educational institutions have the opportunity to upgrade themselves to autonomous institutions or merge and come under such institutions.

As per NEP 2020, all the present Affiliating Universities shall cease to exist by the year 2035 and there shall be only 3 Groups of Educational Institutions as shown below:



1. Research- intensive Universities (RUs)
2. Teaching Universities (TU)
3. Autonomous degree granting Colleges (AC)

Looking at our institution, we can start the journey to be an Autonomous degree-granting College in the next 5 years as per the requirements laid down in the NEP 2020.

One of the requirements for being given an AC status is that the institution should have at least 3000 students in its rolls. SIAS presently has 1300 students. While it may be possible for us to increase the number to 2000 in 5 years, it will be too much of a strain to take this to 3000 in 5 years. However, there is an excellent opportunity via the NEP 2020 through the concept of Cluster Colleges. The colleges in the same or neighboring districts can be brought under the AC if the managements agree to this consolidation or a looser Cluster Colleges concept. This will presumably be possible with the network of institutions in Calicut and Malapuram districts that SAFI Trustees have influence over. This is a great opportunity presented to us to transcend to the next level through the NEP 2020.

NEP 2020 envisages integration of vocational education programs into mainstream education, a business-focused approach creating entrepreneurship-oriented programs, and a close collaboration with industry along with deep focus on innovation and research.

Importance will be given to New Generation courses and Programs at Undergraduate level. More emphasis will be given to Open Distance Learning (ODL) Strategy.

## 2. SAFI ODL Institute: Open - Online Distance Learning

One of the potential areas in the arsenal of educational institutions in the future will be Online, Distance Education & Training. With the internet penetration increasing in leaps and bounds in the country and abroad, the potential for teaching and training of students from primary schools to post graduation through this media has caught up all over world. The physical boundaries that are set by nations and controls by statutory bodies are melting away as there is relaxation in the domain. We find an increasing number of people inclined to embrace this new way of learning. Classrooms are no longer the boundaries of formal education, and the eminent faculties are not limited to an institution.

Apart from taking up formal studies to obtain diplomas and degrees through these channels, there are large number of aspirants for higher education, who hold jobs, and are also looking to upgrade their education and skills. There are also many companies that provide this facility to the employees for up skilling and upgrading themselves, with help of external institutions and agencies.

The two terms that are being used almost inter-changeably are 'Open Learning' and 'Distance Education' and they are often combined to be known as Open and Distance Learning (ODL). Open Learning is a philosophy and Distance Education is the mode used for translating it into reality as the two are complementary to each other.

Distance Education (DE) is an umbrella term which describes all the teaching and learning arrangements in which the learner and the teacher are separated by space and time. In fact, it is a mode of delivering education and instruction to learners who are not physically present in a traditional setting of a classroom. Transaction of the curriculum is conducted by means of specially prepared, self-study learning materials, which are delivered to the learners through audio/video modules shared over the internet, video conferencing, satellite connectivity etc. The technological medium replaces the physical inter-personal communication of conventional classroom. There is also a Hybrid Model where limited face-to-face contact sessions are held at centers close to the learners' homes.

ODL allows flexibility to the learners with regard to entry and exit, pace and place of study, method of study, and also the choice and combination of courses, assessment and course completion. The lesser the restrictions, the higher the degree of openness. The Open learning system aims to redress social or educational inequality and offers opportunities not provided by conventional colleges or universities. There are opportunities for access to education for larger sections of the society. ODL in short accepts the philosophy of “openness” and uses the “distance mode” of learning.

ODL occupies a special place in the Indian higher education system because of its major contribution in enhancing the gross enrollment ratio and democratization of higher education. This will help large segments of the population, particularly to reach out to the unmet demands of lifelong learning which has become more of a necessity in the knowledge society.

When we fast forward to 2030, it is being highlighted by most experts that many of the traditional courses and jobs that we see today will not exist due to automation and advancements. It is very important that we future proof the courses and training for the next decade proactively, and inculcate a culture of continued learning.

