

Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in Colleges of Mizoram: Status, Challenges, and Way Forward

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a major reform in India's higher education system, aiming to promote flexibility, skill development, digital integration, and multidisciplinary learning. For Mizoram, a geographically remote and resource-constrained state, the implementation of NEP 2020 carries both opportunities and challenges. This study examines the current status and institutional preparedness of Mizoram colleges in adopting NEP 2020, drawing on data from questionnaires administered to NEP Coordinators and supplemented by interviews with administrators, faculty and students. Findings reveal progress in areas such as value-added and skill enhancement courses, as well as the introduction of multidisciplinary curricula. However, significant barriers remain, including faculty shortages, infrastructural limitations, financial constraints, administrative delays and uneven awareness or capacity-building efforts. The study highlights the need for clearer guidelines, faculty development initiatives, infrastructural support and collaborative strategies to ensure uniform and effective implementation of NEP 2020 in the state. These insights contribute to understanding the localized challenges of educational reform in Mizoram.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Higher Education, Mizoram, Implementation, Challenges.

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is India's first education policy of the 21st century, approved by the Union Cabinet on 29 July 2020. It replaces the National Policy on Education, 1986, with a vision of transforming India's education system to meet the needs of the rapidly changing national and global landscape. The

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policy emphasizes flexibility, inclusivity, and holistic development, introducing major reforms such as multidisciplinary learning, value-added and skill-based courses, digital integration, the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), and the Multiple Entry and Exit System (MEES). In 2023, the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUGP) was formally adopted by many universities across India, including Mizoram University, marking a critical step toward implementing NEP 2020 provisions.

In Mizoram, higher education is influenced by tribal cultural values, regional constraints, and aspirations for academic growth. However, as a geographically remote and resource-constrained state with limited digital infrastructure, Mizoram faces unique challenges in adopting NEP 2020. The appointment of NEP Coordinators in colleges plays a pivotal role in bridging the gap between national policy and local implementation.

This study examines the status, challenges, and support needs of Mizoram's colleges in implementing NEP 2020, providing insights into institutional preparedness, infrastructural gaps, faculty readiness and opportunities for improvement.

Overview of Higher Education in Mizoram

Mizoram currently has 29 affiliated general degree colleges under Mizoram University and one constituent college. Of these, eight colleges are managed by private or Church bodies, while the rest are government-run. Most institutions offer general undergraduate programmes only with few colleges incorporating professional courses too. Opportunities for postgraduate study and research remain limited. Furthermore, many colleges operate in semi-urban or rural settings, which significantly impacts infrastructural development and digital readiness.

Table 1: List of General Degree Colleges affiliated to Mizoram University and its constituent college

Sl. No	Name of Institution
1	Govt. Aizawl College
2	Govt. Aizawl North College
3	Govt. Aizawl West College
4	Govt. Champhai College
5	Govt. Hnahthial College
6	Govt. Hrangbana College
7	Govt. J.Buana College

8	Govt. J. Thankima College
9	Govt. Johnson College
10	Govt. Kamalanagar College
11	Govt. Khawzawl College
12	Govt. Kolasib College
13	Govt. Lawngtlai College
14	Govt. Mamit College
15	Govt. Saiha College
16	Govt. Saitual College
17	Govt. Serchhip College
18	Govt. T. Romana College
19	Govt. Zawlnuam College
20	Govt. Zirtiri Res. Sc. College
21	Lunglei Govt. College
22	HATIM
23	Helen Lowry College
24	Mizoram Christian College
25	Aizawl City College
26	Divine Mercy College
27	Faith College
28	Kapthangi College
29	Kawnpui College
30	Pachhunga University College (Constituent College)

Rationale of the Study

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents one of the most comprehensive reforms in India's education sector, seeking to reshape higher education into a more flexible, multidisciplinary and inclusive system. While the policy is nationally driven, its effectiveness ultimately depends on how it is interpreted and implemented within diverse regional contexts.

Mizoram, being a geographically remote and resource-constrained state, faces unique challenges in higher education. Most of its colleges are located in semi-urban and rural areas with limited infrastructural facilities, inadequate digital resources and faculty shortages. At the same time, the state's rich cultural heritage, strong

community-based values and aspirations for upward mobility create fertile ground for policy-driven transformation.

