## Studies on Holistic & Multidisciplinary Higher Education

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**Abstract:**

*The National Education Policy 2020 places a strong focus on fostering students' innovative spirit, logical judgment, creative thinking, and continuous learning skills. It also encourages the use of technology to support education. This educational policy places a strong focus on helping people develop their creative potential. The flexible and innovative curriculum of all higher educational institutions will include credit-based curriculum and areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, value education, and so on in order to bring the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education to reality, according to this education policy. The primary goal of education is to fully develop each and every human capacity in an integrated way. In actuality, The National Education Policy, 2020 aims to make schools and colleges suitable for the needs of the twenty-first century and places particular emphasis and importance on holistic and multidisciplinary education. It is founded on the fundamental pillars of easy access, equality, quality, and accountability for all. Students are prepared to become thoughtful, knowledgeable, and involved global citizens through the dynamic and inclusive educational framework that is created by the synergy between holistic and multidisciplinary education. This integrated approach not only enhances the educational process but also gives graduates the abilities and perspective needed to successfully navigate and make a meaningful contribution to a world that is becoming more linked and complex.*

**Keywords:** *Holistic & Multidisciplinary Education, Education Policy, NEP-2020.*

**Introduction:**

In an age characterized by quickening technical progress and more intricate worldwide issues, higher education is going through a radical change. As educators and institutions become aware of the drawbacks of a learning strategy that is isolated from other disciplines, traditional disciplinary boundaries are being reexamined. In order to educate students for a lifetime of adaptability, innovation, and moral decision-making, the modern world demands a more comprehensive, integrated educational paradigm.

Higher education that is holistic and multidisciplinary aims to close the gaps between various academic disciplines and promote a more integrated body of knowledge. Through the integration of intellectual, emotional, social, and ethical components, it highlights the development of the full person. By encouraging students to make connections across various courses, this teaching paradigm promotes creativity, critical thinking, and a greater understanding of the complexity of the world.

An energetic and stimulating learning environment is produced by the combination of holistic and multidisciplinary education. It gives students the knowledge and skills they need to comprehend and tackle difficult global issues including social injustice, climate change, and technological disruption. Additionally, this integrated approach meets the needs of modern businesses, who are looking for graduates who can collaborate across disciplines, have a varied skill set, and are adaptable.

Higher education that is holistic and multidisciplinary places a strong emphasis on integrating many subject areas to promote a thorough grasp of challenging, real-world problems. By encouraging connections between fields including the humanities, sciences, social sciences, and arts, this method goes beyond conventional, compartmentalized education. It seeks to produce well-rounded people with the critical thinking, inventiveness, and problem-solving abilities necessary to tackle today's pressing global issues.

In this article, we will explore the principles and benefits of holistic and multidisciplinary higher education. We will examine how this approach can be implemented within academic institutions, the challenges it faces, and its potential to reshape the future of learning and societal development. By fostering a more connected and comprehensive educational experience, we can prepare the next generation to thrive in an interconnected and ever-evolving world.

**Objectives:**

- To know about the Holistic & Multidisciplinary Higher Education.

- To understand the extent of the scale implemented in the Education policy.

- To understand the National Education Policy 2020 for Holistic & Multidisciplinary approaches.

**Analysis the Data:**

In higher education, holistic and multidisciplinary approaches aim to provide an integrated learning environment that prepares students for the complexities of the modern world. These methods foster intellectual growth, personal development, and the ability to apply knowledge across various disciplines.

**Holistic Higher Education:**

A holistic approach to education focuses on developing the full person—academically, socially, emotionally, and ethically. It encourages students to think critically, connect ideas across subjects, and apply knowledge to real-world situations. Holistic education includes intellectual growth, experiential learning, social and emotional development, ethical understanding, and continuous learning.

**Key aspects of holistic education include:**

- **Intellectual Growth**: Integrates diverse subjects, fostering creativity and critical thinking.

- **Experiential Learning**: Connects theory with practice through internships and real-world projects.

- **Social & Emotional Growth**: Develops emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills.

- **Moral & Ethical Growth**: Encourages ethical decision-making and a sense of social responsibility.

- **Lifelong Learning**: Promotes adaptability and curiosity for ongoing development in an evolving world.

**Multidisciplinary Education:**

Multidisciplinary education combines various academic fields to offer a broader, more adaptable learning experience. It encourages students to explore knowledge across subjects and synthesize information from different disciplines, addressing real-world challenges more effectively.

**Key benefits of multidisciplinary education include:**

- **Improved Innovation & Critical Thinking**: Exposure to multiple perspectives enhances creativity and analytical skills.

- **Workplace Preparedness**: Equips students with diverse skills, making them adaptable in today's dynamic job market.

- **Global Challenges**: Prepares students to tackle complex issues like climate change by integrating multiple viewpoints.

- **Lifelong Learning**: Promotes intellectual flexibility and curiosity, ensuring ongoing relevance in a changing world.

- **Collaboration & Teamwork**: Encourages working in diverse teams, enhancing communication and problem-solving skills.

