

Value Added Courses in the Colleges of Nagaland: An Exploratory StudyLongchanenla¹¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, Nagaland UniversityMero, Neizo-ü²²Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Nagaland University**Abstract**

Value added courses are additional educational programs or modules that are designed to complement the core curriculum of a degree program. These courses aim to provide students with extra skills, knowledge, and experiences that go beyond the traditional academic requirements. Value added courses are intended to enhance students' overall learning experience, make them more competitive in the job market and better prepare them for the challenges of the professional world. These skill sets beyond the degree that one possesses will make an individual more desirable to secure a job and at the same time sustain the job and face challenges along the way and therefore considering this need, the NEP 2020 made a visionary step to introduce. The significance of such skills is slowly sprouting in the society and with the changing job market where the shift is towards industry and entrepreneurship and not only inclined towards white collar jobs, acquiring certain skill set is the call of the hour. Besides, the preferences of such skills in the career perspective, we cannot deny the significance of the skills and experience that make individuals good human beings capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion, empathy, resilience, courage with sound ethical values as envisaged by National Education Policy 2020 and therefore giving priority towards such courses should be of utmost importance. This paper highlights the importance of Value-Added Courses in the higher educational institutions and examines the status of Value-added Courses in the colleges of Nagaland and also identifies challenges faced by the teachers using the interview method on 25 college teachers involved in imparting the course papers. Findings with regard to challenges revealed, there is a lack of clarity in the allocation of value-added courses to different departments, resulting in confusion, also availability of relevant textbooks of the value-added course papers and so on. Collaboration among teachers and feedback mechanisms to gather input from students were recommended as suggestive measures for further improvement

Keywords: Value Added Courses, National Education Policy 2020, Skills, Holistic Development, Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary

1.0 Introduction

Value added courses are additional educational programs or courses that are designed to complement the regular academic curriculum and provide students with extra skills, knowledge, and experiences. These courses are aimed at enhancing the overall learning experience of students and equipping them with practical skills that can be beneficial in their academic and professional pursuits. Value added courses may cover a wide range of subjects and areas, including vocational skills, technical training, soft skills development, language proficiency, leadership training, entrepreneurship skills, and more. These courses are often hands-on and practical in nature, allowing students to apply their learning in real-world scenarios.

In the words of M Jagadesh Kumar, chairman of UGC, “The new four-year curriculum framework provides for holistic education by allowing students to experience courses from multiple discipline as envisaged in the NEP 2020”.

The conception of the Value-Added Courses is ideally drawn from the Indian values which encompasses a rich tapestry of cultural, ethical, and philosophical principles that have been passed down through generations and are deeply rooted in the country's history and traditions. These values play a significant role in shaping the social fabric of Indian society and guiding individuals in their personal and professional lives. These values are not only integral to Indian culture but also holds universal significance, promoting virtues such as compassion, integrity, empathy, and social responsibility. Incorporating Indian values in education can help nurture well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also morally upright and socially responsible.

1.1 National Education Policy 2020 And Value-Added Course

The National Education Policy 2020 has taken a visionary step towards the introduction of Value-Added Courses in the curriculum of higher education institutions. Specific sets of skills and values across domains will be identified for integration and incorporation at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education ([National Education Policy 2020, p. 12](#)). By incorporating practical experiences into the curriculum, Value Added Courses aim to provide students with real world

skills and experiences that go beyond traditional theoretical education, fostering holistic development and character building in alignment with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. These initiatives aim to provide students with practical skills and knowledge that complement their academic learning, preparing them for wide range of career opportunities and enhancing their overall educational experiences.

1.2 Importance of Value-Added Courses in The Higher Education Institutions

The introduction of Value-Added Courses in the higher education institutes are multifaceted and crucial for the holistic development of students. Here are some key points highlighting the importance of Value-Added Courses:

