NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020: THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

Skill Development

Holistic Education

Emphasis on Arts and Humanities

Strategic Assessment and Evaluation System

NEP 2020

Multilingual Education

Leveraging Technology

Focus on Vocational Education

Better Accessibility to Quality Education

Effective Teacher Training and Professional Development

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Message from the Principal

It gives me immense pleasure to know that the department of English, Duliajan College is going to release it's 5ᵗʰ issue of esteemed departmental magazine **'DISCOURSEZ'** for the academic year 2024-25 with the theme **"NEP 2020: The Students' Perspectives"**. This milestone is a testament to the creativity, dedication, intellectual sprit and more that define the departmental students as well as faculties.

Over the years, this departmental magazine has served as a vibrant platform for sharing knowledge, celebrating achievements and fostering meaningful dialogue with a different theme every year amongst academic community of the department in particular and the entire college as a whole. Each edition reflects the hard work of the students and faculty, showcasing their creativity, innovations, insightful and thought provoking perspectives.

I sincerely offered my special thanks to the editorial team and all contributors for their relentless efforts in curating valued contents which not only highlights academic excellence but also strengthens the bond between students and faculty.

I encourage everyone to continue contributing ideas, articles and feedback to make future editions even more impactful.

Wishing you all happy reading ahead.

(Dr. Lok Bikash Gogoi)
Principal
Duliajan College, Duliajan
Principal
Duliajan College

Foreword from the Head-Department of English: Duliajan College

As a faculty in Higher Education invariably involved with the implementation of NEP 2020, I have often observed that while there is plenty of literature on the National Education Policy 2020 from multiple perspectives, the views of students who are its crucial stakeholders hardly finds space of importance in the prevailing discourse.

I am extremely privileged to present the 5th Edition of *DiscourseZ*, a journal which goes against the grain by highlighting the students' perspectives on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy marks a paradigm shift by emphasizing holistic, multidisciplinary and flexible learning that nurtures critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills.

Our students, as the primary stakeholders in this reform, offer invaluable insights into its potential impact. Their voices reflect enthusiasm for a student-centric approach, greater freedom in subject choices and the integration of experiential and skill-based learning. As we implement NEP 2020 their feedback is crucial in shaping its success and ensuring that education remains inclusive, equitable and future-ready.

I congratulate the contributors of this journal for their thoughtful reflections and commend the efforts of the entire team for bringing this discussion to the forefront. May this initiative inspire constructive dialogue and pave the way for an enriched learning experience for all.

Ms. Jyoti Singh Pathak
Vice-Principal- Duliajan College,
Associate Professor and Head
Department of English
Duliajan College

Message from the Head: Department of English- Dibrugarh University
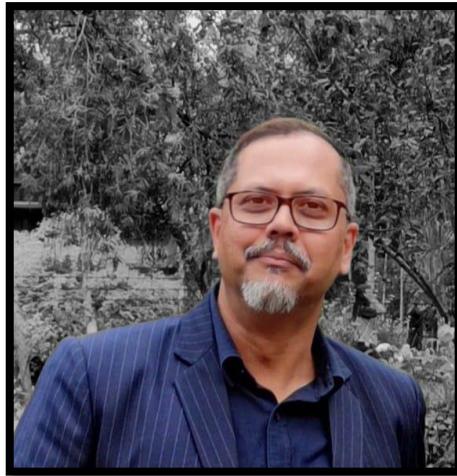
Dear members of Editorial Board, contributors and readers of *DiscourseZ.*

I first congratulate the Editorial Board for coming out with the fifth issue of *DiscourseZ*. It is indeed a great platform for young writers to exhibit their promise, prowess, and passion in negotiating with the written word. I wish them the very best!

With the launch of the Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) in 2023, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the academic journey of learners has taken a bold, new direction. Gone are the days of being confined to a single discipline. Instead, these learners are getting the opportunity to explore, experiment, and engage with a wide range of subjects—from Core Courses in their primary field to Minors, Value-Added Courses (VACs), Skill-Enhancement Courses (SECs), and Generic Elective Courses (GECs).

This shift is totally aligned with the needs of the time - skilling practices in the twenty-first century - which cannot remain unidimensional, but has to push towards multidisciplinarity. It has to prepare the learners for a world that values adaptability, integration, creativity, and interdisciplinary thinking. Whether they decide to dive into a new field or plan to hone a skill outside their comfort zone, this interdisciplinary flexibility will equip them to thrive in an ever-evolving, shape-shifting future.

But with this freedom comes responsibility. While exploring diverse areas, they must remember to stay rooted to the values of their primary discipline. The NEP 2020 envisions a balance—breadth without sacrificing depth, exploration without losing focus.

These students pursuing FYUGP courses are a pioneer of this transformative approach. How they navigate this journey will shape not only their future but also the future of higher education itself. So, they should embrace this opportunity with curiosity, passion, and a commitment to excellence.

This issue of *DiscourseZ* is a testament to how the challenges posed by NEP 2020 has been turned into opportunities, and how the stakeholders are negotiating with the systemic shift, breaking free from the disciplinary silos, and acquiring knowledge that is holistic, integrative, and relevant to the time and space.

Dr Mridul Bordoloi
Professor and Head
Department of English
Dibrugarh University

Editorial Board: DiscourseZ 2025

From Left: Mr. Gaurab Sengupta (Assistant Professor: Department of English), Ms. Jyoti Singh Pathak (Associate Professor and Head: Department of English), Ms. Nirupama Dey (Assistant Professor: Department of English)

Editorial
NEP 2020 and the Students' Takeaways

Education is the cornerstone of societal evolution and policy frameworks like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to realign academic structures with contemporary needs. As we transition into a knowledge-driven economy, the student community stands at the intersection of pedagogical transformation and global opportunities. NEP 2020 envisions a holistic, multidisciplinary and skill-based education system, shifting from rote learning to competency-based education. However, how does this shift resonate with the primary stakeholders—our students?

