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W41&42: Towards Holistic Learning: The Vision of NEP 2020 (An Empirical Analytical Study Based on Primary Data)

Dr. Shital Rathod

SLU Arts and H&P Thakore Commerce
College for Women, Ahmedabad.

Dr. Kandarp Chavda

SLU Arts and H&P Thakore Commerce
College for Women, Ahmedabad.

Abstract: The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant transformation in India's educational framework, focusing on comprehensive and learner-centric development. This research investigates students' understanding and attitudes toward holistic learning as envisioned in the policy, using primary data collected from undergraduate learners. A structured questionnaire was administered to 60 students enrolled in commerce and management programs. Analytical techniques such as percentage distribution and Likert-scale evaluation were applied to interpret responses related to interdisciplinary learning, experiential pedagogy, and skill acquisition. The findings indicate a generally favourable perception of holistic education among students; however, concerns related to insufficient awareness, institutional limitations, and gaps in execution persist. The study concludes that while NEP 2020 provides a progressive roadmap, its effectiveness depends on systematic implementation, faculty preparedness, and infrastructural enhancement.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Holistic Learning, Holistic Development, Interdisciplinary learning, Skill Development.

Introduction

Education systems are increasingly being reoriented to address the complexities of a rapidly evolving global environment. Conventional teaching models, largely centred on memorization and examination performance, are gradually being replaced by approaches that emphasize analytical reasoning, innovation, and adaptability. In response to these changing demands, India introduced NEP 2020 as a comprehensive policy reform. A key feature of this policy is its emphasis on holistic development, which extends beyond academic achievement to include emotional intelligence, ethical awareness, social responsibility, and practical competencies. This approach seeks to cultivate individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also capable of critical thinking and problem-solving in real-world contexts.

The policy introduces several transformative measures, including interdisciplinary education, flexible course structures, integration of vocational training, and the incorporation of digital technologies. These initiatives aim to bridge the divide between theoretical instruction and practical application. However, the effectiveness of such reforms largely depends on how they are perceived and adopted at the institutional level. Students, as central stakeholders, play a vital role in shaping the outcomes of educational reforms. Therefore, examining their perspectives is essential for understanding the practical implications of NEP 2020.

This study aims to analyse student perceptions regarding holistic learning using primary data collected through a structured survey.

Review of Literature

Recent academic discourse highlights the growing importance of holistic and interdisciplinary education.

- **Kumar (2021)** argued that NEP 2020 facilitates cross-disciplinary learning by removing rigid academic boundaries, thereby encouraging creativity and innovation.
- **Sharma and Gupta (2022)** emphasized that experiential learning strategies—such as project-based tasks and interactive activities—significantly enhance student engagement and comprehension.
- **Rao (2023)** noted that holistic education encompasses cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions, contributing to the overall personality development of learners.
- **Mehta (2022)** identified implementation-related challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, limited faculty training, and resistance to pedagogical change.
- While these studies provide theoretical insights, empirical investigations focusing on student perceptions remain limited. This study contributes by offering data-driven analysis in this area.

Research Methodology

• Research Gap

Existing research on NEP 2020 predominantly focuses on conceptual frameworks and policy analysis. There is a noticeable lack of empirical studies that examine how students interpret and experience holistic learning in practice.

This research addresses this gap by analysing primary data collected directly from students.

• Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the level of student awareness regarding NEP 2020.
2. To examine perceptions of interdisciplinary learning approaches.
3. To assess the influence of experiential learning on skill development.
4. To identify key barriers to implementing holistic education.

• Research Questions

1. To what extent are students familiar with NEP 2020?
2. How do students perceive multidisciplinary education?
3. What is the perceived impact of experiential learning on skills?
4. What factors hinder the implementation of holistic learning?

• Hypotheses

- H1:** Students exhibit a favourable attitude toward holistic learning under NEP 2020.
H2: Interdisciplinary education positively influences academic engagement.
H3: Experiential learning significantly enhances practical competencies.

• Research Design

The study adopts a **descriptive-cum-analytical design** to interpret student responses.