1. **Enhanced Skill Development:** Value added courses provide students with opportunities to develop additional skills and competencies beyond their core academic curriculum. These skills can include technical expertise, soft skills, industry-specific knowledge, and practical experience, making students more well-rounded and marketable to potential employers.
 2. **Holistic Learning:** By offering a diverse range of value-added courses, educational institutions promote holistic learning experiences that go beyond traditional academic boundaries. These courses encourage students to explore interdisciplinary subjects, develop critical thinking abilities, and gain a broader understanding of various aspects of their field of study.
 3. **Personal Growth:** Value added courses often focus on personal development areas such as leadership, communication, and teamwork. These courses help students enhance their interpersonal skills, self-confidence, and adaptability, fostering personal growth and resilience in the face of challenges.
 4. **Flexibility and Customization:** Value added courses offer students the flexibility to tailor their educational experience according to their interests, career goals, and learning preferences. This customization allows students to explore diverse subjects, pursue minors or specializations, and create a well-rounded academic profile that reflects their individual strengths and aspirations.
- From the above points it is evident that value added courses play a vital role in enriching students' educational journey, preparing them for the complexities of the modern workforce, and empowering them to succeed in this fast-changing world.

1.3 Overview of Value-Added Courses in The Colleges of Nagaland

The introduction of Value-Added Courses in the colleges of Nagaland has started not long ago. Colleges affiliated to Nagaland University follow the guidelines laid down by the university. Currently, there are a total of 69 colleges affiliated to Nagaland University out of which 58 general colleges are offering value added courses. In order to allow academic flexibility to the students to study the subjects/courses of their choice and for their mobility to different institutions, Nagaland University focus on courses which are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in nature, and accordingly Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes are being introduced at the undergraduate level in the colleges of Nagaland. As a result, the colleges have also started offering Value Added Courses from the academic session 2024. The introduction of Value-Added Courses being at the infancy stage, it is confronted with a lot of challenges on the part of the teachers and the institutions at large. A lot is still to be known of the merits of the course. The proposed guidelines of the university incorporate the guidelines of the National Education Policy 2020 which lays emphasis on imparting holistic and multidisciplinary education to students. The following table shows the various Value-Added Course proposed by Nagaland University as part of FYUGP programme for the affiliated colleges of the state.

Table1: Value Added Courses in the colleges affiliated to Nagaland university

Name of the course	Total Credit
Soft Skills	3
National Cadet Corps	3
National Service Scheme	3
Basic Computer Application	3
Financial literacy	3
Computer application	3
Leadership	3
Fundamentals of Computing	3
Mass Communication and Broadcasting	3
Advertisement and Media	3
Business Ethics	3
India's Diversity & Business	3

Comprehensive sexual health education	2
Event Management	2
Soft Skills Development	2
Business & Corporate Communication	2
Intellectual Property Rights	2
Work Ethics	2

Source: Nagaland University; NEP FYUGP syllabus

The above table shows the various Value Added Course papers offered in the colleges affiliated to Nagaland University. These courses are offered in the second and fourth semesters. The colleges can opt for any papers from the various courses mentioned above as per the interest of the colleges.

1.4 Objective of The Study:

The study comprises of the following objectives;

1. To find out the status of Value-Added courses offered in the colleges of Nagaland.
2. To find out the challenges faced by teachers in imparting the Value-Added courses.
3. To put forth suggestive measures to enhance the implementation of Value-Added courses.

1.5 Methodology

The present study is exploratory in nature and hence the investigators have adopted the exploratory research method. A total of 25 teachers have been selected using purposive sampling method from 20 colleges in Nagaland. The data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through interview method from those teachers who were engaged in imparting Value-Added Courses in the colleges and secondary data were collected from books, journals, articles, policy documents, annual reports, newspaper articles, magazines etc.

1.6 Findings

The findings of the study are presented in two sections;

1.6.1 Findings relating to the status of Value-Added courses in the colleges of Nagaland are;

1. The study revealed that the Value-Added Courses were introduced in all the general colleges affiliated to Nagaland University.

2. Study also found out that Value Added Courses were offered only in the second and fourth semesters of the undergraduate programmes. There was a total of 18 different value-added courses prescribed by the university.
3. The total credit points of the Value-Added Course papers are of 50 marks.
4. The study revealed that out of the 18 value added course papers prescribed by the university the most common papers offered by the colleges were soft skill development, National Service Scheme, financial literacy, mass communication and broadcasting, comprehensive sexual health education.
5. The study also found that some colleges invite guest faculties to teach some of the Value-Added course papers.
6. The study further revealed that the colleges were given the autonomy to opt for papers in accordance to the availability of resources and interest of the colleges.

