An Analysis Of The Impact Of National Education Policy 2020 On Assam's Single-Stream Colleges

Dr. Bulbuli Boruah[1*]

[1*]Principal, H.P.B. Girls' College, Golaghat, Assam

Corresponding Author: Dr. Bulbuli Boruah
*Principal, H.P.B. Girls' College, Golaghat, Assam

Abstract:
Modernizing the country's educational system was the aim of the New Education Policy (NEP), a comprehensive reform initiative introduced by the Indian government. The North East is known for its challenging geography, incredibly diversified population, and historically underdeveloped educational system. The NEP highlights several significant variables that could substantially impact higher education in the North East. By emphasizing skill-based education, the NEP also aims to increase the employability of graduates. This is especially crucial in the Northeast since it can aid in addressing the unique job problems of the area and encourage entrepreneurship. The NEP strongly emphasizes skill-based education to improve graduates' employability. This can be especially important in the North East when tackling the region's job difficulties and promoting entrepreneurship. This study aims to investigate how the New Education Policy might affect higher education in India's northeastern area.

This study examines the policy's central tenets and goals in light of the unique circumstances of the Northeast to determine how they may affect student involvement, access to high-quality education, employability, and regional development.

The global education development plan aims to "offer inclusive and equitable quality education and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for everyone" by 2030, as per Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which India endorsed in 2015. The educational system must be restructured to support and foster learning to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's primary aims and goals (SDGs).

Since the National Policy on Education 2020 was introduced, multiple discussions have aimed at developing strategies for implementing the policy's directives. With an emphasis on Assam, this article tried to explore the advantages and disadvantages of the New Education Policy.

Keywords: Effects, National Education Policy 2020, Assam, Single-Stream Colleges

Introduction:

The development of human potential is greatly aided by education. It is essential to building a fair and just society. The cornerstone of advancing a nation's interest is education. The secret to India's continuous rise and leadership in the world in economic expansion, social justice and equality, science, national integration, and cultural preservation is to ensure that everyone has access to high-quality education. Universal access to high-quality education is the best path forward for utilizing and developing our nation's many skills and resources to benefit everyone, society, country, and planet. Over the next ten years, India will have the world's largest youth population; our nation's future will depend on our capacity to offer them opportunities for a top-notch education.

Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 Goal for Sustainable Development, which India adopted in 2015, reflects the global goal for education development and aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. Achieving such a high standard will necessitate reorganizing the educational system to promote and support learning to fulfill the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's essential targets and goals (SDGs).

The landscape of information is changing quickly across the world. Machines may replace many unskilled jobs globally due to dramatic scientific and technological advancements, including big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence. Consequently, there will be an increasing demand for a skilled workforce, particularly in mathematics, computer science, and data science, as well as multidisciplinary skills across the social sciences, humanities, and sciences. The world's energy, water, food, and sanitation needs will change significantly due to climate change, rising pollution, and the depletion of natural resources. This will demand new skilled labour, especially in biology, chemistry, physics, agriculture, climate science, and social science. The increasing frequency of epidemics and pandemics will necessitate cooperative research in managing infectious diseases and creating vaccines. The ensuing societal challenges will also increase the demand for multidisciplinary learning. As India progresses toward being a developed nation and one of the three most significant economies in the world, there will be an increasing demand for humanities and the arts.

The gap between the existing learning outcomes and what is necessary must be closed through significant reforms that bring the most excellent quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early childhood care and education to higher education. By 2040, India's education system must be the best in the world, providing all students, regardless of social or economic background, with fair access to the best possible education.

The first education policy of the twenty-first century, National Education Policy 2020, attempts to address the numerous and increasingly pressing needs of our nation's development. To develop a new system that is in line with the ambitious aims of education in the twenty-first century, including SDG4, while preserving and enhancing Indian customs and value systems, this policy suggests revising and overhauling every area of the educational system, including its regulation and governance. The National Education Policy strongly focuses on helping people reach their full creative potential. It is founded on the idea that education has to foster not just the 'higher-order' cognitive skills like critical thinking and problem-solving but also the social, ethical, and emotional skills and dispositions. These skills include the fundamental skills of literacy and numeracy.

Education aims to produce decent people with strong moral principles and values, who can think and act rationally, who are brave and resilient, who have compassion and empathy, scientific temper, and creative creativity. Its goal is to create people who are involved, clever, and contribute to making the pluralistic, inclusive, and egalitarian society that our constitution envisions. An excellent educational institution offers a wide range of learning experiences, fosters a safe and stimulating learning environment, provides an excellent physical infrastructure and appropriate learning resources for all students, and makes every student feel welcome and cared for. Every educational institution should aim to develop these attributes. However, concurrently, there needs to be smooth coordination and integration between institutions and all academic levels.

