

# Multidisciplinary and Holistic Approach in Higher Education with Reference to NEP : 2020

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**Abstract:** *Recently the government of India introduced the National Education Policy 2020. The Policy envisioned about bringing paradigm shift in higher education in India. Earlier Education policies were failed to address some of the issues in the higher education specially the multidisciplinary and holistic approaches, Research Development and structure of the degree programme. To get better results in creativity, development of critical thinking, decisions making skills, problem-solving abilities it is necessary to frame an education policy which address these issues. A holistic and multidisciplinary education would help all-round development of an individual. India must carry its legacy of Multidisciplinary and holistic education from past to 21<sup>st</sup> century as to lead world. The NEP 2020 emphasis on the flexibility and innovative curricula in the subjects of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. The NEP focuses on bringing changes in the duration of the degree programme and implementing multiple entry-exit options to the learners. To improve the qualitative and quantitative research in HEIs, the NEP provided with setting up of NRF (National Research Foundation) which will look into funding research proposal, coordinating with industry and academia for research collaborations. The NEP 2020 envisages upon the bringing back the multidisciplinary and more holistic education in India in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

**Keywords:** NEP-2020, Holistic and Multidisciplinary Approach, NRF, HEIs

## I. INTRODUCTION

Multidisciplinary education was there in Indian society in the ancient period. Takshashila and Nalanda were the universities in ancient time where students across the world came for education because of its multidisciplinary education. We found the mentioning of 64 Kalaas or arts; in the ancient literary work like Banabhatta's Kadambari, where not only traditional subjects like music, archery but also scientific studies like chemistry, surgeries, astronomy and medicine were also taught. Gradually this multidisciplinary system was vanished due to the destroy of these universities in medieval period. Latterly during the British rule, the education was focused on to supply itself with English educated small class of Indians who could act as in Macaulay's words, 'interpreters between us and millions who we could govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and color but English in taste, opinions, in morals and in intellect'. Hence, the curriculum was biased in favor of language and humanities but ignored science and technology. There was little provision for vocational training since learning English was in a way, considered to be the aim of education. Mechanical lessons imparted on English encouraged people to memorize rather than think, which killed creativity and thirst for interdisciplinary engagements. After Independence also we were not able to address the issues related to multidisciplinary and holistic approach in Indian education system. The notion of a 'knowledge of many arts' must be brought back to Indian education, as it is exactly the kind of education that will be required for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The NEP 2020 envisages upon the bringing back the multidisciplinary and more holistic education in India in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**II. AIM OF HOLISTIC AND MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION:**

1. To get better results in creativity, development of critical thinking, decisions making skills, problem-solving abilities it is necessary to integrate the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), which is envisaged in the NEP 2020. By adopting the Multidisciplinary and holistic approach of education it will help to do better in Research and Innovation.
2. A holistic and multidisciplinary education would help all-round development of an individual. It is not good to make compulsion of subjects in which an individual is not interested. Rather than give the choice of subjects he wants and let to finish his studies at under graduate level. A holistic and multidisciplinary education helps to develop aesthetic, social, intellectual, physical and moral skills in an integrated manner.
3. India must carry its legacy of Multidisciplinary and holistic education from past to 21<sup>st</sup> century as to lead world. Creation of well learned human resources which will become the force behind the India's social, economic, scientific development is possible through only incorporating more vocational subjects and soft skills by integrating the engineering subjects with humanities. More flexibility in curricular structure will provide the multidimensional challenges and opportunities to students for multidisciplinary work, including in academic institutions, government agencies, and industrial setup.

