



Emerging Trends in Higher Education Articulations Across Disciplines

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Insights on Quality at Higher Level in Arunachal Pradesh with regard to NEP-2020

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Abstract

NEP-2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge and equitable society by making education more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs. It is based on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. Quality in Higher Education aims at developing well-rounded and creative individuals. In the light of NEP-2020, quality in Higher Education enables scientific temper and specialized areas as per interest of the individual. It focuses on developing creativity, character, ethical and Constitutional values, spirit of service and 21st century capabilities across the range of disciplines. It also reiterates on personal accomplishment and enlightenment by preparing students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and for economic independence. The present paper deals with specific context of the state of Arunachal Pradesh, initiatives and necessary strategies of implementation in the light of NEP-2020.

Key words: Quality, strategies and Arunachal Pradesh.

Introduction

Higher Education system in India has been suffering from various major problems such as rigid separation of disciplines, fragmented higher educational ecosystem, limited access in socio-economically disadvantaged areas, limited teacher and institutional autonomy, lesser emphasis on research, ineffective regulatory system etc. NEP-2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge and equitable society by making education

more holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, suited to 21st century needs. It is based on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability.

Rationale of the Theme

Quality in Higher Education aims at developing good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. It enables intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, and specialized areas as per interest of the individual. It also focuses on developing character, ethical and Constitutional values, creativity, spirit of service and 21st century capabilities across a range of disciplines including sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, as well as professional, technical, and vocational subjects. Quality in Higher Education enables personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to the society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence.

Sub-Themes of Quality in the context of Arunachal Pradesh

1. Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education
2. Flexibility of Courses and Student Mobility: Multiple Entry and Exit.
3. Indian Knowledge System
4. Research , Innovation and Ranking
5. Capacity Building of Faculty

Details of Sub-Themes in the context of Arunachal Pradesh; Initiatives and Strategies for Implementation of NEP-2020:

Sub-Theme-1: Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education

State Specific Context and Challenges:

There are 45 UG colleges in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Out of these 45 colleges, there are 18 UG Government colleges offering B.A courses, out of which there are 3 UG colleges offering B.Sc. courses and 6 UG colleges offering B.Com courses for the students. The state has only one Central University (Rajiv Gandhi University) offering Ph.D, PG, UG, diploma and certificate courses for different subjects. There is one Government college (JNC) offering PG and UG degrees in few Arts subjects. The Government of Arunachal Pradesh has established

one Medical college, three Nursing colleges and one Law college. There are 10 private B.Ed colleges. All these colleges are affiliated to Rajiv Gandhi University. The aforementioned colleges don't possess any multidisciplinary and holistic education. Now, it is crucial and need of the hour to look into multidisciplinary and holistic education in the state in the light of NEP-2020 with a view to strengthen the students with necessary knowledge, skills, competencies, inclinations and desired outcome based behaviours as per the demands of society and industry.

Initiatives and Strategies for Implementation:

1. The Government has to take initiative to establish multi-disciplinary colleges in Arunachal Pradesh. All the multidisciplinary colleges in Arunachal Pradesh need to facilitate high-quality education. There will be flexibility in opting courses for students, in addition to specialization in a subject or subjects.

2. The flexible curricula of all UG colleges in Arunachal Pradesh shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of Environmental Education, Value-Based Education, Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Community Engagement and Services.

i) Environmental Education will include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living.

ii) Value-Based Education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values along with scientific temper and life-skills;

iii) Global Citizenship Education (GCED) will include contemporary global issues and challenges with a view to promote more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.

iv) Engaging and participating in community service programmes will be considered an integral part every major/minor course.

3. Pedagogy will have an increased emphasis on communication, discussion, debate, research, and opportunities for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking. Pedagogy need be added to all major courses such as English, Hindi, Psychology, Sociology, Education, Physical Education, Economics, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Zoology and other pure and applied sciences with multidisciplinary approach.

4. The undergraduate curricula will be formulated to give more space for flexibility to integrate the Humanities and Arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) under same umbrella. It will create positive learning outcomes including increased creativity and innovation, critical thinking and higher-order thinking capacities, problem-solving abilities, team work, communication skills, more in-depth learning and mastery of curricula across fields.

5. Students of all UG colleges in Arunachal Pradesh will be provided with opportunities for internships with artists, crafts persons, local industry, businesses etc., as well as research internships with faculty at their own or other UG colleges with a view to engage students for practical learning and improving their employability.

6. Workshops and seminars regarding implementation of multidisciplinary and holistic education are to be conducted at University and college level for smooth implementation by revising existing curriculum at UG and PG level.

