

IMPACT OF NEP 2020 ON CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING

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Abstract: Among all the policies introduced to improve India's education system, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is considered one of the most significant, diversified and comprehensive reforms in the Indian education system with the aim of transforming the whole education structure and promoting multidisciplinary learning. This study was carried out to know the changes introduced in the curriculum through NEP 2020 and investigating how multidisciplinary curriculum practices are being implemented in higher education institutions. Researcher collect the data from various secondary sources like book, journal, articles, previous research articles. The finding of the study shows that NEP 2020 has plays a transformative role in a paradigm shift in the Indian education system. It promotes diversity, critical thinking, holistic development and skill-based education. The effective implementation of the policy can create an inclusive, modern, and learner cantered education system. However, the implementation of this NEP 2020 policy faces several challenges due to inadequate infrastructure and lack of trained faculty members in many rural as well as urban institutions.

Introduction

As everyone knows that education is one of the most important aspects of human life. Education not only improves the personal growth of an individual but also plays a vital role in the development of society and the nation. By education individuals can gain knowledge, understanding, develop skills and build moral values. Keeping the importance of educational development in mind, the Government of India has undertaken various initiatives and reforms to improve the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of education across the country. Indian education system has undergone several reforms through different national education policies. There are three major policies introduced in 1968, 1986 and 2020. Among them, NEP 2020 is considered as the most comprehensive policy because of its divergent vision towards the modern education system for 21st century. M.K. Gandhi emphasized that education should develop the head, hand and heart meaning intellectual, practical and moral development. According to Gandhi "By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit." Similarly, NEP 2020 emphasizes holistic and multidisciplinary education for the all-round development of the learner (Wikipedia). The first national education policy on education 1968 was based on the recommendation of the Kothari Commission. It focuses on the value orientation, national unity, equal educational opportunities and the three-language formula and had limited focus on practical skills and technology. On the other hand, The National Policy on Education 1986 focuses on access, equity and quality education. it also focuses on women education, adult literacy, child cantered learning and open blackboard to improve school infrastructure. However, the policy still gave deep emphasis on examination-based judgment and rote learning. Due to various flaws in these policies, the Indian government took the initiative to formulate a new policy. NEP 2020 differs significantly from the earlier policies. It emphasises holistic and multidisciplinary education rather than memorization-based learning.

National Education Policy 2020

NEP 2020 is the third and most comprehensive education policy in Indian history. It developed under the chairmanship of Dr. Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, approved by the Union Cabinet of India on 29th July 2020, outline the vision of the new education system of India. The vision of this policy is to build an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India by providing high quality education to all, thereby making India a global knowledge superpower (Sharma, 2025). This policy promotes creativity, critical thinking, communication skills and problem-solving abilities to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. NEP 2020 is developed on the five foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. It aims to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global knowledge superpower. One of the major features of NEP 2020 is holistic and multidisciplinary education. Students are encouraged to study subjects from different disciplines according to their interests. This policy provides the student to choose various subjects according to

their interested areas. It also removes the rigid boundaries between arts, science and commerce streams, allowing flexibility in education. It also emphasis on student's practical learning, internships, coding, digital literacy, experiential learning, skill based and vocational education to improves employability and self-reliance among them.

Multidisciplinary And Holistic Education

Multidisciplinary education refers to the combination of different subjects. It not only includes arts, science and commerce but also includes technology, vocational education, skill-based education, home science, humanities etc. Unlike traditional, fragmented education systems, where courses are taught in isolation, the multidisciplinary approach encourages collaboration between different disciplines without integrating them (Jacobs, 1989)). For example of a multidisciplinary curriculum, a science student can also study history, politics, music, economics, philosophy or computer application. This variety of subjects and flexibility in curriculum helps students gain diverse knowledge from various aspect. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a multidisciplinary approach as the cornerstone of reforms in both school education and Higher education and place special emphasizes on 21st centuries multidisciplinary curriculum in multiple aspect. Taking care to remove the artificial barriers that exist within the education system, the policy encourages flexibility in subject choice, allowing students to study a combination of subjects such as history and computer science or physics and music, in the 'academic' and 'vocational' or 'arts', 'commerce' and 'science' branches (Ministry of Education, 2020). NEP 2020 states that the strategy aims to build the critical thinking, creativity, problem solving and innovation skills that are essential for survival in today's connected world.