From a student-centric lens, NEP 2020 introduces sweeping reforms that promise greater autonomy and flexibility. The NEP 2020 document published by MHRD, Government of India states that the New Education Policy "would offer multiple entry and exit points, thus, removing currently prevalent rigid boundaries and creating new possibilities for life-long learning" (37). The Multiple Entry and Exit System (MEES) empowers learners by allowing seamless movement between academic programs, thereby fostering inclusivity. The shift from rigid disciplinary silos to a multidisciplinary approach ensures that students engage in a broader knowledge spectrum, integrating humanities, sciences and vocational training. Yet, the pragmatic challenge remains—are institutions ready to implement this level of academic fluidity within its premise?

Moreover, the policy also states that "every classroom shall have access to the latest educational technology that enables better learning experiences" (40). It underscores the role of technology-driven pedagogy advocating for Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital repositories and virtual labs "for better participation and learning outcomes" (41). While these digital interventions democratize access to quality education, they also widen the digital divide, particularly for students from rural and marginalized backgrounds. This raises a pertinent question: Does technological advancement translate into equitable education, or does it risk further stratification?

The emphasis on 'Critical Thinking, Creative Learning, and Global Citizenship' under NEP 2020 seeks to redefine traditional assessment paradigms. As the document further states that "Curriculum content will be reduced in each subject to its core essentials, to make space for critical thinking and more holistic, inquiry-based, discovery-based, discussion-based, and

analysis-based learning. The mandated content will focus on key concepts, ideas, applications, and problem-solving" (12). Moving away from high-stakes examinations, the policy advocates continuous and formative assessments, ensuring a more reflective and application-based learning process. For students, this signifies a departure from performance anxiety toward a more engaged, exploratory and experiential learning ecosystem. However, the successful execution of this reform hinges on faculty training, infrastructural readiness and curricular realignment.

NEP 2020 envisions a holistic, multidisciplinary and skill-based education system, shifting from rote learning to competency-based education. However, while these changes promise to reshape the academic landscape, a critical question arises—are students truly aware of these reforms and the challenges they entail? While the policy emphasizes flexibility through the MEES and a shift towards a more multidisciplinary curriculum, many students remain uninformed about how these changes impact their academic journeys and career trajectories. The transition from a rigid degree structure to a fluid, choice-based system requires students to make informed decisions about their education. Yet, the awareness and preparedness among the student community remain uneven, especially in institutions where systematic guidance and counseling mechanisms are either absent or inadequate. Without proper dissemination of information, students may struggle to navigate this new educational paradigm, leading to confusion rather than empowerment.

Furthermore, the success of NEP 2020 hinges not just on policy implementation but also on student engagement and preparedness. The emphasis on digital learning and skill-based training presents both opportunities and challenges. While digital platforms and online resources democratize learning, they also highlight the existing digital divide, leaving students from rural and underprivileged backgrounds at a disadvantage. Similarly, competency-based assessments and experiential learning demand a fundamental shift in mindset—from passive absorption of knowledge to active problem-solving. However, if students are not adequately oriented to these new methodologies, they may find themselves struggling to adapt. Thus, the key to ensuring the efficacy of NEP 2020 lies not just in reforming the system but in equipping students with the necessary awareness and skills to make the most of these transformations.

As India navigates through this academic metamorphosis, it is imperative that students not only adapt to these changes but also voice their concerns, expectations and

aspirations. NEP 2020 is not merely an administrative blueprint—it is a dynamic space of negotiation between policy formulation and grassroots implementation. As educators, policymakers and students collaboratively engage in this discourse, the success of NEP 2020 will ultimately be measured by its resonance in student experiences.

This edition of *DiscourseZ* will serve as a platform for critical engagement, reflective narratives and constructive dialogues on NEP 2020. The future of Indian education is being rewritten and the students' perspective is central to this transformative journey. As you navigate through these pages, may you reflect, question and engage with the ideas presented, broadening your understanding of the evolving academic landscape. May this issue inspire you to think critically, voice your insights and actively participate in shaping the educational discourse. Knowledge thrives in discussions and we hope this platform empowers the reader to explore, challenge and contribute to the future of learning with an informed and open mind.

Best Regards
Editorial Team
DiscourseZ
5th Issue: 2024-2025

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FACE TO FACE

Face to Face

Standing: Front Row (From Left): Sandeep Limbu: B.Sc. 4th Semester, Department of Physics, Sneha Dey: B.Com 2nd Semester, Department of Commerce, Mrinal Phukan: B.Sc 4th Semester, Department of Physics.

Standing: Back Row (From Left): Jyotimoyee Talukdar: BA 4th Semester, Manashree Gogoi: BA 2nd Semester, Priyanka Khanikar: BA 2nd Semester, Isha Das: BA 2nd Semester: Department of English

Q1. What do you think about Skill Enhancement or Vocational Education? Did you hear about this course before enrolling in your graduation course? If yes, what did you hear?

Mrinal: Skill Enhancement or vocational education is very important for students in the job oriented market because it helps the student to gain practical knowledge and experience related to a particular skill or set of skills. Vocational education helps one to bridge what we learn in school and what we need to apply practically, in order to succeed in our career. Moreover, vocational education can help one to acquire a job right after completing studies, since students will have the necessary skills ready.

Sneha:- Vocational education is necessary for students because colleges or schools provide us only theoretical knowledge, but with the help of vocational education and skill enhancement courses, student can apply the theoretical knowledge in the practical world.