Apart from the regular courses being offered, ODL helps in starting New Generation Courses on various subjects which can be in a Hybrid Model:

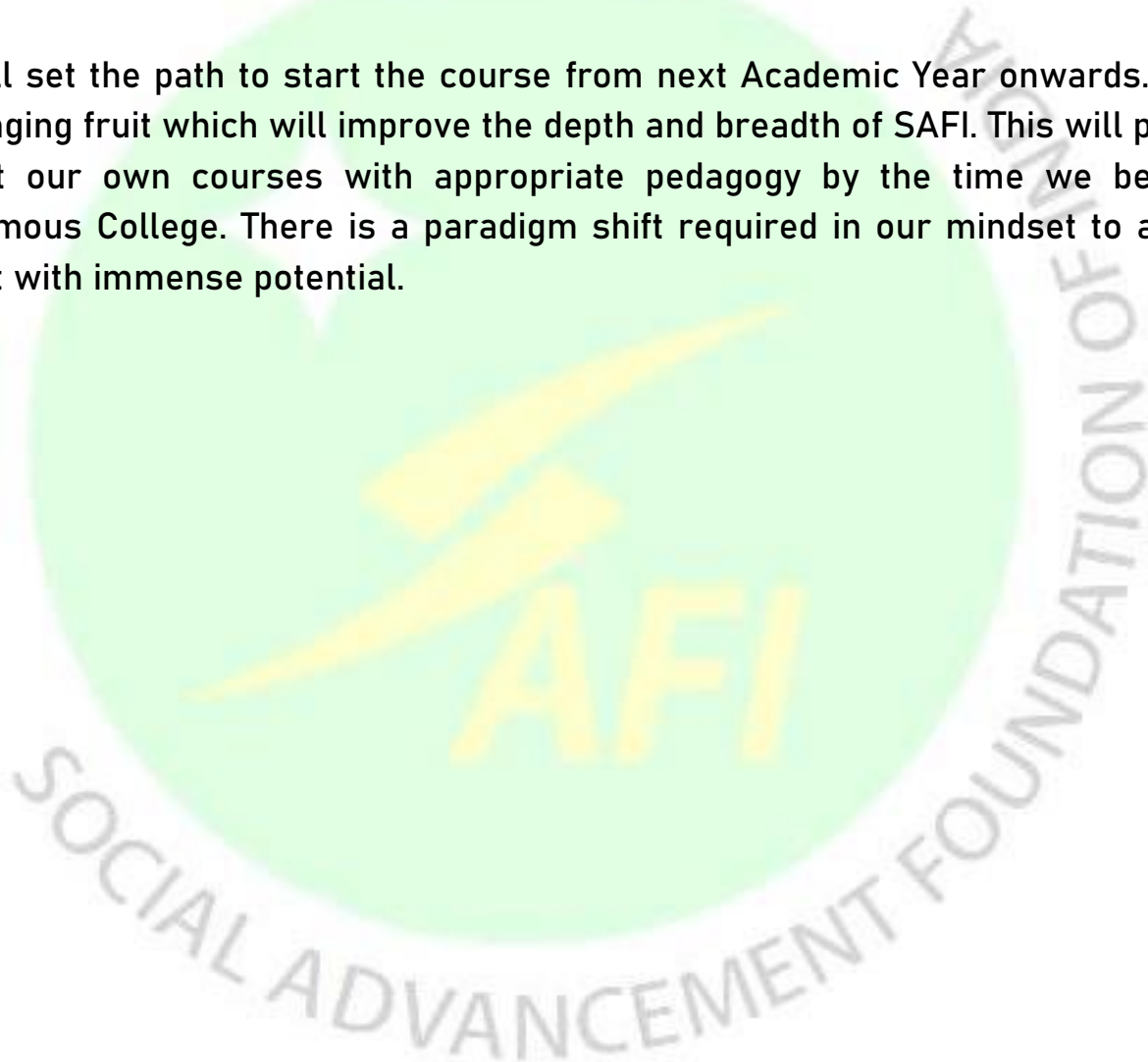
- Artificial intelligence
- Critical Thinking
- Data Analysts
- Computer Programming
- Cyber Security
- Nano technology
- Robotics
- Digital Marketing
- Machine Learning

There is also significant potential for starting On-the-Job Training of existing employees of corporates through the ODL Platforms.

The new courses that SAFI starts hitherto were those affiliated to the affiliating

University only. It is important that we shift gears, adapt and adopt Open and Distance Learning modalities ASAP. This will give us access to a large pool of Distance Learning Universities which can serve aspiring students. It will also diversify SAFI's offerings and aid in the eligibility towards the status of an Autonomous College when it will be assessed in 2025. This is a strategic shift that must be consciously made from next Academic Year onwards.