Since Mizoram University and affiliated colleges began aligning their curricula with the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programme (CCFUGP) in 2023, understanding the preparedness, challenges and support requirements of institutions has become crucial. NEP Coordinators, faculty and administrators play an instrumental role in translating policy into practice, but there is limited empirical research that documents their experiences, institutional capacities, and the systemic barriers encountered during implementation.

By addressing these gaps, this study will provide a ground-level perspective on how NEP 2020 is being implemented in Mizoram colleges by identifying structural, financial and pedagogical challenges that hinder effective adoption of reforms. Moreover, by documenting the status, challenges and support needs of colleges in Mizoram in implementing NEP 2020, the findings will provide evidence-based insights to guide policymakers, Mizoram University and state-level higher education authorities in framing policies, issuing clearer guidelines, strengthen support mechanisms and allocating resources for smoother implementation of NEP 2020. Ultimately, this study seeks to bridge the gap between policy intent and institutional practice, enabling higher education in Mizoram to become more inclusive, future-ready and responsive to local needs.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the status of NEP 2020 implementation in Mizoram colleges.
2. To identify challenges faced by institutions in the implementation of NEP 2020.
3. To suggest suggestions for effective implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram colleges.

Research Design and Methodology

Research Design

The study follows a descriptive survey design combined with an analytical approach, using both primary and secondary data.

- **Primary Data:** Semi-structured interviews with officials from the State's Directorate of Higher & Technical Education, college administrators, faculty members and students; questionnaires administered to NEP Coordinators in colleges.

- Secondary Data: Policy documents, UGC guidelines, Mizoram University directives, reports from the Directorate of Higher & Technical Education (Mizoram), and institutional websites, prospectuses and magazines.

Population and Sample

The study population comprised all general degree colleges affiliated with Mizoram University. A purposive sampling method was used to take responses from designated NEP Coordinators from colleges of Mizoram and to ensure representation from government officials, students and faculty across arts, science, commerce and professional colleges.

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

A structured questionnaire with four sections (institutional profile, implementation status, challenges, and support required) and semi-structured interviews with stakeholders constitute the primary tools.

For collection of data, questionnaires were distributed through online platforms to designated NEP Coordinators of the colleges, supplemented by in-person semi-structured interviews with state education officials, college faculties and students. Confidentiality and informed consent were ensured throughout.

Data Analysis

The data collected were thematically analyzed to identify the status and the recurring challenges of the implementation of NEP 2020 in the colleges of Mizoram and recommendations for its smooth functioning.

Major Findings

1. Status of NEP 2020 Implementation in Mizoram Colleges

Following the UGC's notification of the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programme (CCFUP) in December 2022, Mizoram University issued Guidelines for Implementation of NEP 2020 in Undergraduate Programmes and functions from the academic session July 2023 in the HEIs/colleges of Mizoram.

The following key observations are made in the different areas of implementation:

- Major and Minor Courses: In alignment with the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUGP) prescribed by Mizoram University, the introduction of Major and Minor courses has been successfully implemented across colleges in Mizoram. Since this structure is a mandatory requirement for all affiliating colleges, its adoption has been uniform, marking

one of the more successful aspects of NEP 2020 implementation in Mizoram. This will ensure in-depth specialization in a chosen subject as well as allow students to broaden their academic exposure by opting for interdisciplinary or skill-based courses.

- **Value Added Course:** Value-added courses were introduced and mandated for students of 1st semester up to the 4th semester in all colleges as per the CCFUGP guidelines. This will help instil in the students, positive attitude as well as common outlook on life as these courses contains certain bodies of knowledge essential for all students irrespective of their individual differences.
- **Skill Enhancement Courses:** The introduction of Skill Enhancement Courses (SECs), as mandated by the CCFUGP, has been uniformly adopted across all colleges in Mizoram. These courses are studied in 2nd, 3rd and 4th semester. However, the options available to students vary significantly between institutions. While some colleges provide a limited range of SECs or, no options at all, others are able to offer a wider variety of courses.
- **Ability Enhancement Courses (AECs):** Ability Enhancement Courses (AECs), focusing on Modern Indian Language (MIL) and English, have been implemented across Mizoram colleges in accordance with the CCFUGP. In Mizoram, colleges have adopted these courses with varying degrees of emphasis, but their inclusion remains a mandatory requirement to ensure competency in language and communication, which is central to the holistic approach of NEP 2020.
- **Multidisciplinary Curriculum:** A very positive advantage of the NEP 2020 curriculum is the introduction of multidisciplinary curriculum which is designed to broaden students' intellectual experience and promote liberal arts and science education. The provision has been formally integrated in the curriculum and has been implemented in all colleges but reveals disparities. Flexibility in course selection varies significantly across institutions due to limited subjects, streams of study and inadequate teaching faculty.
- **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):** Implementation remains in early stages, limited by digital readiness and the requirement of an Aadhaar ID. Some students, including those refugees from Myanmar or from families with religious objections, are unable to obtain Aadhaar, restricting full adoption.
- **Multiple Entry/Exit System (MEES):** In line with UGC guidelines (2021), Mizoram University has formally adopted the provision for multiple entry and exit options within undergraduate programmes, allowing students to re-enter in odd semesters and exit after completing even semesters with the required