Sandeep:- Vocational course in degree course is provided through SEC course. Under this course, one can master skills like mushroom cultivation, aquarium making and keeping, etc. which can help students to gain practical knowledge about various skills. Though vocational education is very necessary, there should be teachers who are skilled or trained in order to pass on the practical skills and knowledge to the students.

Q2. Do you have any knowledge about CBCS education? If yes, what is the difference between CBCS and NEP?

Sandeep:- Yes, there are difference between CBCS and NEP. In CBCS system when a student enrolls for the course, one has to complete the entire course to get the certificate. In this system, students are not allowed to exit from the course in between. So, if a student drops out in between, he/she will not get any certificate for the part he has completed. Also in this education system, subjects are mainly oriented to specific stream and there is a strict rigidity within the streams. Students are not allowed to choose subjects from other streams. In NEP however, students have the opportunity to exit in multiple stages with certificate. Not only this, they also have the freedom to choose subjects across other streams as well.

Mrinal:- The CBCS which was adopted in 2018 is all about allowing students flexibility in career choices. However, the main difference between CBCS and NEP is that NEP offers multiple entry and exit strategy where as CBCS does not have such strategy. A certificate which is earned in NEP can later be used to continue the same course later on if a student is willing to opt out in between. The second difference is the introduction of the fourth year in NEP. NEP helps the students to get the taste of research work in the fourth year, which will enables the student to decide whether they want to continue the research for higher education or drop it down altogether.

Sneha:- CBCS allows flexibility to the students to choose from different courses only with regards to the SEC subject, the course structure is thus limited to their domain. However, NEP allows the student to choose courses from different streams. A commerce student can choose subject from science and arts stream.

Q3. Are you aware of the internship program to be done in the Fifth Semester? What is your opinion about it?

Sneha:- No, I don't know much about the internship program, but I believe internships will be beneficial for us because they will provide real world work environment. It is definitely a good step, but there is a lack of clarity on how students can find internship. As a commerce student we learn lot of

theoretical knowledge about book-keeping and accounts an internship will teach us practical skills related to theoretical knowledge provided by an institution.

Mrinal:- In my opinion, it quite difficult for B.Sc. students to get internship. Many industries such as Thermal Plants often refuse to offer internships to us (students coming from pure science backgrounds) and that's a challenge we face. Even when some opportunities are available they are often limited to short observational visits where students visit the field, observe for a few days and write reports without gaining much practical experience.

Sandeep:- Yes, I completely agree with Mrinal that various industries often refuse to offer internships to B.Sc students. One of the main reason is that we are pure science students, and our studies focus mostly on theory. Because of this industries might feel we lack the practical skills they are looking for. It would really help if we get more chance to learn practical skills and gain real experience.

Q4. What do you think are the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach to education for student's overall development?

Mrinal:- The NEP has introduced a wide range of subjects which I believe is a positive step. It gives us the chance to study a wide range of subjects and learn from different fields. Students are allowed to undertake multidisciplinary courses through Minor, Generic and SEC subjects, but it is true that an Arts student often don't opt for Science based subjects. So there is also a need to design more interdisciplinary courses.

Sandeep:- In my opinion, it really depends on whether one has selected a subject out of personal interest, i.e. to learn something new or just to achieve more grades. Multidisciplinary courses like SEC subjects promote practical learning, which is beneficial for developing real life skills.

Sneha:- Multidisciplinary education will be beneficial if the students are taught the basic first. For example, if we choose Computer as Generic subject and we are not taught the fundamental concepts, it can become difficult for students to start directly from an advanced level, especially for those who are not familiar with the knowledge of computers. These are my practical experiences as a student undergoing FYUGP.

Q5. Do you think there is enough awareness about IKS amongst students? How can it be improved?

Mrinal:- No, I don't think there is enough awareness regarding IKS amongst students. As students we understand that it is all about traditional knowledge and cultural practices. But is it only that? The institution can take necessary measures to spread more awareness among students by organizing workshops and on IKS and related matters.

Sandeep:- Honestly, I do not know much about it and I suppose my friends too don't have much knowledge about it. In my opinion, IKS focus on providing knowledge on Indian tradition, astronomy, mathematics and history, mostly through the curriculum. Since awareness about IKS is quite low, it must be raised.

Sneha:- No, I don't know about IKS. It is completely new to me. I actually heard about it just now in the question.

Q6. What do you feel about the flexibility of the three year and four year UG degree structure with multiple entry exit options?

Sandeep:- Yes, earlier I have mentioned that, in the CBCS course, even if we exit in between, we don't get anything. NEP provides a greater flexibility which gives us opportunities to walk out of the course in between, if need arises. But the system hasn't given us enough information about the entry-exit system because we have heard that one needs to complete an internship in order to get a diploma or a certificate. The awareness is low. Awareness should be given to students regarding multiple entry exit options.

Mrinal:- The flexibility of three year or four year UG degree structured with multiple entry-exit options is beneficial for students. If someone faces any crisis or has a household problem, definitely, in situation, one can walk out of the course if necessary. It is therefore, convenient.

Sneha:- I think it is a good idea. If someone is willing to continue study, they can, and if a student wants to leave in between, they can also drop out from his or her studies after completing one year. They can at least get one certificate or diploma and can focus on other things which they want to engage in.

Q7. What kind of guidance and mentorship do you require to make you informed about NEP 2020?

Mrinal:- NEP has introduced one major thing: the multidisciplinary aspect, so it gives us a lot of choice regarding the subject selection. However, teachers should properly inform the students regarding the subjects selection and what they will gain out of it in future. Proper orientation should be given to the students.

Sandeep:- There should be proper counseling for the students before admission into the course. There should be proper orientation. Orientation should be given to students when they are in Class 12 itself.