The multidisciplinary approach is different from interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach. The interdisciplinary approach connects various subjects by combining their concepts and methods, example like environmental studies integrating biology and geography. The transdisciplinary approach goes beyond subject boundaries and focuses on solving real life problems through holistic learning. Therefore, the new education policy NEP 2020 strongly focuses these approaches to make education flexible, innovative, skill oriented and real life based for the holistic development of the learner (Bhoi, 2025).

Rational of the Study

India is a nation with very rich, diverse and comprehensive culture-based society. The country is characterised by different languages, religion, tradition, values, art forms and indigenous knowledge systems. This cultural diversity reflects the multicultural nature of Indian society. Therefor the curriculum that is part of the Indian education system must also be much more influential and comprehensive which can affect the real lives of children. The traditional education system as well curriculum focuses on the behavioural changing aspect among child and it based on a rigid mentality and stream oriented, where students have only few fixed options to choose as well, they were restricted to separate disciplines such as Arts, Science and Commerce. This limited the development of creativity, innovation, critical thinking and practical understanding. However, in the rapidly changing global and technological world, students require knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines to become competent and socially responsible citizens. Recognizing this need, the NEP 2020 introduced major reforms regarding the curriculum as well as the whole education system. The vision on National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is to make the whole Indian education system more strengthen, inclusive, holistic, enrich and flexible. NEP 2020 emphasizes multidisciplinary education by integrating arts, science, humanities, home science, vocational education, technical education, commerce, skill-based education etc. This policy encourages students to study diverse subjects according to their area of interest and future purpose. As educational institutions are gradually implementing these changes, it becomes important to examine whether the objective of multidisciplinary learning is being effectively achieved or not. The rational of the study lies in analysing the changes introduced in the curriculum and to understanding the context to which NEP 2020 has influence curriculum transformation in higher education institutions. Thus, this research is significant in analysing the role of NEP 2020 in modification in the whole education system and reshaping the curriculum.

Review Related Literature

Bhoi, E. (2025). Conducted a study on "Promoting a multidisciplinary approach in view of NEP2020: A thematic perspective." The objective of the study was to examine how NEP 2020 promotes interdisciplinary education in India. Researcher conducted

qualitative thematic analysis method based on NEP 2020 document. Findings shows that NEP 2020 strongly support smarter disciplinary education by promoting flexible and holistic learning. Sharma, S. (2026). Conducted a study on “National education policy 2020 and multidisciplinary approach.” The purpose of the study was to examine India’s NEP 2020 and its impact on promoting a multidisciplinary framework in higher education. Distribute quantitative research design was adapted by the researcher. Also, researcher collect various data from secondary sources. The result of the study revealed that NEP 2020 has a positive impact on promoting multidisciplinary framework in higher education and it also nurtures critical thinking, creativity and holistic development among learners. Sharma, A. (2025). Conducted a study on “NEP 2020 and multidisciplinary institutions: Fostering innovation and research.” The main objective of the study was to determine the role of multidisciplinary institutions in achieving the goals NEP 2020. In this study researcher used qualitative methods and collected the data from media secondary sources. Findings revealed that the multidisciplinary institutions, aligned with NEP 2020, can transform higher education by promoting critical thinking, research, innovation and holistic learning through successful implementation. Maheshwari, K. et al. (2025) Conducted a study on “NEP 2020 and Roadmap for holistic and multidisciplinary education.” The objective of the study was to investigate the impact of NEP 2020 on holistic and multidisciplinary management education, focusing on faculty preparedness and student adaptability in MBA institutions under Pune university. Researcher used quantitative research design. A total of 400 educators across several MBA colleges were selected as a sample. Random sampling, regression and ANOVA tests were used in the study The result of the study revealed that the effectiveness of NEP 2020 mighty disciplinary education relies heavily on faculty preparedness and student adaptability. Langal, R. et al. (2025). Conducted a study on “Multidisciplinary education in NEP 2020.” The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of the multidisciplinary education model on university level students’ academic achievement. Researcher used a qualitative and analytical methodology. Findings revealed that multidisciplinary education can enhance creative thinking, problem solving abilities among the university level students. Bose, C.D. (2024) Conducted a study on “NEP 2020 mediated transformation in Higher Education.” The main objective of the study was to examine the impact of NEP 2020 on transforming higher education through multidisciplinary, holistic and skill-based learning. In this study researcher used descriptive method based on various secondary sources. The study reviewed that NEP 2020 improves the quality, accessibility, accountability and multidisciplinary education in higher education.