By offering high-quality education to everyone and establishing India as a global knowledge superpower, this National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that directly contributes to transforming India, or Bharat, into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society in a sustainable manner.

"In order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among and silos between different areas of learning, NEP emphasizes that there will be no hard separation between arts and sciences, between curricular and extracurricular activities, between vocational and academic stream, etc." [1] To ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge, multidisciplinarity and holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports is another fundamental principle and policy for a multidisciplinary world. [2]

Review of Related Literature:
1. Choudhury and P. Baruah (2021), Reducing Regional Disparities Examining NEP Implementation in Higher Education in Assam. This study looks at the implementation of the NEP in the higher education system of the Northeastern state of Assam. The policy's effects on inclusion, quality, and accessibility in Assamese higher education institutions are examined by the writers. The study sheds light on the potential and difficulties encountered when implementing policies.
2. Mahanta, S., and Deb, S. (2022), NEP and Skill Development: An Analysis of Higher Education in Meghalaya. This study investigates the impact of the NEP on skill development programs in higher education institutions with a particular focus on Mizoram. Based on Mizoram's distinct socioeconomic background, the study evaluates how well the policy prepares students for employment and entrepreneurship.
3. Sharma, N., and R. K. Singh (2023), Digital Transformation in Nagaland: The Effect of NEP on Accessibility to Higher Education. The impact of the NEP on digital transformation in Nagaland's higher education sector is examined in this article. This study examines how technology can improve accessibility and education delivery in areas with limited infrastructure and remote locations.
4. Phukan, B., and Das, S. (2022), promote Multidisciplinarity: NEP's Role in Shaping Higher Education in Sikkim. This study explores the NEP's emphasis on multidisciplinary education and its consequences for higher education in the state, with a particular focus on Sikkim. The study evaluates how well interdisciplinary approaches may handle local problems and promotes university creativity.
5. Nath, K., and Saikia, P. (2021), The Effect of NEP on Faculty Development in Higher Education in Manipur. The impact of the NEP on efforts to strengthen faculty and increase capacity in Manipur's higher education system is investigated in their paper.
6. Bhatia, A., and Sharma, M. (2022), give emphasis on the NEP Implementation Challenges and Opportunities in Indian Higher Education. The implementation of NEPs in Indian higher education institutions is examined in this study article, along with its prospects and limitations. The study draws attention to institutional obstacles, faculty worries, and infrastructure constraints that could interfere with the effective implementation of policies.
7. Kumar, A., and R. Gupta (2023), Effects of NEP on Research and Faculty Development in Indian Universities. The influence of the NEP on faculty development and research activities in Indian institutions is assessed in this study. The writers examine the policy's effects on faculty participation in research initiatives, funding opportunities, and research infrastructure.
8. D. Sharma and S. Chatterjee (2023), NEP and Diversity in Indian Postsecondary Education. The importance of the NEP in advancing inclusion in Indian higher education is examined in this essay. The authors read the policy's efforts to improve underprivileged communities' access to education by addressing social and economic imbalances.

Statement of the Research Problem:

Unveiled in 2020, the Government of India's New Education Policy (NEP) aims to promote inclusivity, multi-disciplinarily, and technological integration to revolutionize the country's educational system, particularly in higher education.[4]

Even with the extensive goals of the NEP to transform education, there is still considerable cause for concern and interest over how the program would affect higher education in Assam and Northeastern India. The Northeast, comprising eight states with disparate cultural histories and topographical challenges, has long been plagued by infrastructure constraints and educational inequity.

1. What challenges and chances does it provide to improve quality, employability, accessibility, and regional development?
2. To what extent has adopting the New Education Policy changed the higher education scene in Northeast India?

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the study are-
     1. An effort has been made to investigate how NEP 2020's Higher Education system affects Assamese single-stream colleges.
     2. It also makes an effort to identify the issues and offers solutions to address them.

Justification of the Study:

Many stakeholders, politicians, educational institutions, and society at prominent emphasize the study of how the New Education Policy (NEP) has affected higher education in Assam and Northeast India. The study's significance stems from its capacity to offer insightful information and support decision-making procedures.

Analyzing how the NEP has been implemented in the Northeast helps decision-makers determine how well the policy has worked to solve the region's educational problems. It thoroughly examines how the policy affects many facets of higher education, highlighting areas that have worked well and those that still need improvement.

The study adds to the conversation on regional development by analyzing how the NEP affects higher education in Assam and Northeast India. It clarifies how providing students with pertinent knowledge and skills can assist in closing the achievement gap and promote long-term development in the area.