Sneha:- I think the first classes of every semester should be a introductory classes regarding the course structure and the subjects that we are going to take. Students should know what they are choosing, which department will teach that particular subject. So the basic introductory classes are required for all

the students. I want that the students should choose their subject in their guidance of mentors.

Q8. Is the multidisciplinary approach envisaged by the NEP being properly implemented in the colleges of Assam?

Sneha:- I don't think that the multidisciplinary approach is properly implemented in the Colleges of Assam. Many government colleges do not have the necessary infrastructure, faculty or study materials to continue their education system.

Mrinal:- The answer is No. There is a disparity of implementation in the central government institutions and rural colleges. The rural colleges don't have enough or proper resource. The government should take some measures. They should expand the infrastructure first and then should move forward.

Sandeep:- Lack of faculty results in the disadvantages. Even many colleges are not able to provide such courses to students because the teachers are not skilled or trained to educate the students.

Q9. Can you tell some positive and negative aspects of NEP?

Mrinal:- There are two huge benefits as a science student. First positive aspect is the multiple entry and exit strategy. If any student face any sort of problem in continuing their studies, they can exit from the program and still have the scope of further education. The second positive aspect is the introduction of fourth year, which enables a student to get knowledge about research work. The negative aspect of NEP is the problem with infrastructure. Only the central universities with proper infrastructure can reap the full benefits of NEP. Where as the rural colleges might be at a disadvantageous position.

Sandeep:- As already mentioned, the first positive aspect is multiple entry and exit system. The second positive aspect is the facility of providing multidisciplinary courses. The third positive aspect is the research scope in the fourth year. The positive features can also act as the negative. Firstly, when a student enrolls in the degree course and wishes to exit from it, he/she is provided with the certificate, but the question is what can be the benefit of those certificates in students' career. The certificate may enhance portfolio, but may not do anything with industrial purpose or provide good jobs in the job market. The second negative aspect is many colleges are only able to provide limited courses even if we are talking about multidisciplinary courses. This happens because of the shortage of skilled faculty members and infrastructure facilities.

Sneha:- The positive aspect of NEP is definitely the multidisciplinary courses and the multiple entry exit structure it offers. Flexibility is the positive aspect of

NEP. The negative aspect of NEP is that courses which are based on theory should have more practical aspects to enhance career opportunities.

True knowledge is
not attained by
thinking.
It is what you are;
it is what you
become.

-Sri Aurobindo

Major Education Policies in India: Post-Independence Period

University Education
Commission
(1948-49)

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Secondary Education
Commission (1952-53)

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Education Commission-
Kothari Commission
(1964-66)

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National Policy on
Education
(1968)

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National Policy on
Education
(1986)

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National Education
Policy: NEP
(2020)
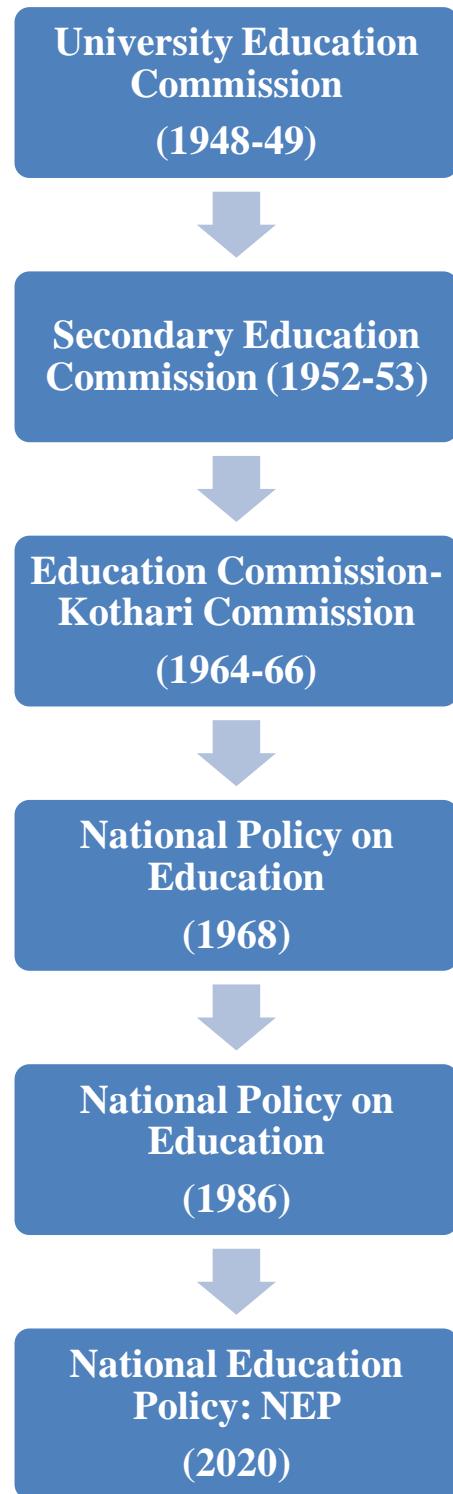
The Kasturirangan Committee: Architect of NEP 2020 and the Future of Indian Education

The Committee led by the Chairman Dr. Kasturirangan submitting the Draft National Educational Policy to the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' and Minister of State for HRD, Shri Sanjay Shamrao Dhotre in New Delhi, in the presence of Shri R. Subrahmanyam, Secretary Department of Higher Education and Smt. Rina Ray, Secretary Department of School Education & Literacy and other senior officials of the Ministry.

