



NEP 2020 IN MIZORAM COLLEGES: INFRASTRUCTURAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSIONS OF IMPLEMENTATION

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform higher education in India through curricular flexibility, digital integration, multidisciplinary learning, and enhanced student mobility. While Mizoram University and its affiliated colleges have formally adopted the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUGP), effective implementation continues to face infrastructural and administrative challenges. This study examines these dimensions in Mizoram colleges, drawing on data from NEP Coordinators, faculty members, and administrators. Findings reveal that although reforms such as value-added and skill enhancement courses have been introduced, persistent gaps in digital infrastructure, classroom and laboratory facilities, financial resources, and faculty availability constrain progress. On the administrative side, delays and lack of clarity regarding the four-year undergraduate programme, Integrated Professional Courses (IPC), and the Multiple Entry–Exit System (MEES) create uneven adoption across institutions. The study emphasizes the need for policy clarity, infrastructural investment, and broader faculty capacity-building to support effective implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram.

Keywords: *NEP 2020, Mizoram, higher education, infrastructure, administration, policy implementation*

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents India's most comprehensive reform in higher education in recent decades. By promoting flexibility, innovation, and inclusiveness, it envisions a learner-centric and multidisciplinary framework that strengthens both academic and employability skills (Ministry of Education, 2020). Key provisions include Value-Added Courses (VACs), Skill Enhancement Courses (SECs), Ability Enhancement Courses (AECs), Multidisciplinary exposure, the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), and the Multiple Entry–Exit System (MEES).

In Mizoram, higher education is coordinated primarily through Mizoram University, which issued directives in 2023 for the adoption of the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes (CCFUGP).

While these reforms signal an important step forward, Mizoram's geographic remoteness, resource constraints, and digital divide present unique challenges. General degree colleges in Mizoram have initiated implementation, but progress is uneven due to varying infrastructural capacity and differences in administrative preparedness.

Although several national-level studies have examined NEP 2020's prospects and challenges (Hau, 2023; Kaur, 2023), less attention has been given to state-level contexts, particularly in resource-constrained regions like Mizoram. This paper therefore focuses on the infrastructural and administrative dimensions of NEP 2020 implementation in Mizoram colleges. By analyzing the state's current readiness and identifying areas requiring strengthening, the study provides insights into how policy aspirations can be translated into practical outcomes within the region's unique context.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the infrastructural dimensions of NEP 2020 implementation in Mizoram colleges.
2. To examine the administrative aspects of NEP 2020 adoption.
3. To propose actionable strategies for strengthening infrastructural and administrative capacities to ensure effective and context-sensitive implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram.

Rationale of the Study

While several studies on NEP 2020 have explored its prospects and broad challenges at the national level (Hau, 2023; Kaur, 2023), fewer have examined the specific contextual realities of resource-constrained regions such as Mizoram. The state's higher education system, characterized by its remote location, dependence on limited government funding, and uneven digital readiness, provides a unique case for analyzing how infrastructural and administrative dimensions influence policy implementation.

The rationale for this study arises from two considerations. First, infrastructural factors—such as classrooms, laboratories, ICT facilities, and research capacity—play a decisive role in determining whether colleges can translate curricular reforms into practice. Without sufficient infrastructural support, provisions like skill enhancement courses, digital integration, and the four-year UG degree with research remain difficult to operationalize. Second, administrative dimensions, including clarity of guidelines on the Multiple Entry–Exit System, Integrated Professional Courses, and the four-year undergraduate programme, shape institutional preparedness and create variations in implementation across colleges.

By focusing on these dimensions, the study seeks to document the ground realities of NEP 2020 implementation in Mizoram and provide insights that can inform state and national policymakers. The rationale is therefore not only to highlight challenges but also to identify areas that require strengthening for smoother, context-sensitive realization of policy objectives.

Methodology

The study employs a descriptive survey method combined with thematic analysis of qualitative data. Primary data were collected through questionnaires administered to NEP Coordinators across colleges, supported by semi-structured interviews with officials from the Directorate of Higher & Technical Education and teaching faculties and administrators of General degree colleges of Mizoram. Secondary data included UGC guidelines, Mizoram University CCFUGP documents and related scholarly literature.

Findings and Discussion

1. Infrastructural Barriers

- **Digital Infrastructure Deficit:** While urban colleges have started integrating Learning Management Systems (LMS), rural institutions remain hindered by poor internet connectivity and inadequate ICT facilities. Virtual labs, e-content delivery, and online assessments are minimally available, leaving a digital divide between institutions.
- **Classroom and Laboratory Shortages:** Colleges often lack adequate classrooms, laboratories, and teaching–learning spaces to accommodate new courses introduced under NEP 2020. Institutions offering science and professional streams face particular challenges in upgrading laboratories to meet revised curricular requirements.
- **Four-Year UG Degree (Honours with Research):** According to UGC’s CCFUGP guidelines, departments offering this degree must have sufficient infrastructure, access to journals, research laboratories, and at least two permanent faculties recognized as Ph.D. supervisors. Most Mizoram colleges fall short of these requirements, making the rollout of the four-year honours with research degree unfeasible at present.
- **Skill Enhancement Courses (SECs):** While SECs have been introduced, their scope is limited by insufficient funding for tools, equipment, and qualified trainers. As a result, course offerings are inconsistent across colleges, restricting student access to diverse skill development opportunities.