Sub-Theme-2: Flexibility of courses and student Mobility: Multiple Entry and Exit:

State Specific Context and Challenges:

In the state of Arunachal Pradesh, there is no opportunity for the learners to study the creative combination of disciplines with flexibility. There is no space for flexible learning which provides possibility of learning from anywhere and anytime based on preference, convenience, or necessity. It is fact that flexible learning encourages lifelong learning. It is important to choose one's academic pathway leading to the award of certificate, diploma, and degree. It will reduce the drop-out rate as well as improve Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). It will offer creative combination of disciplines. The achievement of objectives of flexible learning depends on the principle of Multiple Entry and Exit system.

Initiatives and Strategies for Implementation:

1. The Multiple Entry and Exit option at UG and PG level would nullify rigid boundaries and create opportunity for students to choose and learn the subject(s) of their choice. In Arunachal Pradesh, It needs to provide platform for seamless student mobility, between or within degree-granting HEIs through a formal system of credit recognition, credit accumulation, credit transfers, and credit redemption.

2. In Arunachal Pradesh, Multiple Entry and Exit option needs to offer flexibility in curriculum and novel course options to students in addition to discipline specific specializations and it will enable credit accumulation and transfer along with provision of evaluation and validation of non-formal and informal learning for the award of a degree and encourage lifelong learning.

3. It will facilitate encashing credits earned when the learner resumes his/her programmes of study. Multiple Entry and Exit options at the undergraduate and Master's levels would facilitate credit accumulation through the facility created by the Academic Bank of Credits(ABC) scheme

Operationalization of Multiple Entry and Exit System

For 4-year UG Programme:

1st Year

Entry 1: The 1st Year entry requires Secondary School Leaving Certificate with Grade 12. The first year of the UG programme is open to those who have fulfilled admission regulations of the colleges affiliated to University.

Exit 1: A certificate will be awarded when a student exits at the end of 1st year (Level 5). The first year (two semesters) of the undergraduate programme requires 36-40 credits for certificate.

2nd Year

Entry 2: The 2nd Year entry requires a certificate obtained after completing the one year (two semesters) of the UG programme. The second year of UG programme is open to those who have fulfilled admission regulations of the colleges affiliated to University.

Exit 2: A Diploma shall be awarded when student exits at the end of the 2nd year (Level 6). A diploma requires 72-80 credits with the completion of four semesters.

3rd Year

Entry 3: The 3rd Year entry requires diploma obtained after completing two years (four semesters) of the UG programme. The third year of UG programme is open to those who have fulfilled admission regulations of the colleges affiliated to University.

Exit 3: If student exits after completion of three years, the relevant Bachelor's degree shall be awarded (Level 7). A Bachelor's degree re-

quires 108-120 credits with completion of six semesters.

4th Year

Entry 4: The 4th Year entry requires the relevant three-year Bachelor's degree. The fourth year of UG programme is open to those who have fulfilled admission regulations of the colleges affiliated to University.

Exit 4: On the successful completion of the fourth year (Level 8), a student shall be awarded a Bachelor's degree (Honours/Research). A Bachelor's degree (Honours/Research) requires a total of 144-160 with completion of eight semesters.

However, the 4-year degree shall be the preferred option since it allows the opportunity to experience the full range of multidisciplinary approach and focus on the chosen major and minors as per the choices of the student.

For PG Master's programme:

PG Master's programme and PG Diploma Programme are open to those who have fulfilled admission regulations of the colleges affiliated to University.

Entry 5:

- The entry for Two year (Four Semesters) PG Master's Programme (Level 9) requires three-year Bachelor's degree. The two year PG programme requires total of 72-80 credits

- The entry for One year (Two Semesters) PG Master's Programme (Level 9) requires four-year Bachelor's Degree (Honours/Research). The one year PG programme requires total of 36-40 credits.

- The entry for one-year (two-semester) Post-Graduate Diploma programme requires three-year Bachelor's degree. The Post-Graduate Diploma programme requires total of 36-40 credits

Exit 5:

For postgraduate programmes, there shall only be one exit point for those who join the two-year Master's programme, that is, at the end of the first year of the Master's programme. Students who exit after the first year shall be awarded the Post-Graduate Diploma.

There may be an integrated five-year Bachelor's/Master's programme with an option to exit at the end of the third year with a Bachelor's degree, with an entry to a Master's programme in another HEI

The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), a national-level facility will promote the flexibility of the curriculum framework and interdiscipli-

nary/multidisciplinary academic mobility of students across the HEIs in the country with appropriate “credit transfer” mechanism. The ABC is an academic service mechanism as a digital/virtual/online entity established and managed by Ministry of Education (MoE)/UGC to facilitate students to become its academic account holders. It shall be a mechanism to facilitate the students to choose their own learning path to attain a Degree/ Diploma/ Certificate, working on the principle of Multiple Entry and Exit. ABC shall enable the integration of multiple disciplines of higher learning leading to the desired learning outcomes including increased creativity, innovation, higher order thinking skills and critical analysis. ABC shall provide significant autonomy to the students by providing an extensive choice of courses for a programme of study. It will promote distributed and flexible teaching-learning.