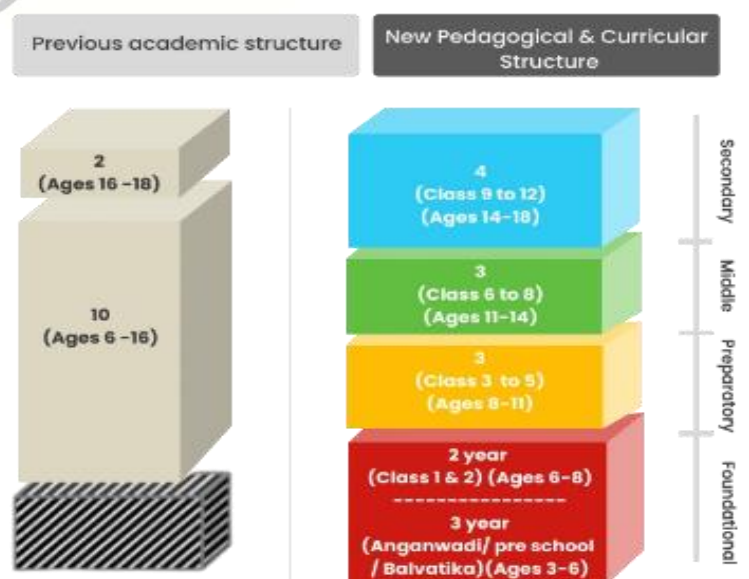
Research Objectives

1. To analyse the changes introduced in the curriculum through NEP 2020.
2. To investigate how multidisciplinary curriculum practices are being implemented in higher education institutions in the context of NEP 2020.

Discussion

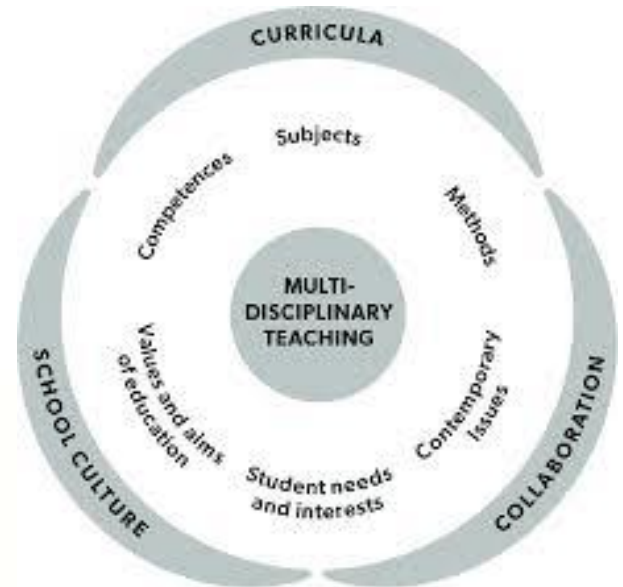
Objective 1: To analyse the changes introduced in the curriculum through NEP 2020

The changes introduced to the curriculum through the NEP 2020 have brought about a significant transformation in the Indian education system. Moving away from the previous rote-learning-based approach, this policy places special emphasis on skills, creativity, critical thinking, and multidisciplinary education. The primary objective of the NEP 2020 is to shape students in such a way that they not only excel in examinations but are also capable of solving real-world problems (Ministry of Education, 2020). One of the most significant changes is the introduction of the new 5+3+3+4 educational structure: Foundation, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary stages, replacing the old 10+2+3 framework. This new structure is designed based on the age-appropriate mental and intellectual development of children. Consequently, opportunities for play-based learning, activity-based education, and the development of linguistic skills for children have expanded right from the primary level. The first five years include pre-primary education (classes 1-2), the next 3 years focus



on activity-based education (classes 3-5), the following 3 years emphasizes experimental learning, critical thinking and skill orientation (classes 6-8), and the final 4 years provide multidisciplinary and flexible subject choices (classes 9-12).