This will set the path to start the course from next Academic Year onwards. This is a low hanging fruit which will improve the depth and breadth of SAFI. This will prepare us to start our own courses with appropriate pedagogy by the time we become an Autonomous College. There is a paradigm shift required in our mindset to adopt this concept with immense potential.





### 3. Leadership Development

One of the cherished dreams of SAFI when it was established was to be at the forefront of Leadership Development. While there have been discussions and some recent initiatives in this area, we are yet to reach anywhere in this journey.

There is no doubt that creating good leadership talent across the various segments is of utmost importance for the country. Hence it has to be one of the major missions of SAFI, as it will provide young leaders to propel the community forward.

When looking at leaders in various arenas across the world, a common recurring theme is that most of them are educated in the world's best centers of learning. The alumni of the IITs, IIMs, AIIMs, ISBs, National School of Law will be seen perambulating the corridors of power in India. On a global level, this is true of Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Oxford, Cambridge, Columbia etc. Apart from the universities, you will also find standalone COEs that act as beacons like Wharton, INSEAD, LSE etc. churning out leaders.

This shows us that the best incubator to create world class leaders is a platform like a University or a COE in chosen areas. While acknowledging that many of the above institutions have reached the status after centuries of existence, we have to start somewhere and embark on this journey with a very structured and planned approach.

To start small with some achievable short-term goals by utilizing already existing programs to develop leadership traits among existing students along with starting training program for Civil Services in the short term.

Establish few Centers of Excellence in a phased manner over the next 10 years.

This strategy will help us to have some immediate gains, while focusing on the long-term vision to create world class institutions that churn out leaders.

#### 3.1 SAFI Leaders Academy

This is an approach in which programs already in existence can be further strengthened with planning and resources. This program will help support the students of SIAS get

insight into principle-centered leadership and make SAFI stand out as a different institution.

The core of the program must embed moral and ethical values with principles as the pillars.

- Principle-centered Leadership
- Personal Leadership
- Team Leadership
- Strategic Leadership
- Execution Leadership

We can utilize various paths to take SAFI Leaders Academy to the next level, such as:

- Have a structured, content-rich 6-month program as a single cohort in each year.
- Student selection must be merit-based after aptitude test interview.
- Prescribe a fee with 50% students on merit scholarship.
- Get access to Online Mode of Leadership programs e.g. [www.getsmarter.com](http://www.getsmarter.com)
- External faculty with good remuneration.
- Frequent guest lectures by successful and inspiring leaders.
- Provide Certification after successful completion.
- Give admission to external students once stabilized.

After each 6-month cohort completes the course, we should pick up the best students who show leadership qualities on the basis of the performance in the exams, as well as in the interview. There must be programs that provide them support to explore further avenues in their career.

### 3.2 SAFI CIVIL SERVICES ACADEMY

Passing the UPSC with a good rank is the cherished dream of many of the youngsters in the country. It is a coveted goal among the students, as well as many young employed aspirants.

An organization like SAFI must take the lead in this and see how it can provide a platform for young people from the community coming to the Civil Services. This is an

important step towards participating in nation-building, as well as to have the eligible representation in the top bureaucracy of the country.

SAFI must set up an excellent Civil Services Academy (CSA), with the support of likeminded people and resources.

The following steps will allow us to start the SAFI CSA by next year:

- 1) Allocate infrastructure in existing SAFI building for the students – classrooms and hostels.
- 2) Identify and Establish association with a reputed agency who is already into Civil Services training.
- 3) The mode of teaching shall be hybrid with the content being provided by the agency.
- 4) Advertise for enrollment of candidates for the 3 levels of the examination.
- 5) Conduct aptitude tests and interviews of the candidates with the help of the selected agency and like-minded officers.
- 6) Select the students purely on the basis of merit looking at past academic achievement, aptitude tests and interview.
- 7) Start off with a 50-student batch initially, with course duration of 2 years
- 8) Provide 50 % seats with scholarship to students from low socio-economic sections.
- 9) Get scholarships through sponsors for the students requiring support.