2. Administrative Barriers

- **Lack of Policy Clarity:** Mizoram University has issued broad guidelines for NEP 2020 adoption, but detailed instructions on key provisions remain unclear. Colleges report uncertainty regarding the introduction of the four-year undergraduate programme, the structure of Integrated Professional Courses (IPC), and the operationalization of multidisciplinary options.
- **Multiple Entry–Exit System (MEES):** Though formally recognized, MEES remains largely theoretical. Colleges lack clarity on credit transfer mechanisms, re-entry procedures, and coordination between institutions. This ambiguity has delayed practical adoption.
- **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):** Implementation is still in the early stages, with technical and regulatory barriers. The Aadhaar-linked requirement for ABC ID excludes some students, including refugees from Myanmar, as well as those with religious objections to Aadhaar registration.
- **Administrative Delays:** Frequent delays in receiving timely guidelines from regulatory bodies hinder colleges’ preparedness. Institutional leaders noted that rumors often precede official directives, creating uncertainty around whether reforms such as the four-year UG programme will be uniformly implemented.
- **Awareness and Capacity Building:** Although NEP 2020 implementation cells have been established in all colleges and Mizoram University regularly organizes meetings and workshops for NEP Coordinators, awareness of the policy remains largely concentrated within this small group. Many faculty members outside the coordinator role are unfamiliar with the provisions of NEP 2020, limiting effective integration into classroom teaching and departmental planning. This gap in faculty-wide understanding contributes to uneven implementation and slows the transition toward a fully NEP-compliant academic environment.

Way Forward: Actionable Strategies

To address the infrastructural and administrative barriers identified, the following strategies are proposed for strengthening the implementation of NEP 2020 in Mizoram colleges:

1. Strengthening Digital Infrastructure

- Expand broadband and ICT facilities in rural and semi-urban colleges through state–central collaboration.
- Establish Learning Management Systems (LMS) and virtual laboratories to ensure equitable access to digital learning.

2. Upgrading Physical Infrastructure

- Allocate targeted funding for classrooms, laboratories, and libraries to accommodate the new curricular requirements.
- Prioritize support for colleges aiming to introduce the Four-Year UG (Honours with Research) programme, ensuring access to journals, research labs, and qualified supervisors.

3. Ensuring Policy Clarity and Timely Guidelines

- Mizoram University and UGC should issue clear operational frameworks for provisions such as the Multiple Entry–Exit System (MEES), Integrated Professional Courses (IPC), and the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).
- Create user-friendly handbooks or digital portals to standardize implementation across all colleges.

4. Expanding Faculty Awareness and Capacity

- Move beyond training only NEP Coordinators by extending regular orientation programmes to all faculty members.
- Organize department-level discussions and refresher workshops so that teachers across disciplines are familiar with NEP 2020 provisions, thereby ensuring consistent classroom-level implementation.

5. Mobilizing Financial Support

- Leverage schemes such as RUSA, UGC grants, and state funding to support infrastructure upgrades, technology procurement, and faculty development.
- Explore partnerships with NGOs, ed-tech companies, and private institutions for resource-sharing and collaborative capacity-building.

By addressing these barriers through infrastructure development, policy clarity, broader faculty engagement, and sustainable financial support, Mizoram's higher education institutions can align more effectively with the vision of NEP 2020 and ensure equitable, future-ready learning opportunities for students

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that while Mizoram colleges have taken steps toward implementing NEP 2020, infrastructural and administrative dimensions continue to shape the pace and effectiveness of reform. Infrastructural limitations—including uneven digital readiness, inadequate classrooms, and insufficient research facilities—pose significant constraints on curricular innovation. At the same time, administrative delays and ambiguities regarding provisions such as the four-year degree, Integrated Professional Courses, and the Multiple Entry–Exit System create uncertainty for both institutions and students.

To strengthen NEP 2020 implementation in Mizoram, targeted interventions are required. These include expanding digital and physical infrastructure through central and state funding, issuing clearer and timelier

policy guidelines, and extending awareness and training beyond NEP Coordinators to all faculty members. By addressing these areas, Mizoram's higher education institutions can align more effectively with the national vision of NEP 2020 while ensuring that reforms are implemented in a context-sensitive and equitable manner.

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