EDITORIAL: THE HINDU

GENERAL STUDIES 2: SOCIAL JUSTICE
TOPIC: EDUCATION   **DATE:** 08.01.2025

MORE FLEXIBILITY, BUT ALSO GREATER CHALLENGES

Introduction to UGC's New Degree Programmes

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has introduced **accelerated** and **extended degree programmes** for undergraduate students.

- These programmes offer flexibility to complete degrees faster or over an extended duration, deviating from traditional rigid frameworks.

Advantages of the New Programmes

Enhanced Autonomy and Flexibility

- Aligns with the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, promoting a multidisciplinary approach.

- Students can customise their academic pathways to match personal interests and career aspirations.

- Encourages innovation through a focus on **soft skills** and **creative thinking**.

Career and Skill Benefits

- **Accelerated programmes** allow early workforce entry, reducing education costs and increasing employability.

- **Extended programmes** offer scope for internships, research, and interdisciplinary studies, enhancing skills.

Global Alignment and Mobility

- Aligns with international education standards, improving global mobility for Indian students.

- Flexible credit systems enable self-paced learning tailored to career goals.

Challenges of the New Structure

Depth and Rigour Concerns

- Accelerated programmes risk **superficial learning** due to compressed schedules.

- Extended programmes may reduce academic urgency, leading to prolonged degree completion.

Impact on Technical Education

- Engineering and technical courses may struggle with **rigour and hands-on learning** in compressed formats.

- Extended durations could increase financial pressures, deterring economically weaker students.

Practical Challenges in Implementation

Institutional and Administrative Overhaul

- Significant restructuring of curricula, teaching methods, and credit systems is required.

- Resource-limited universities may face challenges in implementation.

Equity and Accessibility

- Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may need better **guidance and support**.

- The **digital divide** may exacerbate inequities in access to online education.

Faculty Training

- Teachers need training in **interdisciplinary pedagogy** to adapt to flexible programmes.

Way Forward

- **Strategic planning**, investment in resources, and **inclusive frameworks** are crucial.

- Robust administrative systems and teacher training are necessary for successful implementation.

- If executed effectively, these reforms can transform Indian education and contribute to the vision of **Viksit Bharat by 2047**.

Source: https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/more-flexibility-but-also-greater-challenges/article69073268.ece