Apart from a handful of resident faculty, the mainstay of the program shall be the online and contact classes with the selected agency. There shall be access to study material with regular objective and descriptive tests provided by the associating agency. The candidate will have access to the online teaching and testing platform with downloadable material. There shall be proper scheduling of the courses and face-to-face sessions at frequent intervals with the teachers from the agency, as well as from guest faculty.

## 4. SAFI Centers of Excellence

While SAFI itself can aspire to become a world-renowned university, we know that this will take many decades. The pragmatic way to do this will be to look at short-term and medium-term gains as we lay the foundation for graduating into a Teaching and Research University in the future. We have already discussed the short-term gains through OLD, launching the Leadership Development Program and SAFI Civil Service Academy. We also discussed the medium-term plan to upgrade to the level of the SAFI Autonomous degree-granting College status in 3 to 5 years. In the medium-term, there is an opportunity for SAFI to establish a few Centers of Excellence in selected areas. While this idea has been discussed historically, due to many reasons, it has not been acted on so far effectively.

Possibility of establishing a few of the following COEs in a phased manner in the next 5-10 years:

### 4.1 SAFI Institute of Social Sciences

Leadership scarcity is one of the major challenges faced by the community. This is especially true when we look at grassroot level work amongst the needy population. Professional Social Work requires commitment and passion. SAFI must focus on creating leaders from the community who have high moral and ethical values. They must be capable of visualizing and executing projects at the community level. The Institute must aim at producing leaders at graduate and post-graduate level who must strive for an equitable and sustainable society. Leaders who can be at the grassroot level can produce major shift in the status of the community.

### 4.2 School of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence is the future – there has been huge focus by many universities on this subject, which will completely change the way in which we live in just 10 years.



Areas like Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing, Computer Vision and Augmented Reality are becoming common jargon instead of restricted to programming and coding now.

There have been countries like the UAE that have started a University of Artificial Intelligence. With the large pool of bright engineers and computer professionals that we have access to, we must start exploring this high potential area and move at the earliest to be on the bus to future.

### 4.3 Institute of Digital Journalism

With courses in Journalism already running at SAFI, we must focus our efforts to start an Institute for Digital Journalism. Everyone agrees that this is the future of journalism. The digital media is swallowing the print and even the visual media. The future is for digital media being delivered through the smartphones and mobile devices directly to the customer. It is a different ball game and our focus must shift to this emerging high potential area. This not only future proofs the graduates, but also helps us to have a share of the opinion, and allows us to express ourselves in the times to come. There is a requirement for likeminded people to be present in this space to have a voice.

NEP 2020 envisages India to be promoted as a global study destination providing premium education at affordable costs. Foreign universities from among the top 100 in the world will be facilitated to operate in India by establishing in India. Research collaboration and student exchanges between Indian and global institutions will be promoted. In view of the contacts that we have and the availability of land, we must explore establishing a technical university in the SAFI campus in association with a foreign institution of reputation.

These are some of the COEs that are suggested but there are many others which can be included in the list after proper study and analysis. The idea was to plant the seed in the minds of the Trustees about the requirement to think about the concept of establishing COEs at SAFI over a period of 5 to 10 years, which can differentiate from many institutions.

## THE FUTURE

We must start the efforts to achieve the following in a time-bound and practical manner.

**By the Year 2025**

Leaders Academy	2021
Civil Services Academy	2021
ODL Platform	2022
COE	2024
Autonomous degree-granting College	2025

**By the Year 2030**

With achievement of the above in a time bound manner, we can aspire to ascend to the status of Teaching & Research University by the year 2030.

We shall also be able to get collaboration with foreign universities and institutions by that time, and establish COEs by this time.

This requires further planning and execution by an empowered team of educational and administrative experts, which we shall take up separately, once the required momentum is achieved.

## ACTION POINTS - WAY FORWARD

1. Change in mindset of the Trust to “Can do”
2. Bring Resourceful Trustees on board
3. Infuse Young Blood into the Trust
4. Small Empowered Team for Transformation
5. Invest in Human ware – Faculty & Leadership
6. Focus on Quality over Quantity
7. Project-based approach with clear outlines
8. Empowerment and Accountability
9. Seed Funding –to start the journey
10. Budget to meet the execution in 5 years
11. Get sponsors for the COE

*“Give me a place to stand and a lever long enough and I will move the world.” – Archimedes*

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