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An Analytical Study of NEP-2020 in Higher Education and Implementing Challenges of FYUGP in Assam

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Abstract

Change is the endless and natural rule of the universe. No society is untouched by the process of change. Indian society is also no exception to this. It is known from the historical study of Indian society that many social, economic, political, educational and other changes have also taken place from the primitive to the present period. After a long period of Indian educational history, Government of India is going to change our education system through the implement of National Education Policy 2020. This policy is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims making "India a global knowledge superpower". This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system building upon India's traditions and value systems. The current paper describes the analysis of the NEP 2020 on Higher Education level and implementing challenges of FYUGP in Assam. Recommendations are made for the implementation of FYUGP in Assam. Investigator use descriptive as well as analytical approach for the study. This study is focused on secondary data sources. The secondary data has been collected from NEP 2020 published by Government of India, and various research paper, news articles etc.

Keywords: National education policy, higher education and FYUGP

Introduction

Change is the endless and natural rule of the universe. No society is untouched by the process of change. Indian society is also no exception to this. It is known from the historical study of Indian society that many social, economic, political, educational and other changes have also taken place from the primitive to the present period. After a long period of Indian educational history, Government of India is going to change our education system through the implement of National Education Policy 2020. This policy is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims making "India a global knowledge superpower". This Policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system building upon India's traditions and value systems. The concept of policy has been defined by Wadi and Terry (1995) as a single or combination of decisions that may set out directions for guiding future decisions, initiating or delaying actions, or guiding the implementation of the earlier decisions, whether explicit or implicit. In the perception of Owolabi, (2005) [7], a policy is a process of doing or performing a particular action with intention and thus one's involuntary action cannot be a policy. According to him, a policy must have certain elements such as the policy agents, policy action, and purposes. Manga, (2014) [5] also looks at policy as an authoritative prescription issued by the

government to guide the achievement of objectives. However, Musisi, (2015) [6] is of the opinion that a policy is a broad statement that reflects future goals and aspirations and provides guidelines for carrying out those goals. In a nutshell, a policy could be any sort of action that is taken by an individual or authority to guide the operation of a given endeavor for the attainment of the determined goals (Manganese, 2015) [4].

Education policy includes of the principles and policy decisions that influence the field of education, as well as the collection of laws and rules that administer the operation of education systems. It is a processes and policies that educational organizations, local districts, states, and nations put in place and follow to attain academic goals.

Educational policy is a policy that is related to education or a policy that is directly meant for education (Rosha, 2022) [8]. Educational policy involves all authoritative prescriptions or decisions that are taken by the government to guide the activities of education for the realization of the desired goals (Falalu, 2020) [2]. That is why Manga, (2010) [3] emphasized that educational policies cover all those binding prescriptions, principles or guidelines set aside by the government or authority in a logical way to guide the business of education towards the attainment of the desired goals. Educational policies therefore define in implicit or explicit terms the dos

and don't's not's in educational enterprises for the realization of goals.

Since the country's independence in 1947, the Indian government sponsored a variety of programmes to address the problems of illiteracy in both rural and urban India. The Union government established the University Education Commission (1948-1949), the Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953), University Grants Commission and the Kothari Commission (1964-66) to develop proposals to modernise India's education system.

Based on the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), the government headed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the first National Policy on Education in 1968, which called for a "radical restructuring" and proposed equal educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration, greater cultural and economic development, fulfilling compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, implemented to be "three language formula" and encouraged the teaching of the ancient language.

In 1986, the government led by Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new National Policy on Education. The new policy called for "special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity," especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities. To achieve such a social integration, the policy called for expanding scholarships, adult education, recruiting more teachers from the SCs, incentives for poor families to send their children to school regularly, development of new institutions and providing housing and services. The NPE called for a "child-centred approach" in primary education, and launched "Operation Blackboard" to improve primary schools nationwide. The policy expanded the Open University system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University, which had been created in 1985. The policy also called for the creation of the "rural university" model, based on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, to promote economic and social development at the grassroots level in rural India.