• Data Collection

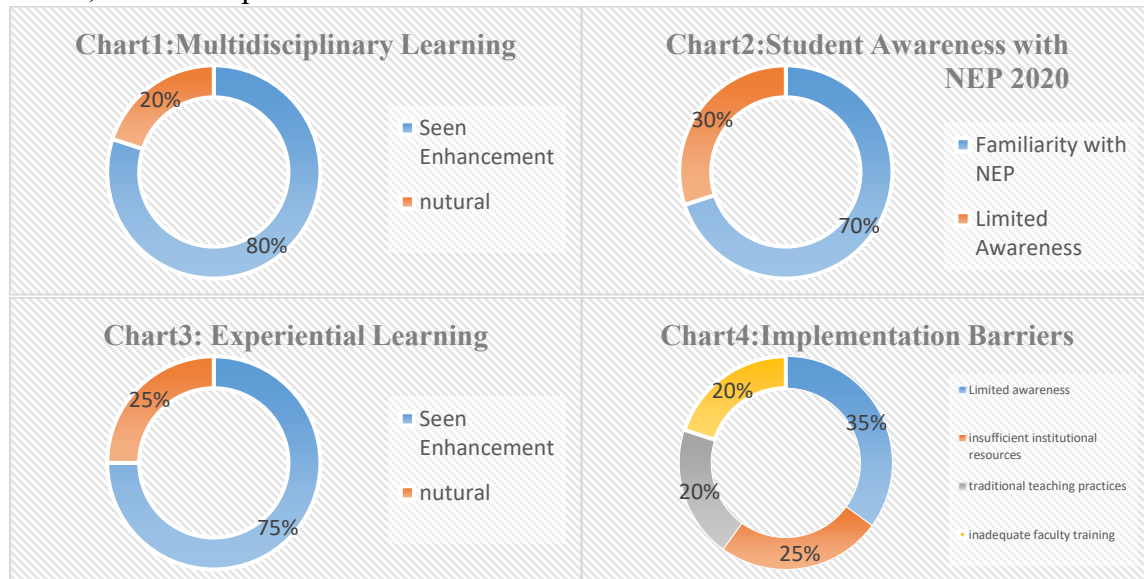
Primary data was obtained through a structured questionnaire comprising close-ended and scaled questions.

• Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of **60 undergraduate students** from commerce and management disciplines was selected using convenience sampling.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis has been done by using the analytical tools like Percentage distribution, Likert-scale assessment, and Descriptive statistics.

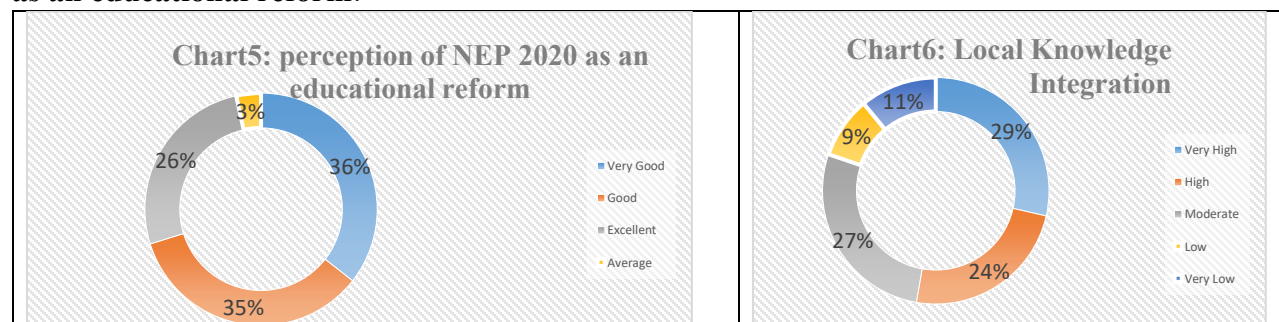


Approximately 70% of respondents indicated familiarity with NEP 2020, while the remaining 30% reported limited awareness. This reflects moderate dissemination of policy knowledge. A substantial proportion (around 80%) expressed agreement that interdisciplinary approaches enhance their academic experience, suggesting strong acceptance of flexible learning models. Nearly 75% of participants acknowledged that practical and activity-based learning contributes to skill enhancement, reinforcing the value of experiential pedagogy. Respondents identified several obstacles, including limited awareness (35%), insufficient institutional resources (25%), reliance on traditional teaching practices (20%), and inadequate faculty training (20%).