The Kasturirangan Committee was formed to draft a new National Education Policy (NEP) for India, replacing the outdated NPE 1986. Chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan, the committee aimed to reform the education system to meet 21st-century needs. It proposed a new curricular structure (5+3+3+4), emphasized multilingual education, promoted experiential learning, vocational training, and integrated technology in education. The committee also focused on higher education reforms, introducing flexible learning pathways, multidisciplinary institutions, and a four-year undergraduate program. The Draft National Education Policy (DNEP) 2019, prepared by this committee, formed the basis for the NEP 2020, which was later approved by the Government of India.

- **K.Kasturirangan (Chairman):** An Indian space scientist, Kasturirangan headed the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) from 1994 to 2003. He is a recipient of the three major civilian awards -- the Padma Shri (1982), Padma Bhushan (1992) and Padma Vibhushan (2000). He was previously the chairman of the NEP drafting committee.

- **Mahesh Chandra Pant:** He is the chancellor of National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, a body under the union education ministry.

- **Govind Prasad Sharma**: Sharma is the chairman of the National Book Trust, a book publishing body of the government.

- **Najma Akhtar**: Akhtar is an academician of repute. Since April 2019, she has been the vice-chancellor of the Jamia Millia Islamia, a central university in New Delhi.

- **T V Kattimani**: A former VC of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak (M.P.), Kattimani is now the vice-chancellor of Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh.

- **Michel Danino**: He is an Indian author of French origin. He is a guest professor at IIT Gandhinagar. In 2017, the Government of India conferred Padma Shri for his contribution towards Literature and Education.

- **Milind Kamble:** An Indian entrepreneur, Kamble is also the founder of Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In 2013, he was awarded Padma Shri, and currently he is the chairperson of IIM-Jammu.

- **Jagbir Singh**: Singh, is a former professor and HoD, Department of Punjabi at Delhi University. He is now the chancellor of the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda.

- **Manjul Bhargava**: He is a renowned American mathematician of Indian origin and was also part of NEP drafting committee.

- **M K Sridhar:** He is a trainer and a social activist and has served as member secretary of Karnataka Knowledge Commission and Karnataka State Innovation Council. Recently, he served as a member of a committee for draft NEP.

- **Dhir Jhingran**: Jhingran is a retired bureaucrat and has served as principal secretary of Education in Assam and as a Director in the union Ministry of Human Resource Development. He is the founder-director of 'Language and Learning Foundation (LLF), a non-profit focused on improving foundational learning of children in government primary schools.

- **Shankar Maruwada**: He is the co-founder and CEO at 'EkStep Foundation' and he is an entrepreneur and marketing professional with a wide range of experience working on large-scale projects such as Aadhaar, India's national identification programme.

ARTICLES SECTION

NEP 2020 and ICT in Education: A Brief Analysis

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E- Learning is a learning system based on formalized teaching but with the help of electronic resources. While teaching can be based in or out of the classrooms, the use of computers and the internet forms the major component of E- learning. It encompasses online courses, digital platforms, virtual classrooms and mobile applications, allowing students to learn at their own pace and convenience.

The National Education Policy 2020 has emphasized on the importance of E-learning and its integration in the transaction of education in India. This is a transformational blueprint in revamping the Indian educational system to the meet the needs of the 21st century. Acknowledging the importance of technology in education, the policy envisions the integration of digital learning tools and resources to make education more holistic and equitable. NEP 2020 acknowledges the need to make education accessible to all, geographically and socio- economically. E-learning platforms are a key to delivering quality resources to students in remote and underserved areas. To drive technology in education, the policy introduced the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) a platform to share best practices, shape policies and drive innovation in e-learning. AI driven personalized and adaptive learning systems take this further by tailoring content to individual student needs, building confidence by addressing strengths and weaknesses. The policy also empowers educators through targeted professional development programs, workshops and training so teachers can effectively use e- learning tools and deliver dynamic and interactive experiences. NEP 2020 also advocates multilingual digital content to cater to India's linguistic diversity so students can learn in their mother tongue. This approach not only promotes inclusivity but also bridges cultural and linguistic divides.

E- learning has been seen as a game changer in education, promising to make learning flexible, inclusive and accessible to all. It aims to provide quality education to every corner of the country regardless of a student's location or background. But when we look at its real impact, the situation is not as smooth as expected. The biggest promise of e-learning is personalized education. Students can learn at their own pace, revisit lessons and explore topics of their interest. Online platforms allow learners to access global knowledge from the comfort of their homes, making education more flexible and convenient.

But the reality tells a different story. Digital divide remains one of the biggest challenges in India. Many students especially in rural areas, lack access to devices, stable

internet or even electricity. This makes it hard for them to benefit from e- learning. Another challenge is student engagement. Virtual classrooms cannot fully replace the personal connection of a physical classroom. Without interaction and support many students feel isolated and unmotivated. Health concerns like long screen hours and a lack of physical activity also add to the problems. Apart from students' challenges, teachers also do not have adequate expertise in using digital tools and also have limited access to internet or devices, especially in rural areas. For teachers, keeping students engaged online is yet another challenge. Online evaluation methods may not be suitable for students. Additionally, inequality among students, with some having better access to devices and internet than others, creates learning gaps. All these challenges make e- learning a tough transition for students.

Putting E- learning into action runs into big infrastructure hurdles especially in rural and far-off areas that don't have good internet or reliable power. A lot of schools don't have the basic digital tools they need, like computers or high-tech classrooms. Many problems make it hard to keep devices working and up to date. What's more, the lack of local e-content and inadequate server capacity for large scale online learning makes things even trickier. To fix these issues, we need better digital infrastructure, internet that people can afford and clear plans to give everyone an equal shot.

However, E- learning also offers benefits. The blended learning mode promoted by NEP 2020 set to change education by mixing old school teaching with digital tools lets students learn at a speed that suits them, while still getting face to face help from teachers. This method helps close gaps in access making sure students in far off or less served areas can use good digital stuff along with classroom lessons.