Conversely the NEP 2020 has made the education system more flexible and student-centric. Previously, the education system featured a distinct segregation among the Science, Arts, and Commerce streams, which limited students' opportunities to select a combination of subjects aligned with their specific interests. However, this barrier has been largely eliminated under the new education policy. Now, students can pursue subjects from various disciplines concurrently, based on their individual preferences and aptitudes. For instance, a student can opt to study subjects such as Fashion Design or Theatre Arts alongside Mathematics and Physics. Consequently, this will enhance opportunities for students to cultivate creative thinking, practical skills, and multidisciplinary knowledge. Such a multifaceted approach to education will also play a pivotal role in their future career prospects and personal development. This policy also places special emphasis on skill-based education. It proposes the introduction of vocational education, coding, and internships starting from the sixth grade. Through this, students will be able to acquire technical knowledge, job-oriented knowledge and practical experience from an early age. Consequently, they will be better prepared for future employment opportunities (National education policy, 2020).



Significant changes have also been introduced to the assessment system. Previously, the primary objective of examinations was merely to secure marks; however, the NEP 2020 places emphasis on conceptual understanding, analytical abilities, and problem-solving skills. In addition to making board examinations simpler and stress-free, emphasis has been placed on continuous assessment. This comprehensive policy introduced to the curriculum in the realm of higher education. Through initiatives such as four-year undergraduate programs, a Multiple Entry and Exit system, and the Academic Bank of Credits, students will be able to pursue their education with greater autonomy. students are able to receive a certificate based on the duration of the course, and they can also re-enter later to continue their studies (UGC, 2021). They will be given a Certificate for completing one year, Diploma for two years, a Bachelor's degree for 3 years, and a Bachelor's Degree with Research for four years of completion. This policy also specially emphasis has also been placed on mother-tongue-based education. It has been recommended that instruction be provided in the mother tongue or a regional language up to at least the fifth grade. As a result, students will be able to grasp the subject matter with ease, and their linguistic foundation will be further strengthened.

Overall, it can be said that the NEP 2020 has rendered the Indian curriculum more modern, skill-based, student-centric, and multifaceted. Through this policy, an endeavour has been made to transform education from being merely examination-centric into a life-oriented and practical-based system—a shift that will help make the future educational framework more effective and of international standard.

Objective 2: To investigate how multidisciplinary curriculum practices are being implemented in higher education institutions in the context of NEP 2020.

One of the primary objectives of the NEP 2020 is to transform India's higher education system into one that is more multidisciplinary, practical, holistic, skill-oriented, and student-centric. Through this policy, particular emphasis has been placed on providing students with opportunities to acquire knowledge across diverse subjects, rather than confining them to a single, specific discipline. Under the previous education system, subject-specific compartmentalization was, in most instances, extremely rigid; consequently, students had limited opportunities to pursue a combination of subjects aligned with their individual interests and aptitudes. However, the NEP 2020 challenges this conventional paradigm by prioritizing the concept of multidisciplinary education within the higher education landscape. As a result, significant changes are currently being observed in the curricular frameworks of various universities and colleges (Ministry of Education, 2020). Currently, many higher education institutions have taken initiatives to introduce interdisciplinary pedagogical approaches. Through this system, students are afforded the opportunity to acquire knowledge in other subjects alongside their core discipline. For instance, a student majoring in Economics can opt to study subjects such as Data Analysis, Computer Applications, or Sociology. Similarly, a student pursuing

Literature can simultaneously study subjects like Mass Communication or Psychology. Consequently, this fosters multidimensional thinking among students and equips them with the ability to analyse real-world problems from various perspectives (UGC, 2021). Another significant aspect of this policy is the introduction of the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) and the Multiple Entry and Exit System. Through this framework, students are able to store academic credits earned at various institutions and, when necessary, transfer them to another institution. Consequently, the education system has become more flexible, providing students with the opportunity to pursue their studies according to their own convenience. Even those who are compelled to discontinue their studies midway for any reason are now afforded the opportunity to earn a certificate, diploma, or degree after a specific period.