1.6.2 Findings relating to the challenges faced by teachers;

The challenges faced by the teachers with regard to value added courses are as follows:

1. The study revealed that majority of the teachers were of the opinion that proper orientation and training are necessary for value added course papers like National Service Scheme (NSS). Moreover, at the time of its initial introduction, there were no proper guidelines, manuals, or training materials available which made it very challenging for the teachers to conduct the classes and activities.
2. The study revealed that some departments have impractical teacher-pupil ratios due to the mismatch in course allocation and modalities for value added courses. As a result, the departments face challenges of being overloaded or underloaded with value-added courses, impacting the teaching-learning experience for students.
3. The present study found out that there is a lack of clarity in the allocation of value-added courses to different departments, resulting in confusion, overlapping, and repetition in course offerings. This lack of clear guidelines hinders the smooth implementation of value-added courses.
4. Study also found that teachers faced challenges while teaching specific value-added course such as sex education because students had no prior understanding of the paper because it was not a subject they were taught in school.

5. The study revealed that teachers face difficulty in finding relevant textbooks for reference which pose a challenge for teachers in preparing course materials.
6. A major challenge with the Value-Added Course papers that have been provided were found to be theoretical in nature impacting the engagement and learning outcomes of students.
7. As the nature of the course is such that any stream can opt for it, teachers find it difficult to teach those students who do not have prior knowledge of the paper. For instance, paper like financial literacy which is a commerce paper taken by arts students.
8. The teachers also revealed that most students have least interest towards value added courses because these papers carry less credits affecting the motivation and engagement levels.

1.7 Suggestions and Recommendations

Basing on the findings of the present study, it is imperative to suggest the following recommendations for overall improvement of value-added courses in the colleges of Nagaland:

1. Relevant training programmes/ sessions should be organized for the teachers so as to equip them with the required knowledge to facilitate smooth dissemination of the assigned value-added course paper and thereby making it possible to organize relevant activities for the students.
2. There should be clear cut guidelines on the part of the university in allotting papers to the departments so as to avoid confusion and enable teachers to dwell into papers they are well versed.
3. There is a need to integrate value added courses seamlessly into the existing academic curriculum to ensure that students have access to a diverse range of supplementary learning opportunities that complement their core papers.
4. In relation to the various Value-Added courses, relevant reading materials and books should be made available in the institutional libraries.
5. There is a need to balance theoretical knowledge along with practical skills to enhance students' overall learning experience. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensure the effective implementation of value-added courses and provide students with a well-rounded educational experience that enhances their skills and knowledge. Exposure, real life situations, mock interviews are some exercises that can be conducted to enhance learning outcomes.

6. Collaboration among teachers of different disciplines can be encouraged in order to leverage their diverse expertise and knowledge. This can create opportunities for teachers to share best practices, resources and insights with colleagues.
7. The government/university should take initiatives in offering skill development training sessions or certification courses alongside Value Added Course papers to enhance students' practical skills that are in demand in the job market.
8. There is a need to incorporate experiential learning components such as internships, fieldwork, case studies, project works, into value added courses to provide students with real-world experiences and practical skills that are essential for success in their chosen fields.
9. The industry and institutes can collaborate to ensure that students receive practical, hands-on training that prepares them for the demands of the professional world.
10. The stakeholders of higher education should provide incentives and support to teachers for them to pursue further training in specific areas (Value added course) to enhance their expertise in guiding the students better and also encouraging lifelong learning and their professional growth.
11. Feedback mechanisms can be established to gather input from students, teachers on the practical relevance of Value-Added Course papers so as to continuously improve and update the curriculum to meet the evolving needs of the students.

By incorporating these strategies, higher education institutions can effectively enhance academic excellence and industry readiness among students through value added courses, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to succeed in life.

1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of Value-Added Course in higher education institutions is crucial for preparing students to meet the demands of the society. These courses enhance students' academic readiness, foster global competencies, and promote a holistic approach to learning. By focusing on innovation and industry integration value added programs contribute to building a sustainable academic ecosystem that nurtures future leaders equipped to tackle contemporary challenges. Understanding the challenges faced in its implementation becomes important for policy makers and implementing agency to take utmost care to take proactive steps to overcome the challenges through ways and means best suited for each institute. Faculty members can also take proactive

steps by attending professional development workshops, participating in mentorship programs, adapting the curriculum, and continuously learning and growing as educators. By working collaboratively and investing in professional development, institutes can empower faculty members to deliver high quality education and enhance the learning experience of students.

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