The 1986 National Policy on Education was modified in 1992 by the P. V. Narasimha Rao government. In 2005, Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopted a new policy based on the "Common Minimum Programme" of his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

In 2019, the then Ministry of Human Resource Development and now the Ministry of Education released a Draft New Education Policy 2019, which changed into accompanied through a number of public consultations.

On 29 July 2020, the cabinet approved a new National Education Policy with an aim to introduce some changes to the existing Indian education system, which will be introduced in India till 2026. National Education Policy 2020 is a comprehensive document that promises major reforms in higher education in India. The policy recognizes the importance of multidisciplinary education, research, vocational education, teacher education, and the use of technology in higher education. The policy aims to make India a research hub and development, attract talent from around the world, and allow students to select courses according to their interests and ability. The goal of the policy is creating a holistic and flexible education system that is adaptive to the needs of the 21st century.

Overview of the National Education Policy 2020 for Higher Education

- The policy recommends the establishment of a single regulator for higher education, called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), to replace multiple regulatory bodies.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund and promote research in all disciplines.
- The policy proposes the introduction of a four-year multidisciplinary undergraduate degree, with multiple exit options and opportunities for skill development.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to promote the use of technology in higher education.
- The policy recommends the development of a credit-based system for degree programs, which would enable students to pursue multiple degrees or programs simultaneously.
- The policy proposes the establishment of a National Academic Credit Bank (NAC-Bank) to facilitate the transfer and accumulation of academic credits across institutions.
- The NEP 2020 proposes the breaking down of rigid boundaries between different academic disciplines and faculties. It encourages universities to offer multi-disciplinary courses that allow students to explore various subjects and fields of study.
- The NEP 2020 recommends a flexible curriculum that allows students to choose from a range of courses and subjects to meet their individual interests and career goals. The policy also proposes a credit-transfer system that enables students to shift between institutions without losing academic credit, thereby boosting mobility and promoting academic excellence.
- The NEP 2020 aims to make India a global hub for innovation and research by encouraging universities to prioritize research and increasing investment in science and technology. The policy also recommends the establishment of a National Research Foundation to support and fund research activities across all disciplines.
- The NEP 2020 recognises the importance of vocational education and skill development in preparing students for the job market. It proposes the integration of vocational education into mainstream education, offering apprenticeships, and work-integrated learning programmes to help students acquire relevant skills.
- The NEP 2020 acknowledges the importance of technology in education and proposes the development of a comprehensive digital infrastructure for education. It encourages universities to offer online courses and Blended Learning models to reach a broader student population and promote access to education.
- The NEP 2020 places significant emphasis on promoting inclusivity and equity in education by addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups such as girls, low-income families, and students with disabilities. It also seeks to provide equal opportunities to students from all socio-economic backgrounds.

- The NEP 2020 aims to promote internationalization by encouraging collaborations with foreign universities, attracting international students, and facilitating student and faculty exchanges. The policy also recommends the establishment of a National Education Exchange Programme (NEEP) to promote educational exchanges between states.
- The NEP 2020 proposes greater institutional autonomy and decentralisation of decision-making to improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education. The policy also emphasises the importance of accountability, transparency, and regulatory mechanisms to ensure that institutions adhere to quality standards.
- The NEP 2020 focuses on providing comprehensive teacher training and development programs that will help build an effective and competent teaching force. It also seeks to promote a culture of continuous professional development among teachers.
- NTA to offer Common Entrance Exam for Admission to HEIs;
- Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country.
- Single overarching umbrella body for promotion of higher education sector including teacher education and excluding medical and legal education-the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)-with independent bodies for standard setting-the General Education Council; funding-Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC); accreditation-National Accreditation Council (NAC); and regulation-National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC);
- Expansion of open and distance learning to increase Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER).
- Professional Education will be an integral part of the higher education system. Stand-alone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities, or institutions in these or other fields, will aim to become multi-disciplinary institutions.
- Establishing a National Mission for Mentoring.
- Creation of an autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration. Appropriate integration of technology into all levels of education.
- Achieving 100% youth and adult literacy.
- Multiple mechanisms with checks and balances will combat and stop the commercialization of higher education.