**2.1 Move towards Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education**

1. To achieve the goal of holistic and multidisciplinary education there needs to be setting up of large multidisciplinary universities and colleges. More flexibility in curricula designing to the HEI by giving autonomous status. More emphasis must be given in research, debate, communication, inter-personal skills, discussion and opportunities for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking.
2. All departments of HEI such as Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Theatre. Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Science, sociology, Languages, Economics, sports and other such subjects needed for a multidisciplinary, stimulating Indian education and environment will be established and strengthened at all HEIs. Credits earned in such subjects through regular or distance mode must be added to ABC (Academic Bank of Credits).
3. The NEP 2020 emphasis on the flexibility and innovative curricula in the subjects of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. To achieve the goal of sustainable development environment education must include global warming, environment degradation, waste management, management of biological resources, biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation. Value based education is very important for development of moral and ethics among the learners. The NEP emphasis upon the value based education must be integral part of holistic education.
4. In a globalized world collective efforts are needed to understand and respond with global challenges. To make global society more peaceful, inclusive, interconnected, tolerant, secure and sustainable initiative like Global Citizenship Education (GCED) are needed. To achieve the goal of a holistic education, students required to send for internship with surrounding industries also attach them with some professional that will help to acquire respective skills. Research and innovation can be done by setting more incubation centres in the HEIs.

**2.2 Adjustment of the Structure and Lengths of Degree Programs**

1. In matching with the structure of international 4-year degree course, the NEP emphasis upon the restructuring the duration of undergraduate degree courses as well providing multiple exit options. Undergraduate degree can be 3 or 4-year duration, on completion of one year course a certificate will be provided, on completion of two year course diploma will be provided, on completion of three year course a Bachelor's degree will be provided. A 4-year degree programme will be having Degree with Research if the students opt for research in his major subject. An academic Bank of Credits (ABC) will digitally store the credits earned by student every year.

2. At Master's Degree level programmes HEIs will have more flexible options such as a) There will be a 2-year Master's program of which 2<sup>nd</sup> year entire for research work in major for those who completed 3-year Bachelor's Degree; b) There will be 1-year Master's programmes for those who completed 4-year degree program with 1-year Research; c) There will be 5-year integrated Bachelor's/Master's programmes. The M.Phil. programme shall be discontinued.
3. It has been seen that as compare to the international standard our universities are far behind in the ranking of universities because of lack of multidisciplinary research university, The NEP envision of setting of multidisciplinary education and research university (MERU) which will open new opportunities for India's youth. It will promote inter-disciplinary research and make India a global hub of research and development, and also aim at making Indian education at par with the global standard in quality education.

### **2.3 Focus on Research and Innovations**

1. India is lacking behind in terms of research when compare with countries like US and China. There are over millions of Patent files annually in Us and China whereas in India the numbers merely in thousands. The National Education Policy 2020 envisioned about the development of research culture in India by establishing National Research Fund (NRF). It will helpful for growth of research in India by collective efforts of government agencies, universities, research organization and industry set up. According to NEP, NRF will looks into funding research proposal, coordinating with industry and academia for research collaborations, monitoring the research initiatives and also provide incentives to the outstanding research projects.
2. The entire world facing the problem of Covid-19 for last two years. In such time the research in the field of viral infectious diseases, epidemiology, virology, diagnostics, instrumentation, vaccinology and other relevant areas. HEIs must take initiative and linkage with industry to do research for the solution to the problems of society specially the during the situation like of Covid-19 Pandemic. The research must be focused on development of precautionary measure and development of vaccines and making it affordable to the community.
3. There is much scope in research in India, NRF will set up mechanism for competitive review of the research if needed the research proposal can also be sent to outside of the countries for getting review. Encouragement to be given to all HEIs to do research at par with the institutions like IITs, IISC, DRDO, ISRO and CSIR laboratories across the country.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

Through Multidisciplinary and holistic education, the NEP envisioned to nurture a curious and creative mind and develop analytical and critical thinking among the learners at early age. Multidisciplinary education was there in India in ancient times. The Gurukul system emphasized upon the all-round development of students through different Kalas in students. Already we find the mentioning of 64 Kalas in Banbhata's Kadamabari. Now the time has come, we have to learn from our glorious ancient system of education and implement it in current times. Multidisciplinary education is found to be very helpful in addressing the global issues specially the pandemic situation the world is facing for last two years. Multidisciplinary Education helps to find all the aspects of the problems and enables to find the solution through collaborative research which helps to the society.

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