• Percentage Analysis

Awareness and Perception of NEP 2020

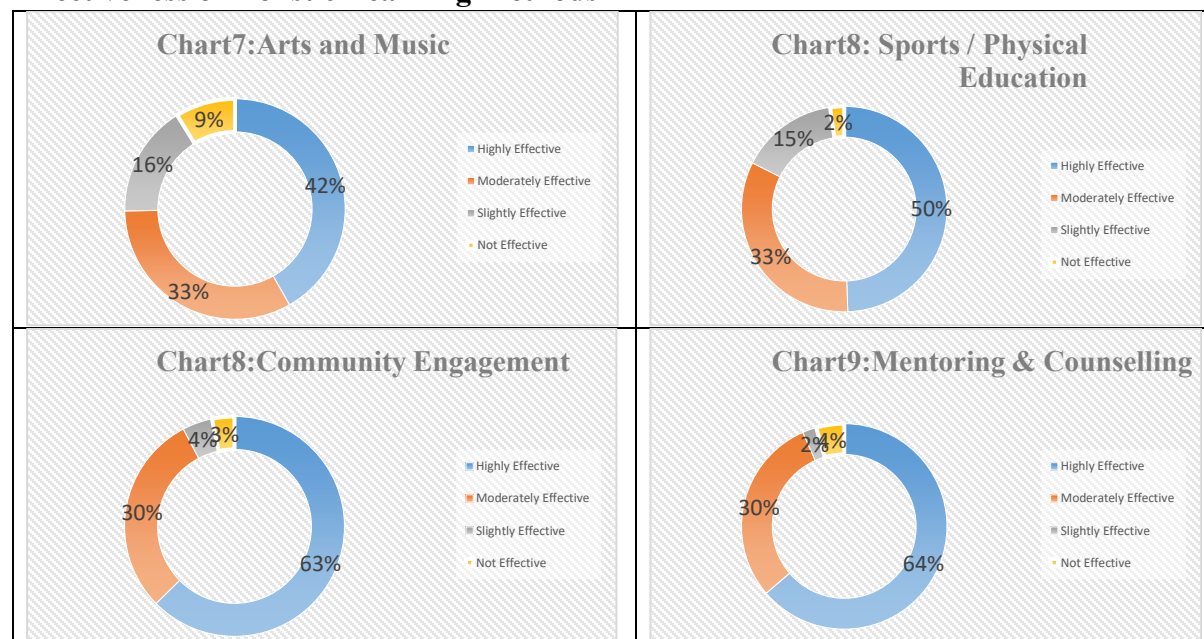
The responses indicate that a large proportion of students have a **positive perception of NEP 2020 as an educational reform**:



Interpretation: More than **96% of respondents** rated NEP 2020 positively, indicating strong acceptance and support among students.

Interpretation: A majority (~53%) rated 4 or 5, showing that students consider integration of local knowledge **important to holistic learning**, although a moderate group remains neutral.

Effectiveness of Holistic Learning Methods



Interpretation: Community engagement and mentoring programs are perceived as the **most effective methods**, with over **60% strong agreement**, indicating their crucial role in holistic development.

• Mean Score Calculation: Table 1

Method	Mean Score
Arts & Music	3.08
Sports / Physical Education	3.29
Community Engagement	3.52
Mentoring & Counselling	3.53

Interpretation: All mean values are above 3, indicating overall positive perception. Mentoring (3.53) and Community Engagement (3.52) rank highest. This confirms that experiential and support-based learning approaches are most impactful.

• Descriptive Statistical Insights

Central Tendency (Overall Trend): Majority responses are clustered around “Highly Effective” and “Moderately Effective”. Indicates positive skewness toward holistic learning practices

Variability: Low percentage of “Not Effective” responses (mostly below 5%) Suggests consistency in student opinions

The aggregated Likert-scale responses which were set from 1 (Highly Effective) to 5 (Not Effective) reveal a positive inclination toward holistic learning practices. The overall mean score indicates that students largely support the principles underlying NEP 2020.

The empirical findings validate all proposed hypotheses, demonstrating a significant relationship between holistic learning approaches and perceived educational benefits.

Findings

1. Students show **strong positive perception** toward NEP 2020.
2. Holistic learning methods like **mentoring and community engagement** are rated most effective.
3. Students value **multidimensional development**, not just academics.
4. There is a **moderate awareness gap**, indicating need for awareness programs.
5. Implementation challenges include lack of infrastructure, Insufficient teacher training, Traditional teaching methods

Recommendations

1. Institutions should organize awareness campaigns to familiarize students with NEP 2020.
2. Faculty development programs should focus on innovative teaching methodologies.
3. Greater emphasis should be placed on experiential and skill-based learning.
4. Investment in educational infrastructure and technology should be prioritized.

Limitations of the study:

1. The study is limited to a relatively small sample size.
2. The use of convenience sampling restricts generalizability.
3. Only student perspectives are considered.

Conclusion

NEP 2020 represents a forward-looking initiative aimed at transforming India's education system through holistic and multidisciplinary learning. The findings of this study indicate that students generally support these reforms. However, achieving the policy's objectives requires addressing challenges related to awareness, infrastructure, and faculty readiness.

Holistic education has the potential to foster well-rounded individuals equipped with the skills and values necessary for societal and economic development. Sustained efforts in implementation and evaluation will be crucial for realizing this vision.

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About SLU College

Shree Lalshankar Umiyashankar Arts and Harivadan & Padmaben Thakore Commerce College for Women, which was established in 1920 as an endeavour of Gujarat Stree Kelvani Mandal, has the proud privilege of being the first women's college in Ahmedabad. The college is recognised under Section 2 (f) and 12 (b) of UGC Act 17th June, 1972. The college runs various programmes in affiliation with Gujarat University such as - B.A., B.Com., and M.Com. The BS-BBA programme was added from the academic year 2025-2026. The college also runs several add-on programmes like Fashion Design and Computer Courses at the ICTC centre located at the SLU Campus.

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College Website

www.slucollege.org

Aarsi Email Id

sluaarsi@gmail.com