Higher Education

The higher education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life harmony with all existence.-Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Higher Education is an essential instrument for facing up with the challenges faced by the modern world and it is an unavoidable element for social development, production, economic growth, strengthening the culture, maintaining social coherence, and continuing the struggle against poverty and the promotion of the culture of peace.

Higher education is the highest stage of formal education in India which includes Under-graduate and Post-graduate courses. The University education which includes both

Under-graduate and Post-graduate courses is conducted through regular traditional Universities and Open-Universities which functions are performed under Central and State Governments under the control of the University Grants Commission.

Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP)

The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 suggests four-year undergraduate programme (FYUGP) with multiple entry and exit options to the students, allowing certificate, diploma, and degree at the end of first, second, and third year, respectively. It notes that the FYUGP shall allow “the opportunity to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to a focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choices of the student” (NEP 2020: 37).

Four Years Degree Course in Assam

Assam Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, launching the NEP 2020 in higher education institutions a four-year degree programme all colleges and universities institutions should undertake from 2023.

The GU-FYUGP program will be implemented on the University campus and all affiliated colleges of Gauhati University. To ensure the successful implementation of the new program, the university has already discussed the matter and received approval from various committees and forums. The Academic Council under the chairmanship of the Vice Chancellor, Gauhati University, also approved the syllabi for the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP).

A total of 15 state university of Assam are going to start 4 year undergraduate (UG) programme the Academic year 2023. The Assam State Higher Education Admission Portal-2023 is being introduced for admission into all UG Programmes in Assam State Universities for academic session 2023-24 under the Department of Higher Education Assam. The Assam State Higher Education Admission Portal will provide a common platform and equal opportunities to candidates across the state, especially those from rural and other remote areas and help establish better connect with the Universities. A single portal will enable the Candidates to cover a wide outreach and be part of the admissions process to Assam State Universities.

Gauhati University

Gauhati University was established by an act of the State Legislature-The Gauhati University Act 1947 (Assam Act, XVI of 1947) of the government of Assam in 1948. Gauhati University started functioning as an affiliating, teaching and residential university in a few temporary buildings in Guwahati, with K.K Handique as the first vice-chancellor, Phanidhar Dutta, Sailandhar Rajkhowa and Sarat Kumar Dutta were selected as the registrar, treasurer and secretary of university classes, respectively. The emblem of the university, selected from among many submitted, was designed by T. Mukherjee, a textile designer of Ahmedabad. Two Sanskrit words inscribed on it-Vidyaya Sadhayeta (meaning achievement through learning)-indicate the motto of the university. It had 17 affiliated colleges and eight Post Graduate Departments on its establishment. The university which started functioning from the city centre was shifted to the present campus in 1955-56. Two Sanskrit words inscribed on it-Vidyaya Sadhayeta (meaning achievement through learning)-indicate the motto of the university.

The Regulations of FYUGP of Gauhati University, in line with NEP 2020, provide options for multiple entries/exits, including a Certificate or a Diploma or Degree with or without a Major or a Degree (Honours) or a Degree (Honours) with Research at various levels in all affiliated colleges under Gauhati University and at the university campus itself.

Dibrugarh University

Dibrugarh University, the easternmost university of India was set up in 1965 under the provisions of the Dibrugarh University Act 1965 enacted by the Assam Legislative Assembly. The University is situated at Rajabeta at a distance of about five kilometers to the south of premier town of Dibrugarh in the eastern part of Assam as well as India. The territorial jurisdiction of Dibrugarh University covers nine districts of Upper Assam viz. Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Sivasagar, Charaideo, Jorhat, Majuli, Golaghat, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur.

In pursuance to the decision of the 127th Meeting of the Academic Council (Emergent), Dibrugarh University held on 18.05.2023 vide Resolution No. 01 has approved the Dibrugarh University Regulations for the Four Year Under Graduate Programmes (FYUGP) in Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) 2023.

The Regulations is effect from the Academic Session, 2023-2024. The Regulations shall be applicable to the students enrolled in UG Certificate, UG Diploma, Three Year UG Degree, Four Year UG Degree (Honours) and Four Year UG Degree (Honours with Research) conducted by the Departments/Centres for Studies of Dibrugarh University/Colleges/Institutes affiliated to/permitted by Dibrugarh University from the academic session 2023-24.