However, the effective implementation of multidisciplinary curricula in higher education institutions is currently facing various challenges. Although the NEP 2020 was introduced with the objective of making the education system modern and flexible, not all educational institutions across the country are yet fully prepared for this transformation. In particular, many government and rural colleges suffer from a noticeable lack of adequate infrastructure, modern technology, and advanced educational resources. Facilities essential for technology-driven learning; such as smart classrooms, digital laboratories, and high-speed internet connectivity, remain limited in many instances, thereby hindering the implementation of the new pedagogical framework. Furthermore, while a multidisciplinary education system necessitates a workforce of skilled and trained faculty members, the number of such educators remains insufficient in many institutions. As the majority of teachers have long been accustomed to traditional, subject-specific teaching methodologies, they are taking some time to adapt to the new interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary approaches. Moreover, a lack of adequate training regarding teaching strategies aligned with the new curriculum, the effective integration of technology, and research-based pedagogical methods is further slowing down the implementation process. Apart from this, to effectively implement a multifaceted education system, it is crucial to enhance coordination among educational institutions. Curriculum planning, teacher training, and the utilization of technology need to be further improved to ensure that students can fully benefit from this policy. Concurrently, it has become essential to structure the curriculum by prioritizing students' interests, skills, and the demands of their future careers.

Overall, it can be said that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has ushered in a significant transformation within India's higher education system. Through the implementation of multidisciplinary curricula, the education system is becoming more modern, flexible, and practical. Consequently, students are no longer confined to a single specific subject; instead, they are able to acquire integrated knowledge across various fields—a process that will help enhance their creativity, problem-solving skills, and employability prospects. In the future, the successful implementation of this policy will play a pivotal role in further aligning India's higher education with global standards.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has ushered in a new perspective within the Indian education system, placing special emphasis on making the curriculum more flexible, skill-based, and student-centric. This study reveals that NEP 2020 seeks to move away from the conventional rote-learning-based education system to foster an educational environment where students not only acquire theoretical knowledge but also develop real-world problem-solving abilities, creative thinking, communication skills, and critical analytical capabilities. As a result of these curricular changes, interdisciplinary integration is increasing, and students are gaining the opportunity to select subjects aligned with their personal interests and professional aspirations. Through this process, education is becoming more meaningful and life-oriented. Research has further revealed that one of the most significant aspects of the NEP 2020 is the promotion of multidisciplinary education. Higher education institutions are gradually introducing curricula that establish interconnections among science, humanities, commerce, technology, and the arts. Consequently, students are gaining the opportunity to acquire knowledge across diverse fields rather than being confined to a single specific discipline. This form of multidimensional education can prove instrumental in enhancing students' skill sets, thereby enabling them to keep pace with contemporary employment trends and global demands. Furthermore, the integration of research-oriented learning, project-based pedagogy, and skill-development courses is playing a pivotal role in improving the overall quality of education.

However, certain limitations have also been observed in the implementation of this policy. Many higher education institutions lack adequate infrastructure, technological facilities, and trained faculty; factors that could hinder the implementation of multidisciplinary curricula. Furthermore, disparities between rural and urban educational institutions, financial constraints, and administrative complexities may somewhat slow down the effective implementation of the policy. Nevertheless, positive initiatives undertaken by various educational institutions, coupled with the government's planned measures, are helping to gradually translate this transformation into reality.

Overall, the NEP 2020 represents a significant endeavour to transform the Indian education system into one that is modern, inclusive, and forward-looking. Changes in the curriculum and the implementation of multidisciplinary education can facilitate the holistic development of students' knowledge, skills, and human values. Although its complete and successful implementation necessitates long-term planning, adequate training, infrastructural development, and concerted efforts, it appears that, through this policy, Indian higher education is advancing toward a new horizon.

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