Both holistic and multidisciplinary education prepare students to thrive in an interconnected and rapidly changing global landscape.

**Aim of Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education :**

Through the integration of multiple academic disciplines and the attention to the cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and creative aspects of human development, holistic and multidisciplinary education seeks to create well-rounded individuals. This method encourages moral principles, global citizenship, and lifelong learning while fostering critical thinking, creativity, and relevance to the actual world. Holistic and multidisciplinary education prepares students for a variety of job options as well as responsible, balanced, and fulfilled lives in an interconnected society by personalizing learning experiences and fostering adaptation, inventiveness, and cultural awareness.

**Implementation Strategies for Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:**

**Redesigning the Curriculum for Integration:** To create an integrated curriculum, educational institutions can design courses that blend multiple disciplines. For example, a course on sustainability could combine concepts from environmental science, economics, policy studies, and ethics, allowing students to explore the intersections of these fields in the context of global challenges (Beers, 2011). Project-based learning (PBL) is another effective strategy, as it encourages students to draw upon knowledge from various disciplines to solve real-world problems (Thomas, 2000). Through PBL, students engage in complex, long-term projects that require collaboration and the integration of diverse perspectives.

**Professional Development for Educators**

Professional development plays a crucial role in supporting educators as they transition to multidisciplinary teaching. Educators must be trained in cross-disciplinary teaching techniques and collaborative learning models. Research suggests that cross-disciplinary professional development helps teachers understand how to connect different subject areas and develop the skills necessary to manage interdisciplinary courses (Beers, 2011).

Furthermore, creating opportunities for collaborative teaching—where faculty from different disciplines work together—can enhance the delivery of interdisciplinary courses (Perry & Southwell, 2006). Faculty development programs should emphasize not only the technical skills needed to use various teaching tools but also strategies for fostering active student engagement and critical thinking across disciplines.

**Building Collaborative Partnerships Across Disciplines**

Institutional leadership must encourage and facilitate collaboration across departments. Creating cross-disciplinary teams for course design and delivery is one way to break down silos (Jacobs & Becher, 1994). For example, a team of faculty members from disciplines such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) might co-teach a course on environmental issues, integrating their respective areas of expertise. Collaborative teaching allows students to benefit from the expertise of multiple instructors and provides them with a more comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand.

Furthermore, institutions can foster a culture of collaboration by creating interdisciplinary centers or initiatives that provide faculty with the resources and support to design cross-disciplinary courses. Jacobs and Becher (1994) suggest that such centers can serve as hubs for innovation and knowledge exchange, encouraging faculty from diverse fields to work together and share insights.

**Encouraging Experiential and Hands-On Learning**

Experiential learning opportunities are essential for bridging the gap between theory and practice. By engaging students in hands-on learning experiences such as fieldwork, internships, and service learning, educators can help students apply interdisciplinary knowledge to real-world problems (Kolb, 1984). For instance, students in a multidisciplinary course on global health could participate in internships with healthcare organizations, where they can apply their academic knowledge to solve health-related issues in local communities.

Additionally, simulations and case-based learning offer valuable opportunities for students to practice interdisciplinary problem-solving. Case studies, which require students to analyze complex situations from multiple disciplinary angles, encourage critical thinking and the integration of diverse perspectives (Boud & Feletti, 1997).

**Institutional Commitment and Leadership**

Institutional leadership must champion holistic education and create a strategic vision that prioritizes interdisciplinary learning. Research suggests that leadership is crucial in guiding institutions through the process of curriculum redesign and supporting faculty in adopting new teaching approaches (Beers, 2011). Leaders should provide resources for faculty development, foster cross-departmental collaboration, and create incentives for interdisciplinary teaching.

Moreover, institutional policies should encourage flexible curricula that allow students to pursue interdisciplinary courses and programs. By making multidisciplinary learning a priority, institutions can ensure that students gain the diverse skills and perspectives necessary to address the complex challenges of the modern world.

**Different Education Policy in India and History of formation National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP 2020):**

India had the enormous burden of nation-building after winning independence in 1947, which called for a skilled and educated citizenry. To achieve the nation's socioeconomic objectives, it was believed that the

educational system needed to be thoroughly reviewed and reshaped. For this reason, Govt. of India formed different commission as below :

1948-49   To Emphasize the need for higher standards in university education, greater autonomy for universities, and the establishment of rural universities and agricultural education, a Commission had been formed headed by Dr. S.Radhakrishnan which was called University Education Commission or Radhakrishnan Commission.

1952-53   After Independence, initially Secondary Education Commission was formed to address different aspects of Education system in India, but there was a lacking of holistic & Multidisciplinary (Integrated) approaches.

1964-66 :   The Government of India established the Kothari Commission on 14 July 1964 headed by Dr. Daulat Singh Kothari, a renowned physicist and the then he was Chairman of the UGC, was appointed as the chairman of the commission. The Kothari Commission submitted its report in 1966, containing detailed recommendations aimed at transforming the Indian education system.

1968 :   The first National Policy on Education was formulated based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission.

1986 :   The second policy was introduced to address the emerging challenges and to promote inclusiveness, equity, and quality in education.