The use of e- learning in NEP 2020 is a significant step toward modernizing education in India. By adopting digital tools, the policy aims to make education more accessible, flexible and inclusive for all learners. However, I believe there are significant challenges that need to be addressed. One of the major concerns, in my view, is over-dependence on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Of course, AI is helpful but at the same time, it might hamper creativity. Too much reliance on technology in education by students leads them to miss developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are required for creativity and growth. In my view, this can limit their ability to think independently and explore new ideas. The other issue I see is the abuse of the internet and mobile devices in the name of e-learning. What was supposed to be a tool for education often turns out to be a source of distraction. Instead of focusing on studies, students get caught up in social media,

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games or misinformation, which not only affects their academic progress but also harms their relationship with technology. I also believe that the language barrier remains a major challenge in e- learning. Most e- learning platforms are centered around English, which can be difficult for students of non-English speaking backgrounds. It is due to a lack of localized content or proper translation options that complicate learning for these students, hence it becomes hard for them to grasp concepts properly.

However, NEP 2020's vision of integrating e- learning is not about replacing traditional classrooms but enhancing them with technology. By combining the strengths of both traditional and digital education, it can create a balanced learning experience. With the collective efforts to address the challenges, e- learning under NEP 2020 has the potential to transform education, providing equal opportunities and preparing students to succeed in a rapidly changing digital world. It is a bold step towards a future where every learner is empowered and ready to thrive.

Here are a few suggestions to strengthen E- learning in India:

- Bridge the digital divide by providing subsidies to students in data, e- device purchase etc.
- Emphasize on development of e- learning material in regional language.
- Provide robust e- learning infrastructure in schools and colleges situated in remote areas.
- Government should regulate networks on addictive games and other such harmful e material.
- Strengthen the teaching of English language at the school level.
- Provide mandatory training to school teachers in remote area specially in ICT use in teaching.

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Indian Knowledge System in NEP 2020: Reclaiming the Roots

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India's intellectual and cultural heritage is vast, spanning a wide range of disciplines such as Ayurveda, yoga, mathematics, literature, and architecture. This rich tradition, honed over millennia, reflects the depth of Indian thought and the holistic understanding of life. The Knowledge Systems of India, including the ancient 14 vidyas and 64 Kalas, encompass fields like philosophy, arts, science, and social organization, which have shaped not only Indian society but also contributed to the global intellectual pool. Traditionally, this heritage was preserved through oral transmission and inscriptions on palm leaves. However, over time, this wealth of knowledge faced the risk of being overshadowed by modern educational systems and the aftereffects of colonization.

A significant turning point in this shift was Lord Macaulay's education policy introduced in 1835, which sought to replace traditional Indian learning with Western education. Macaulay, in his infamous Minute on Indian Education, stated, "We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect." This policy led to the decline of indigenous knowledge systems, as it prioritized English as the medium of instruction and undermined traditional forms of learning, such as Sanskrit and Persian scholarship. As a result, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) were gradually marginalized, and the education system became detached from India's cultural and intellectual roots.

Recognizing this historical disruption, *the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to revitalize IKS, ensuring its integration into contemporary education. This transformation aims to blend ancient wisdom with modern methods, creating a more inclusive and culturally rooted learning environment.* The NEP 2020 acknowledges the importance of the Indian Knowledge System as a guiding principle for the country's educational reforms. It emphasizes the need to reconnect with the traditional knowledge embedded in the Vedas, Upanishads, and other texts, alongside modern scientific progress. This integration is not just about preserving the past; it is about applying time-tested wisdom to modern challenges in health, well-being, community development, and the environment. The revival of interest in Ayurveda and yoga during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the significance of these ancient practices in promoting immunity, mental health, and overall

well-being. By introducing IKS into education, the policy aims to foster a holistic approach to learning, one that values experiential knowledge, critical thinking, and innovation.

The NEP 2020 defines IKS as follows:

Indian: It refers to *Akhanda Bharata*i-e undivided Indian Subcontinent. It Covers the area that spans from Burma on the east, modern-day Afghanistan on the West the Himalayas on the north and the Indian Ocean on the South.

Knowledge: It refers to tacit knowledge gained by insights into personal experiences and life Situations.

System: It refers to a structured methodology for accessing Knowledge.

The IKS is the systematic transfer of ancient and Contemporary Knowledge from one generation to another. It covers ancient Knowledge from various domains to address current and future Challenges. This knowledge exists in both literary and non-literary works. Literary resources cover Vedic and allied literature mainly in the Sanskrit Language, resources on other religious traditions Buddhism and Jainism and knowledge that exists in Indian languages and dialects. Non-literary resources are found in oral traditions available throughout the country.

NEP 2020 integrates the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into modern education by incorporating Indian heritage subjects like classical arts, yoga, Ayurveda, and ancient sciences into the curriculum. It promotes traditional knowledge through language by emphasizing Sanskrit and regional tongues, ensuring access to indigenous wisdom. The policy establishes centers for the study, documentation, and promotion of IKS while empowering teachers with the necessary tools to teach it effectively. Additionally, it focuses on preserving ancient texts through digital platforms and highlights the global relevance of IKS in areas such as wellness, sustainability, and innovation.

The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) is important in NEP2020 because it helps students understand their Cultural roots and develop holistically. It helps students develop holistically by integrating traditional Knowledge with modern Science. It helps students develop wisdom and ethics to tackle the challenges of the modern world. It helps students understand the relationship between traditional and modern Knowledge. Furthermore, IKS helps in preserving India's heritage and inspires pride in its Cultural legacy, enabling students to develop a balanced worldview.