Sub-Theme-3: Indian Knowledge System

State specific context and challenges

With the development of Science and Technology as well as Education, there is more emphasis on imparting professional skills and developing intellectual knowledge, most of the institutions are ignoring the indigenous practices and holistic development. India has a rich heritage of knowledge system that was practiced from our ancient times. Various forms of ancient practices such as yoga, meditation and spiritual healing practices exist in our ancient knowledge system. It also includes tribal knowledge, indigenous and traditional ways of learning various subjects like agriculture, medicine, art, architecture, culture, games, sports, polity, indigenous medical practices, forest management, organic farming, natural farming, handicrafts, textile and tribal literature. Arunachal Pradesh having more than 25 major tribes and more than 100 sub tribes is rich in indigenous culture, tradition, traditional knowledge and practices. Hence, the Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh has to rethink about indigenous practices and holistic development in the light of Indian Knowledge System.

Initiatives and strategies for implementation

1. Indigenous practices to be encouraged by the state for establishing tribe-based learning centers. Emphasis is to be given on the development of indigenous medical practices, forest management, organic farming, natural farming, handicrafts, horticulture, textile and tribal

literature.

2. Creation of repository of ancient practices focusing on holistic development in terms of physical, mental and emotional well beings is essential. Initiatives to be taken for the preservation of ancient practices by the Government of Arunachal Pradesh by establishing sound repository system.

3. Developing strategies for implementation with pilot studies in selected districts or major towns of the state is the need of the hour. District wise pilot project to be carried out for the development of indigenous knowledge based on various practices.

4. For wider outreach & dissemination of traditional knowledge of the state, policy level strategies to be incorporated. Strategies to be taken for the promotion of indigenous knowledge through conducting outreach programmes like Melas or fairs on traditional culture and practices in and outside of the state. Social media, print media and electronic media have to take vital role in promoting incredible practices of the state.

5. Planning for integrating sports in education to foster holistic development, physical and psychological well-being and enhancing cognitive abilities through establishing adequate sport departments in different colleges the state are needed. Even for the promotion of traditional games and sports experts from different fields to be recruited with handsome salary packages.

6. The state should focus on more experiential and holistic approach in connection with handicraft, textile, indigenous medical practices, architecture and astronomy etc. in Higher Education Institutions.

7. Introducing own culture related disciplines in various subjects such as Indology, Indian languages, AYUSH systems of Medicine, Yoga, Music, Indian languages, Comparative Literature, Creative Writing, Arts, Translation and Interpretation, Folklore, Folk Literature, Oral Literature, Philosophy, History and Culture in colleges should be the significant part of the state.

8. Statewide promotions for sports, dance, music, photography, fine arts, theatre activities, extension activities, literary activities, animation and designing etc. for up-skilling of the students at Higher Education level are to be done. Funds and special scholarships are to be sanctioned for conducting project works and participating in such areas respectively.

9. Offering a course on ethnic-based education including the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values is also significant in the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Sub-Theme-4: Research, Innovation and Ranking

State specific context and challenges

In Arunachal Pradesh, faculty members of UG colleges have been doing research activities to pursue Ph.D degree in respective discipline, but they don't have relevant research skills in respective disciplines due to lack of research facilities in colleges. The state has only one Central University which facilitates research programmes. There is no any public State University to strengthen the research skills in pursuing Ph,D degrees and doing reach projects. Knowledge creation through research and innovation is very vital for the academic progress, growth of economy and documentation of the traditional knowledge's for the upcoming generations. The research attitude among the teaching faculties of HEIs of the state should be developed by giving proper opportunities to them by creating research cell in every HEIs of the state. The newly established UG colleges are yet to get NAAC accreditation which is a big challenge for the state in terms of academic ranking and innovations. Hence, research, innovation and ranking of HEIs are the crucial elements in the state.