1992 :   Second Education Policy which was formed in 1986 was slightly modified in 1992.

2010:   By the 2010s, a new, comprehensive policy was necessitated  due to ubstantial changes in the socioeconomic environment, technological improvements, and the rising demand for skill-based education.

2015:   The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) initiated the process of formulating a new education policy. A Committee for  the New Education Policy under former Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Subramanian was constituted.

2016 :   Committee headed by T.S.R. Subramaniam was submitted its report in 2016.

2017:   The government appointed another committee headed by Dr. K.Kasturirangan, former head of ISRO, to draft the policy was submitted in 2016.

2018 :   Committee headed by Dr. K. Kasturirangan was submitted draft policy in 2018.

2019:   The above Education policy was made public and Govt. of India invited feedback from different educational institutions, teachers, parents, students, and the general public.

2020 :   On July 29, 2020, the Union Cabinet approved the NEP 2020, replacing the previous National Policy on Education, 1986 .

**Basic Reforms in National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)** :

Particular emphasis is placed on the development of the creative abilities that are innate in every person. The educational curriculum is divided according to the 5+3+3+4 system, which replaces the 10+2 educational model currently in use. This policy emphasizes early childhood care and education. The 10+2 structure of the school curriculum will be replaced by a new curriculum structure of 5+3+3+4, which is for children ages 3–8, 8–11, 11–14, and 14–18, respectively.

Clauses of National Education Policy allows children between the ages of three and six who have not yet been included in the school curriculum. The new education system calls for 12 years of formal education and 3 years of pre-schooling. The total time spent in school will be 15 years, encompassing pre-school and formal education. The National Education Policy 2020 places particular focus on fostering students' innovative spirit, logical judgment, art of continuous learning, and creative thinking in addition to supporting the use of technology to enhance education.

Actually, the foundation of this policy is easy access to education, equity, quality, and accountability, among other things. Within the framework of this education policy, holistic and multidisciplinary education has received particular attention and importance. This National Education Policy makes reference to holistic and multidisciplinary education, citing India's long history of such learning from universities like "**Takshashila**" and "**Nalanda**" where students got education by integrating subjects from many fields.

Ultimately, if we want to know the true meaning and goal of the NEP 2020 draft into a single paragraph, it would be this: the true goal of education is to open the heart and mind of the students critically to some of the novel ways of thinking, specialization in various fields, and holistic development, rather than just memorizing facts and figures and earning certificates with good marks for whatever post or job you will have in the future.

**Major Reforms in National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)** :

The NEP 2020 introduces several key reforms in various sectors of education. These reforms are categorized as follows:

**School Education:**

- **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**: Emphasizes the importance of early childhood education and care.

- **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**: Focus on ensuring basic literacy and numeracy skills by the early grades.

- **Multilingualism and Mother Tongue Instruction**: Promotes the use of regional languages or mother tongues as the medium of instruction to enhance understanding and learning.

**Higher Education:**

- **Single Regulator for Higher Education**: Proposes a unified regulatory body for higher education, excluding medical and legal fields.

- **Four-Year Undergraduate Program with Multiple Exit Options**: Introduces flexibility in undergraduate courses, allowing multiple exit points.

- **Research and Innovation**: Strong emphasis on research through the establishment of the National Research Foundation (NRF).

- **Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education**: Encourages an integrated approach that combines multiple disciplines to offer a well-rounded education.

**Vocational Education:**

- **Integration into Mainstream Education**: Vocational education will be incorporated into regular schooling, starting from Grade 6.

**Teacher Education and Training:**

- **Reforming Teacher Education**: Introduces a four-year integrated B.Ed. program to enhance teacher training.

- **Continuous Professional Development**: Ensures ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers.

**Technology in Education:**

- **Digital Education**: Promotes the use of digital tools and online learning platforms, with dedicated units for creating digital content.

**NEP-2020 : (in View of Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education)**

A major turning point in the development of India's educational system is the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which calls for a thorough revision to bring it into line with 21st-century needs. Promoting holistic and multidisciplinary education is one of the main goals of NEP-2020, which aims to create well-rounded people with the ability to think critically, be creative, and reason ethically.

NEP-2020 envisions an educational paradigm that goes beyond rote learning and academic excellence. It aims to provide pupils with more all-encompassing care, emphasizing their social, emotional, physical, and intellectual growth.

NEP-2020 promotes a multidisciplinary approach that supports the integration of arts, sciences, and vocational disciplines, breaking away from the old educational system.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, education that is holistic and interdisciplinary fosters a more integrative and comprehensive development of persons by transforming learning beyond conventional bounds. This educational paradigm fosters critical thinking, creativity, and flexibility by highlighting the connections between several disciplines. It also gives students the tools they need to manage a world that is becoming more complex and linked. The emotional, social, and ethical development of students is also given top priority in holistic education, fostering the development of well-rounded people who can make significant contributions to society. Embracing holistic and multidisciplinary education becomes not only helpful but crucial for the development of a resilient and enlightened global community as we progress towards a future that demands inventive and inclusive solutions.

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