credits. However, in practice, the system remains largely at the recognition stage. Colleges are awaiting clearer operational guidelines regarding procedures, credit transfers, and administrative mechanisms to ensure smooth implementation. As a result, while MEES exists in principle, its practical rollout across Mizoram colleges is still pending.

- **Faculty Development:** Faculty training and orientation initiatives have been undertaken primarily under the auspices of the University Grants Commission (UGC) and Mizoram University. In addition, several colleges have organized sensitization and orientation programmes focusing on NEP 2020 and the newly introduced curricular framework. Nonetheless, the frequency and consistency of these initiatives remain uneven. Within the two years since implementation began, some colleges have conducted only a single programme, whereas others have organized multiple sessions, reflecting disparities in institutional commitment and resource availability.
2. **Challenges in the Implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram Colleges**
- **Skill Enhancement Courses:** There are differences amongst the colleges in introducing number of skill enhancement courses for students, leading to some students having more varieties and options depending on the institutions they attend to. This may be due to the lack of or inadequacy of funds for employment of skill teachers and for procurement of tools and equipment in fulfilling the requirements in various skill enhancement courses. This lack of uniformity reflects disparities in institutional resources, availability of qualified faculty, and administrative prioritization, which in turn influences students' access to diverse skill-oriented learning opportunities.
 - **Multidisciplinary Courses:** Although the CCFUGP mandates that students complete three introductory-level multidisciplinary courses, effective implementation has been constrained by structural challenges. Most colleges in Mizoram face a shortage of qualified faculty, limited subjects and streams of study. As a result, many colleges struggle to provide students with diverse options, restricting the intended multidisciplinary exposure envisioned by NEP 2020, undermining the policy's aim of providing broad-based, flexible and liberal education. This disparity across institutions reflects systemic limitations that continue to hinder the full realization of the multidisciplinary vision.
 - **Infrastructural Limitations:** Many colleges in Mizoram continue to face significant infrastructural gaps, particularly in terms of digital readiness and teaching-learning resources. Constraints such as inadequate classrooms, laboratories, and physical spaces hinder the smooth conduct of newly introduced

courses under NEP 2020. While some colleges report moderate preparedness for digital learning, persistent challenges such as poor internet connectivity, insufficient ICT facilities, and lack of e-content development remain pressing concerns. These infrastructural limitations restrict the effective delivery of the courses, most particularly skill enhancement and multidisciplinary courses.

- **Faculty Shortage and Resistance to Change:** The successful implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram is constrained by a shortage of qualified faculty across disciplines, particularly in specialized and skill-based areas. This shortage not only limits the range of courses that colleges can offer but also places an additional workload on existing faculty, thereby affecting teaching quality. Alongside quantitative gaps, qualitative challenges emerge in the form of resistance to pedagogical reform. Many faculty members remain hesitant to adopt learner-centric, multidisciplinary, and technology-integrated approaches, preferring conventional lecture-based methods. Such reluctance often stems from limited exposure to new pedagogical models, inadequate training opportunities, and apprehension about adapting to digital platforms. Together, faculty shortage and resistance to change pose a dual challenge that significantly slows the pace of educational transformation envisioned under NEP 2020.
- **Financial Constraints:** Budgetary limitations remain one of the most critical barriers to effective NEP 2020 implementation in Mizoram colleges. The redesign of curricula, particularly the introduction of new courses such as skill enhancement requires substantial financial investment in human and material resources that most institutions cannot afford. In addition, the procurement of modern technology, establishment of digital learning facilities, and organization of regular faculty training programs demand sustained funding support. Without adequate financial assistance, colleges struggle to bridge the gap between policy directives and practical implementation, thereby limiting the scope and quality of educational reforms.
- **Constraints in Offering 4-Year UG Degree (Honours with Research):** Most colleges in Mizoram face critical gaps in meeting the criteria to offer 4-Year UG Degree (Honours with Research) as per UGC's Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUGP). The acute shortage of regular faculty, particularly those eligible to supervise doctoral research, alongside limited research infrastructure, makes it difficult for colleges to introduce this programme. As a result, the implementation of the 4-Year UG Degree with a research component remains highly constrained across the state.