The study delves into the significance of the NEP in advancing inclusion within higher education. It looks at how well the policy has worked to give marginalized populations more access to high-quality education, promote social fairness, and give disadvantaged pupils educational opportunities.

Research Methodology:

The methodology used in this study is descriptive. Various websites, including those maintained by the Indian and Assam government and other publications like magazines and journals, provided the crucial secondary data. After this, the study and review of this data led to the deductions and findings.

Assam and its Revolutionary Changes were made Possible Via NEP-2020:

Assam has a 72.19 per cent literacy rate, with men making up 78.81 per cent and women 67.27 per cent, according to the 2011 Indian census. The rate of literacy is lower than the 74.04 per cent national average. Assam has just one women's university and only 10.8% private unaided institutions, according to the All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE). Additionally, Assam has the highest proportion of male employees (81%) and female employees (19%) among all states.

According to a recent National Statistical Office poll, Assam ranks fifth in the nation among states with a literacy rate of 85.9%. In Assam, the gender gap in literacy is 8.9 percentage points, with 81.2 per cent of women and 90.1 per cent of males being literate. Students have traditionally depended on "permanent" government jobs, but this is expected to change with the successful implementation of NEP-2020. Education is still dominated by traditional academic fields, particularly at the college and university level. Domain-specific degrees are only helpful for gaining entry into a competitive job; they need more connection to the national or international industry.

The Assam government decided to change the curriculum from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4. Preschool for five years and three classes (ages three, four, and five) will be under the Directorate of Elementary Education; classes (ages six, seven, and eight) and classes (ages nine, ten, eleven, and twelve) will be under the Directorate of Education. To execute the Education Policy (NEP) in the state by 2023, Assam Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma and his cabinet authorized the new school system in 2020.

The Assam Secondary Education Department of the Government has decided to combine schools on the same campus or close by to offer a standard teacher-student ratio, the best possible personnel services, lower administrative costs, and additional logistical assistance for schools. With 836 secondary schools approved thus far, 701 ME, 58 MV, 324 LP, and 2 JBS schools are included. It has given over 13 lakh students in Classes IX through XII 1.34 crore free textbooks.

Admission and tuition expenses for 1,16,191 students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds have been waived. Additionally, the government introduced the Abhinandan Education Loan Subsidy (AELS) program last year. The state government has decided to remove the language barrier from the APSC's Civil Services exam. Three conditions must be satisfied for the English and Assamese papers to be dropped:

▪ The applicant must dwell in Assam.

- Their name must appear on the Assam employment exchange.
- The applicant must speak Assamese or other officially recognized Assamese languages fluently.

The Assam government implemented the innovative class idea in 103 classrooms across 84 institutions to provide high-quality secondary education. Since they won't waste time drawing or making diagrams on the board, teachers will have more time to interact with their students. When children have the "Cognitive Learning Process," they can easily understand and recall.

Higher Education System Under NEP 2020
To create India as envisioned in its constitution a democratic, just, socially conscious, cultured, and compassionate society respecting liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all higher education is crucial to human and societal wellness. The nation's economic growth and the provision of sustainable livelihoods are greatly aided by higher education. Higher education is anticipated to be a goal for more and younger Indians as the country transitions to a knowledge economy and society. Quality higher education must strive to create good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals in light of the demands of the twenty-first century. In addition to developing character, ethical and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temper, 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, it must allow a student to study one or more specialized areas of interest at a deep level. A top-notch university education should facilitate constructive public participation, individual success and enlightenment, and positive societal contributions. It must empower students to become economically independent and prepare them for lives and careers that are more meaningful and fulfilling.

1. It offers a four-year undergraduate program with several exit possibilities that lead to a multidisciplinary bachelor's degree. These will be implemented in the following ways, covering professional and vocational domains.
2. A diploma following a year of study;
3. a certificate following two years of study;
4. a bachelor's degree following the conclusion of a three-year program
5. To oversee higher education, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) shall be established. Increasing the gross enrollment ratio will be the council's objective.

There will be four verticals in the HECI:
- With the exception of medical and legal education, higher education is governed by the National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC).
- A "meta-accrediting body" is the National Accreditation Council (NAC).
- The Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) provides money to colleges and universities. This will replace the National Council for Teacher Education, the All India Council for Technical Education, and the University Grants Commission.
- The General Education Council (GEC) will define the anticipated learning objectives as "graduate attributes." The National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) will also be formulated by it. The GEC will oversee the National Council for Teacher Education as a professional standard-setting body (PSSB).[3]

Major Findings of the Study:
According to the study, the single-stream institutions in Assam may need some help due to the implementation of NEP 2020.

Curriculum Reform: Reforming the curriculum is essential, as NEP 2020 highlights the need for a flexible, multidisciplinary curriculum that prepares pupils for the twenty-first century. Colleges that offer more than one stream may find it difficult to change their curricula to reflect the NEP's diverse approach.