Implementing Challenges of FYUGP in Assam

The policy has come at the right time and the objective is very noble. In Assam both Dibrugarh University and Gauhati University take necessary step for implementing four years under graduate programme from the year 2023. The success of FYUGP in Assam and the pace of its implementation depend to a large extent on how successfully the government, universities and colleges can tide over the practical challenges facing it. Implementing Challenges of FYUGP in Assam are-

- i). The education program's success or failure is largely dependent on the teacher. A teacher who is perfect or efficient can assist in implementing the new program in an appropriate manner. In this instance, it is necessary to have trained teachers. Both universities have a different awareness program for NEP 2020, but they have yet to find any orientation programs or workshops for their teachers regarding the new syllabus of FYUGP. The university cannot implement a new syllabus unless it develops teachers' competencies or keeps them up-to-date.
- ii). It is necessary to organize a guidance or counseling program for all secondary level students for their future courses under NEP 2020 before introducing the FYUGP. But Govt. of Assam implements NEP 2020 in all universities without any student's awareness programme. Colleges and universities will place a greater emphasis on counseling students in the first year of the new syllabus.
- iii). Without the support of the staff of the College Office, it is impossible to accept the admission and evaluation of students. Like a teacher, office staff must be aware of admission procedures, subject combinations, selection procedures, paper codes, credit system, transfer of

credits, and new assessment systems, etc., in order to implement FYGUP. Universities have not taken any significant steps to improve the effectiveness of their teachers yet. In some parts of NEP2020, confusion is also created for office staff.

- iv). The British and Industrial era is responsible for the current education system. A change in mindset will necessitate the involvement of two or more generations of parents, teachers, and educators. It is important to take necessary steps to change old mindsets, including those of parents and teachers, before implementing new policies. Both universities did not show interest in changing parents' mindset.
- v). Parents and students are not aware of new courses, which is another drawback of FYUGP under NEP2020. The new FYUGP course is not clear to all parents who are going to enroll their child in Under Graduate programs right now. It was found that Dibrugarh and Gauhati University did not organize awareness program for parents on FYUGP before it was implemented.
- vi). In the previous graduate programs, Commerce has been introduced as a stream, but NEP 2020 recognizes it as a subject. Accountancy, Business Management, Banking, Economics, Human Resource Management, Information and Communication Technology etc. were counted as a subject of Commerce Stream in early course, but now it's become included in a particular paper. Parents and students with a commercial background may have difficulty selecting the subject.
- vii). Alternative English can be chosen as a subject instead of MIL by students at school level in Assam. A four-year undergraduate programme of Dibrugarh University now requires MIL or Hindi as compulsory subjects i.e. Ability Enhancement Course. In this case, the student who have not learn Assamese and Hindi in early stage is required to learn one of the aforementioned languages during a semester, which is a difficult task.
- viii). The policy envisions promoting online education and making it accessible to all, including those living in remote areas. However, this will require bridging the digital divide, which remains a challenge in Assam where many people still lack access to basic internet connectivity.
- ix). The policy places a strong emphasis on faculty development and training, but there is a shortage of faculty in many areas of higher education and it may take time for institutions to build the necessary capacity.
- x). The NEP 2020 seeks to establish multi-disciplinary institutions for higher education replacing the single-disciplinary ones. It is found that few affiliating colleges of under Dibrugarh University and Gauhati University are single stream and their subjects are also limited. In that case teachers are also limited.
- xi). Colleges and universities will face a significant challenge due to the infrastructure issue.
- xii). The UGC has also made it mandatory for universities to internships with FYUGP. However, internships has not been easy for all.

Conclusion

The implementation of the NEP 2020 will require coordinated efforts from all stakeholders, and it remains to be seen how effective the policy will be implemented. However, the NEP 2020 is a step in the right direction towards transforming India's education system to meet the demands of the changing

world. FYUGP will be implemented by both Dibrugarh University and Gauhati University starting in 2023, despite the challenges.

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