

NEP 2020: MULTIDISCIPLINARY COURSE AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract:

The New Educational Policy 2020 has given due importance to collaborative approaches in the Higher Educational system. The key pillar of NEP 2020 is liberal education, which emphasizes that education should be holistic and multidisciplinary. This approach sensitizes students to interconnect all sorts of knowledge and inquiry to derive effective solutions. This approach helps the learner to overcome learning difficulties and attain overall development. Furthermore, NEP 2020 requires a flexible and innovative curriculum that includes credit-based courses and projects in the domains of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. The paper will highlight the multidisciplinary approach in NEP 2020 and the challenges in implementing multidisciplinary course.

Key words: *The New Educational Policy 2020, Multidisciplinary approach, integration of disciplines, Challenges.*

Introduction

In the NEP 2020, a multidisciplinary course allows students to combine subjects from different disciplines, such as science with arts, or a science major with a minor from another stream. This approach breaks down traditional subject silos, providing greater flexibility for students to explore various interests and develop a wider range of skills, including critical thinking and problem-solving. The goal is to move towards more holistic and integrated learning by offering flexible, choice-based credit systems and multiple entry and exit points for degrees.

NEP 2020's multidisciplinary courses aim to foster holistic development through flexible curricula that blend diverse subjects like science, humanities, and applied fields. The primary challenges in implementing this vision include the need for curriculum restructuring, faculty training, funding, and infrastructure development, especially in digital learning. Other hurdles involve overcoming digital and socioeconomic disparities to ensure equitable access and addressing the complexities of assessment reforms and student-friendly multiple entry-exit systems.

Objectives of the study

The study is designed with the following objectives-

1. To study the concept of multidiscipline education.
2. To study the multidisciplinary approach in NEP 2020.
3. To study the challenges in implementing multidisciplinary course.

Methodology

This study is a descriptive one. As per the nature of the study descriptive method is suitable for the current study. To achieve the goal, secondary data was collected from a wide range of sources, such as papers, journals, and the official website of the Indian government.

What is Multidisciplinary Education?

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is an ambitious policy document aiming to revolutionize the education system in India. One of the key aspects of the policy is the emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach in education. Multidisciplinary education is a form of educational strategy that brings together multiple disciplines to create a holistic learning experience. It is designed to foster an understanding of the interconnectedness of various fields and how they can be integrated for better problem-solving. Multidisciplinary education, if implemented in schools and colleges, allows students to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter through the lens of different disciplines. This approach encourages creative thinking, critical analysis, collaboration, and communication skills. The NEP 2020 emphasizes the need to incorporate this educational approach into the curriculum from an early age. By giving students exposure to multiple disciplines, we can help them understand their chosen field better and also develop an appreciation for diverse knowledge systems. This will enable them to become more well-rounded citizens and prepare them for the future.

Key features of multidisciplinary courses under NEP 2020

- **Interdisciplinary approach:** Students can take up courses from different streams without the hard separation of subjects. For example, a student majoring in science could take a course in literature or philosophy.
- **Holistic development:** The curriculum is designed to promote a holistic development of students, fostering creativity, critical thinking, communication, and teamwork.
- **Flexibility and choice:** The policy includes a flexible choice-based credit system and multiple entry and exit options, allowing students to earn certificates, diplomas, or degrees at different stages.
- **Increased employability:** By combining academic knowledge with vocational and practical skills, these courses aim to make students more employable and prepared for a competitive job market.
- **Skill enhancement:** Focuses on developing critical thinking, analytical, and communication skills, which are valuable in today's job market.
- **Example:** An engineering student can take a minor in a humanities subject like music, or a student can opt for courses in different fields like applied sciences, mathematics, and business studies.

Challenges in implementation of Multidisciplinary course

- **Curriculum and faculty:** Requires significant curriculum restructuring and retraining faculty to adopt new teaching methods, such as outcome-based and experiential learning.
- **Funding and infrastructure:** Demands substantial investment in digital classrooms, research labs, and blended learning models, which can be a strain on resources.
- **Digital divide:** There are stark disparities in access to digital resources between urban and rural institutions, hindering the implementation of online and blended learning.
- **Socioeconomic barriers:** Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face challenges accessing diverse courses and necessary digital tools.
- **Assessment and flexibility:** Implementing competency-based assessments and ensuring that students are aware of and can utilize the new multiple entry-exit options under the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) system presents administrative and awareness challenges.
- **Implementation and mindset:** The success of NEP 2020 depends on consistent implementation across different states and requires a shift in mindset from rote learning to critical thinking.
- **Single stream Institution:** There is no option of multidisciplinary courses for the students where institution with single stream.

As India introducing NEP 2020, one of its central tenets is the implementation of a multidisciplinary approach. Essentially, a multidisciplinary approach in education requires significant changes in the way curriculum is designed and taught.

- ✓ Schools need to equip themselves with experienced staff who are capable of delivering such an approach and ensure they have the necessary resources.
- ✓ Additionally, there needs to be greater collaboration between different departments and institutions to ensure successful implementation.
- ✓ There is need to establish Multidiscipline stream in higher education especially for the single stream colleges.
- ✓ Lastly, many school systems lack the infrastructure and support needed to successfully integrate multidisciplinary learning.

In order to make multidisciplinary education a success, it is essential that we focus on improving the quality of instruction and making sure students are engaged with their studies. Students should be given the freedom to explore different topics, develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of how different subjects interact with each other. With the right support and resources, multidisciplinary education can revolutionize the Indian education system and provide students with the tools they need to thrive in the modern world.

Conclusion

NEP 2020 envisions a holistic and multidisciplinary education with an aim to develop all capacities of human beings viz. intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional and moral. NEP 2020 proposes that a holistic and multidisciplinary education shall be the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines. A multidisciplinary and holistic approach in education is instrumental in developing integrated individuals. It is a ground-breaking move as it helps the students to learn sciences, technologies, mathematics with liberal arts, humanities, languages, social sciences, professional skills, vocational skills, ethics, morality, human values and so on at the same time. This integrated approach can make students more marketable in today's workforce.

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