Infrastructure and Resource Constraints: NEP 2020 advocates using digital resources and technology in the classroom. Colleges that only provide one stream need help obtaining the tools, libraries, and other required facilities.

Teacher Training: NEP 2020 strongly emphasises the necessity of teachers' ongoing professional development. Colleges offering only one instruction stream need more faculty members with multidisciplinary experience. Training and programs for faculty development would be required in large quantities.

Student Diversity: NEP 2020 strongly focuses on the necessity of inclusive education and meeting students' varied needs. Colleges that only provide one stream of study may find it challenging to meet the diverse demands of their students and guarantee an inclusive and accessible educational environment.

Funding: NEP 2020 suggests that the public allocate more funds to the education sector. Furthermore, NEP 2020 emphasises vocational courses and traditional classes, which would need substantial funding. It could be difficult for universities with multiple streams to get enough money to implement the policy's changes. Single-stream colleges must put in much work and money to implement the NEP. The obstacles of the multidisciplinary approach and the resources

of the single-stream colleges would be overcome, according to the colleges, if they were granted autonomous status. It is anticipated that NEP 2020 will significantly raise the standard and pertinence of education in India.

Recommendations and Future Perspectives:

In an article, Hiranya K. Nath states that the academic community in Assam has to have an open mind and a forward-thinking outlook. Higher education will be in high demand in both explored and unknown disciplines. This means bringing in talent from outside the state, connecting with the brightest brains on the planet, and developing talent already present. He stresses that creating Assamese higher education institutions should go beyond filling local requirements. Instead, it should accommodate growing demand transcending national, regional, and even state boundaries. It is widely known that inventions and ideas are essential to the growth of the civilization in which we currently live. The focus of the global economy is shifting toward services. At the apex of the service hierarchy are information services.

The new social and economic order will demand a significant investment in higher education to fulfil its challenges. The workforce will constantly be retooling in the twenty-first century, which will define the nature of the employment market.

Many children, particularly in the less affluent areas, need help to attend school. Kids labour in demanding environments. They are unable to pay for full-time schooling. These young people need to value non-formal education. Thus, a lot of work is required. A comprehensive approach is also needed here, in conjunction with the state education institutes.

Vocational courses must be strongly tied to the industries and natural resources present, both in the state and the communities where the colleges or schools are situated. Technology and science must be prioritized in vocationalization. The State of Assam should guarantee that a student leaning towards a particular profession would find employment following the conclusion of their education; in a place like Assam, there are now very few colleges or universities offering vocational programs.

The state of Assam has a great deal of potential. The state government may create vocational programs focusing on tourism, agriculture, and tea. Courses in computer technology, retail management, and other related fields may also be added to provide a route for practical and applicable education. Vocational courses guarantee chances for both vertical and horizontal mobility for the students who enroll in them.

The necessity of employing an integrated strategy to make the primary school the most desirable place in the hamlet was emphasized by the former minister of education, Brindaban Goswami. It is possible to build a compound around the elementary school. The school complex would include:

- An adult education centre.
- A non-formal and continuing education centre.
- A library.
- A hobby centre.

Conclusion:

The research on how the New Education Policy (NEP) has affected higher education in Assam clarifies the opportunities and revolutionary shifts the policy offers. With its focus on diversity, interdisciplinary learning, technological integration, and skill development, the NEP represents a significant advancement in resolving the inequalities and difficulties in education in Assam.

The results show that the NEP can potentially improve the quality and accessibility of the region's higher education system. The policy aims to ensure that students from varied backgrounds have equal chances for study and employment by bridging the gap between mainstream education and underprivileged groups through the promotion of inclusive education.

The emphasis on regional balance in educational institutions creates opportunities for founding new universities and colleges, increasing access to higher education in Assam. Additionally, students are encouraged to investigate a variety of subjects and participate in cutting-edge research because of the NEP's emphasis on multidisciplinarity, research, and innovation. Through developing creativity and problem-solving abilities, this method can enable students to make unique contributions to the region's growth.

According to the New Education Policy, the North East area of India's higher education system could radically transform. The NEP has the potential to cultivate a more progressive and inclusive educational ecosystem in Assam by endorsing flexibility, technological integration, skill-based education, and ease of access to high-quality institutions. It will be essential to overcome obstacles and take advantage of possibilities if the policy is to have its full effect and benefit all societal classes in the area.

References:

1. National Education Policy 2020, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
2. Dibrugarh University Regulation for the Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) IN Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), 2023.
3. NEP-UGCF-2022-Guidelines.
4. Government of India.(2020). New Education Policy, 2020.