- **Administrative Delays:** A recurrent challenge in the implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram colleges is the lack of clarity and delay in receiving operational guidelines from regulatory bodies. While Mizoram University has issued directives for the adoption of the new Curriculum and Credit Framework, many institutions report that detailed instructions remain insufficiently communicated. These gaps create uncertainty for administrators and faculty, slowing the pace of curriculum redesign and institutional planning. Furthermore, the absence of timely circulars or comprehensive handbooks leads to inconsistent interpretations of policy provisions across colleges. Such administrative delays not only hinder smooth implementation but also contribute to uneven preparedness, create confusion among faculty and students, hinder curriculum redesign, and contribute to uneven implementation of NEP 2020 across colleges.
 - **Capacity-Building Gaps:** Awareness of NEP 2020 among both faculty and students remains limited, creating a significant barrier to effective implementation. Training and orientation programmes have been organized primarily under the auspices of the UGC and Mizoram University, but participation is often restricted to a few representatives from each institution. While some colleges have conducted their own sensitization sessions, the frequency and scope of these initiatives are uneven, ranging from a single programme in two years to multiple sessions in others. Moreover, faculty disengagement, often stemming from unfamiliarity with the policy framework, has further slowed progress. These inconsistencies highlight disparities in institutional priorities, administrative commitment, and resource allocation. Without systematic capacity-building efforts, both faculty preparedness and student awareness will remain inadequate, undermining the NEP's vision of fostering academic flexibility, skill development, and holistic learning.
3. **Suggestions for effective implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram colleges**
 - 1) **Policy Awareness Drives:** Regular seminars and workshops must be organized to sensitize all stakeholders, viz. students, faculty and administrators about NEP 2020's objectives, provisions, strategies and implementation roadmap.
 - 2) **Addressing Faculty Shortage:** The shortage of qualified and trained faculty is a critical barrier to implementing NEP 2020 in Mizoram. To overcome this, the state and institutions should expedite faculty recruitment through transparent and timely selection processes; introduce incentives to attract qualified professionals to teach skilled courses and multidisciplinary courses in colleges and promote adjunct and visiting faculty models in partnership with universities and experts.

- 3) **Capacity Building:** Continuous professional development must be offered through faculty development programs (FDPs), leadership training for administrators, and digital skill enhancement to align with the multidisciplinary and learner-centric model of NEP.
- 4) **Collaborative Models:** Partnerships between colleges, Mizoram University, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and ed-tech platforms must be promoted to support academic reform, content development and technology adoption.
- 5) **Infrastructure Development:** Leveraging state and central schemes (RUSA, UGC) and state schemes for upgrading college facilities like digital classrooms, laboratories, libraries and student support systems.
- 6) **Introduction of AI course:** For enhancement of students' employability and future vocations, there is a great felt need for the introduction of various AI courses in the regular curriculum and orientation courses on AI for teaching faculty to meet the present and future needs.

Conclusion

The adoption of NEP 2020 in Mizoram colleges marks a transformative step for higher education in the state though it is at a formative stage. While commendable progress has been made in introducing value-added courses, skill enhancement modules and multidisciplinary learning, challenges remain in infrastructure, faculty capacity and equitable access to resources. This study, by drawing on the perspectives of primary stakeholders, highlights institutional realities on the ground and offers insights that can inform policymakers, Mizoram University, and state authorities in providing targeted support. Addressing barriers through enhanced policy clarity, faculty development, infrastructure investment and context-specific planning is essential to ensure equity, inclusiveness and effective implementation. Strengthening NEP implementation in Mizoram is not only vital for achieving national educational goals but also for ensuring equitable access to quality higher education in the Northeast region.

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