Initiatives and strategies for implementation:

1. The UG colleges of the state will be instructed to fulfill the criteria required for NAAC accreditation in phase wise and time bound manner and the curriculum will be framed to give maximum scope for the research and innovations by introducing project related courses in each discipline. The UG college teachers will be allowed to avail study leave to pursue research work or Ph.D degree.
2. It will be good initiative to establish research cell in the PG offering college like J.N college, Paasighat of Arunachal Pradesh to facilitate the desirable faculties and students to do research work in the area of their interest. This will promote research culture among the students and faculty.
3. Provision of research grant should be incorporated in the annual college budget. It is very vital for the growth of research culture in the institution. The outstanding research work done by the students

and faculty will be duly recognized by the institutions and financial assistance will be provided from the institution research grant for new proposal areas.

4. There will be a research board in every HEI of the state to promote and coordinate research activities. It will also guide and encourage interdisciplinary research work among the students and faculty. The same will act as a liaison between researchers and relevant branches of Government as well as industry, so that research scholars are constantly made aware of the most urgent national research issues, and so that policymakers are constantly made aware of the latest research breakthroughs.

5. It is needed to establish state universities. The functioning of state universities will encourage and facilitate many students and faculties to conduct research work in various new areas. The state is a biological hotspot of many plants and animals of global importance. The state universities will also guide the affiliating state colleges to build up best academic atmosphere as per the demand of the community living in the various parts of the state.

6. Every HEI of the state will be encouraged to develop their academic and infrastructural facilities as per the criteria mentioned in the NIRF Ranking. It will help to achieve better position in the NIRF Ranking in the future.

7. Teaching, Learning & Resources need to be provided in HEIs of the state. The faculty- student ratio will be maintained for maximum quality output. The financial resources will be mobilized by tie up with the various agencies.

8. The students and faculty members will be encouraged publishing more quality books and papers by following research and academic ethics for publication. The researcher will be encouraged to patent their quality finding and work to preserve for intellectual property and also to follow professional ethics. The reservation policy will be applied to attract students from outside states and foreign countries. The common entrance test will be conducted for various research oriented courses.

Sub-Theme-5: Capacity Building of Faculty:

State specific context and challenges

To improve skills and capacity building of the faculty, continuous

training and developmental programmes are indispensable. In this state, there is no HRD centre for carrying capacity building programmes for faculty of RGU in spite of having 45 colleges. As a result teaching community of HEIs of the state are putting effort to update their knowledge through attending Orientation Courses, Induction Programmes, Refresher courses, Short term courses and Leadership Development Training from the universities of the other states.

Initiatives and strategies

1. Initiative to be taken to establish at least one HRD Centre facilitate with modern infrastructure and innovative teacher training programme in the state for strengthening capacities of teaching communities of the state. Facilitating with innovative and technology enabled teaching and learning for building capacities of the teaching communities in HRD Centre is needed.
2. Initiatives are to be taken for the faculty of the state to organize virtual academy of teaching and learning, awareness programmes on innovative methods of teaching and learning. Disseminating best practices within and between colleges among the teachers in the state is highly needed.
3. Supporting teaching faculties to improve their instruction through regular training, sharing experiences by experts and senior teachers and engaging them in various academic activities are essential elements. Adequate funds are to be sanctioned for the collaborative extension activities within and between colleges.
4. Initiatives are to be taken to appoint and fulfill all sanctioned vacancies of teaching posts in various subjects. There should be scope for Continuous Professional Development in their respective areas among the teaching community of the state.
5. There should be a provision to sponsor international academic and research exposure to each faculty by devising the appropriate institutional mechanism facilitating foreign visits of faculty for academic, research and extension activities.
6. Proper recognition and awards are to be provided by the state to the faculty adopting and engaging innovative methods and tools for teaching in their respective fields.

Conclusion

Multidisciplinary and holistic education, flexibility of courses and student mobility through Multiple Entry and Exit options, Indian knowledge system, research, innovation and ranking as well as capacity building of faculty are the essential ingredients of Higher Education specifically in the context of Arunachal Pradesh. The higher order thinking skills, meta-cognition, problem solving abilities, research and innovation can be fostered and enhanced by integration of multidisciplinary and holistic education. In Arunachal Pradesh, Multiple Entry and Exit option needs to offer flexibility in curriculum and novel course options to students in addition to discipline specific specializations and it should enable credit accumulation and transfer along with provision of evaluation and validation of non-formal and informal learning for the award of a degree and encourage lifelong learning. Indigenous practices are to be encouraged by the state through tribe-based learning centers. Emphasis is to be given on the development of indigenous medical practices, forest management, organic farming, natural farming, handicrafts, horticulture, textile and tribal literature. There should be a research board in every HEI of the state to promote and coordinate research activities. At least one HRD Centre is needed to facilitate with innovative teacher training programme in the state for strengthening capacities of teaching communities of the state. The roadmap provided by NEP, 2020 would make highly significant contribution to the development of a sustainable and dynamic knowledge society.

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