The implementation of IKS in NEP 2020, thus, covers various initiatives of preservation and incorporation of ancient wisdom in India to the modern learning structure. In that regard, it focuses on the digitization of ancient texts with programs Such as the

National Mission for Manuscripts, with a focus on texts related to Ayurveda, yoga, and astronomy. Institutions like KK Handique Library plays an important role. IKS is being introduced into curricula, Such as Vedic Mathematics, Yoga, and Ayurveda, to improve analytical thinking and well-being in students. Specialized research Centers are being established under AICTE to promote interdisciplinary Studies, such as the integration of *vastu Shastra* with modern architecture or ancient astronomy with contemporary Science . This policy further promotes regional languages and traditional arts such as *Kathakali* and *Bharatanatyam* by infusing them into education for the celebration and preservation of cultural diversity.Collaborations with traditional Knowledge holders through workshops and internships ensure that IKS is kept relevant, dynamic, and accessible to future generations.

However, there are many challenges in preserving and integrating Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). Many people, especially future generations, struggle to access and understand these systems as they have been marginalized in favor of Western scientific knowledge. This has led to a lack of awareness and recognition of their depth and relevance in urban and academic spaces. Furthermore, most traditional knowledge is recorded in languages like Sanskrit, Pali, or ancient regional dialects, making it difficult for modern learners to engage with these texts. There is also a lack of interdisciplinary research, as limited collaboration exists between traditional knowledge practitioners and modern scientists or researchers. Additionally, the modern education system prioritizes Western frameworks, often sidelining indigenous knowledge systems and reducing their influence in contemporary learning and problem-solving.

The following measures can be taken for integration of IKS:
- Offering courses on Indian history, philosophy, arts and literature.
- Encouraging the study of regional languages.
- Encouraging interdisciplinary research that blends traditional Knowledge with modern scientific approaches.
- Establishing research centres dedicated to studying ancient Indian knowledge systems.
- Providing funding and support for projects exploring the practical applications of the Indian Knowledge System across various fields.

While I was a child, I often witnessed my grandparents practicing age-old traditions that seemed both fascinating and mysterious. My grandmother would prepare herbal remedies for minor ailments using ingredients from our backyard, and my grandfather would

narrate stories from the Vedas and Upanishads, emphasizing moral and ethical lessons. At that time, I did not fully comprehend the depth of this knowledge, but I was intrigued by its practicality and wisdom.

As I grew older and entered formal education, I noticed that much of what was taught in schools leaned heavily on Western perspectives, with minimal emphasis on India's indigenous knowledge systems. The richness of Ayurveda, yoga, astronomy, metallurgy, and even linguistic traditions seemed relegated to informal spaces rather than structured learning. It was only through independent exploration that I began to appreciate the vast intellectual wealth embedded in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS).

NEP 2020 recognizes the immense value of India's intellectual and cultural heritage, embedded in the Indian knowledge system(IKS). It integrates ancient wisdom from disciplines such as Ayurveda, yoga, mathematics, and the arts with modern scientific approaches to create a culturally rested, holistic education framework. This integration not only ensures the preservation of India's rich traditions but also applies time-tested knowledge to Contemporary challenges like health, Sustainability, and innovation. NEP 2020, despite Challenges like language barriers, lack of awareness, and bias towards western education frameworks, is a progressive step towards bridging the gap through Curriculum inclusion, digital preservation and interdisciplinary research .Regional languages are promoted, research Centres are established, and collaborations are fostered by NEP2020 in order to revive IKS, inspiring pride in India's Cultural legacy and equipping students with a balanced, ethical, and innovative worldview. Ultimately, the NEP 2020 envisions an education system where Traditional and modern Knowledge coexist harmoniously, ensuring sustainable growth and global recognition of India's intellectual Contributions.

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Academic Bank of Credits: Revolutionizing Higher Education Mobility in India

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Defining 'Credit':

In the context of education, 'credit' refers to a unit of measurement that represents the amount of learning or academic work a student has completed. As students complete courses and assessments, they earn credits. The number of credit required to earn a degree varies across institution and program. For example in many bachelor's degree programs, students must accumulate a certain number of credits to graduate, which is set by the institution itself. Credit brings great opportunities for the students by allowing them to take course from different disciplines, institutions or even online platforms. Academic credit is a standardized unit of measurement that reflects the amount of learning a student has completed within a specific course or program. It serves as a quantifiable metric for assessing student's workload, including instructional hours, assignments and assessments.

The credit system is widely used in higher education institutions to track academic progress and determine degree completion requirements. Academic credit is typically assigned based on the total number of instructional hours a student spends in class and on coursework. Generally, one semester credit corresponds to approximately one hour of classroom instruction per week. One of the significant advantages of the credit system is the flexibility it offers students. Many universities allow students to earn credits from various sources, including different disciplines, institutions, or even online platforms.

This flexibility enables students to personalize their education, explore interdisciplinary studies and transfer credits between institutions. Online learning platforms, such as Coursera and edX, and SWAYAM portals (in Indian context) provide credit-bearing courses recognized by accredited universities, further broadening educational opportunities. The academic credit system plays a vital role in structuring higher education, ensuring students meet necessary learning outcomes, and offering them opportunities for academic exploration. By earning and accumulating credits, students progress toward degree completion while having the option to diversify their studies through cross-disciplinary courses, credit transfers and online learning.

Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):

The Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) is a key component of the National Education Policy NEP 2020 introduced by the Government of India. It is an initiative designed to promote flexibility, mobility and a more student centric approach to education. The primary goal of the ABC is to enhance flexibility in Higher Education by allowing students to take courses from different institutions, create a personalised learning path and eventually complete their degree by accumulating required credits. *The Academic Bank of Credit is a pivotal initiative, aimed at reforming the higher education landscape by fostering flexibility and mobility for students. The ABC operates as a digital credit repository that allows students to accumulate, store and transfer academic credits across different higher education institutions.* This initiative seeks to dismantle rigid structures in the education system, offering students the freedom to pursue interdisciplinary learning and design personalized academic pathways. By leveraging digital platforms, the ABC ensures that learners can access a diverse range of courses while maintaining their academic progress without institutional constraints. The NEP 2020 document, published by the MHRD, Government of India mentions, "An Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) shall be established which would digitally store the academic credits earned from various recognized HEIs so that the degrees from an HEI can be awarded taking into account credits earned" (37).

Credits in CBCS and NEP System:

This system provides unprecedented flexibility in higher education by enabling students to take breaks, change institutions, or pursue interdisciplinary learning while maintaining their earned credits. Under the ABC system, students can accumulate credits from different universities, autonomous colleges and online platforms. These credits remain valid and can be transferred to another institution, allowing learners to complete their degrees at their own pace. The CBCS system, implemented under UGC guidelines before NEP 2020, allowed students to choose elective courses within a fixed credit structure but lacked a mechanism for credit storage or mobility. Students under CBCS were bound to a single university/institution and credit transfers were highly restricted. Additionally, CBCS did not formally recognize credits earned from online courses, limiting opportunities for learners to explore multidisciplinary education beyond their institution's offerings. Unlike CBCS, where credits were institution-specific, ABC under NEP 2020 seeks to enable a

national-level credit transfer system, ensuring that students can continue their education seamlessly across different universities.

Objectives of Academic Bank of Credit:

National Level Mobility of Students

Facilitate Multidisciplinary Education

Enables break in studies

Enables Credit Transfer

Integrating Digital Education Platforms
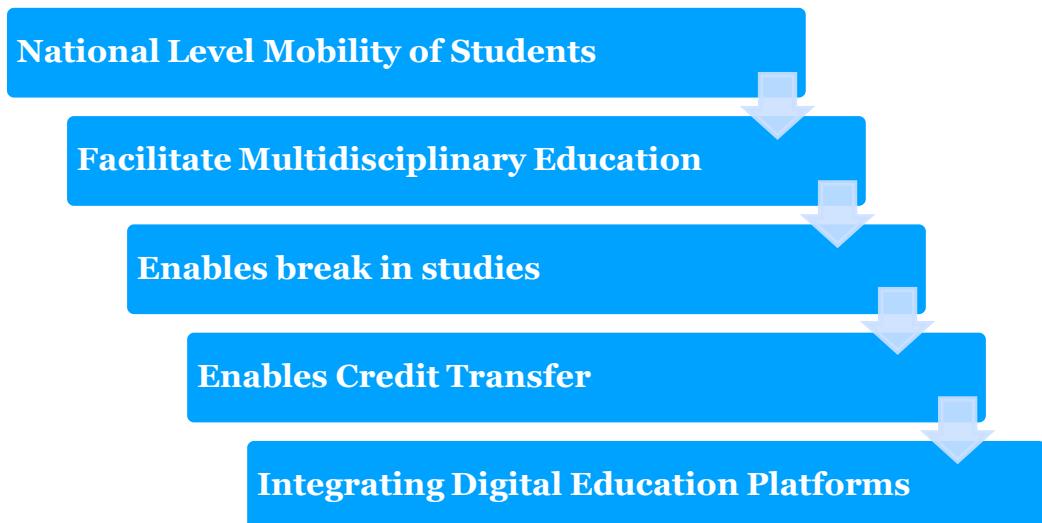
The ABC allows national level mobility of students. This objective allows students to pursue educational opportunities across different institutions and region within the country. It ensures that credits earned by students at one institution can be easily transferred to another institution, if students are willing to change the institution. This key feature of the ABC in facilitating student mobility between institutions, both within and beyond disciplinary boundaries is a positive change in the educational scenario. Under this system, students can earn credits from different universities, autonomous colleges, or even recognized online education platforms, thus making education more inclusive and dynamic.

This feature further aligns with NEP 2020's broader vision of promoting a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to education, allowing students to engage with diverse subjects beyond their primary field of study. The policy acknowledges that the future of education lies in interdisciplinary learning and skill diversification, which the ABC framework actively supports by permitting credit transferability across institutions. Academic Bank of Credit provides an opportunity to the student to take up multidisciplinary courses. For example, if a student from Arts or Commerce stream is willing to take subjects like Mathematics or Physics, i.e., subject from Science stream, they are allowed to take it. ABC focuses on students' desire of subject selection or course selection. The implementation of the Academic Bank of Credit represents a transformative shift in India's Higher Education system, moving towards a student-centric and outcome-based model. By

enabling credit accumulation and transfer, the ABC encourages flexibility, personalization and lifelong learning, in alignment with global educational standards. This initiative is expected to bridge gaps between formal education, skill-based training and employability, ensuring that students can tailor their educational journey according to their aspirations and career goals. As the policy continues to evolve, the success of the ABC will largely depend on its effective implementation, institutional cooperation, and student awareness.

ABC enables a break in studies. This objective allows students to take a break from their present studies to pursue other interest, opportunities or personal obligations. It provides students with a chance to rest and recharge reducing the risk of burnout and improving their overall mental health and well-being. It also enables students to take a break to gain practical experience, explore career options and build their professional network. Moreover, the ABC framework addresses dropout rates and learning discontinuity by enabling students to pause their education without losing their accumulated credits. In traditional education models, students discontinuing their studies due to personal or financial constraints often find it difficult to rejoin the system. However, with the ABC, credits remain valid for a designated period, allowing learners to resume their education at a later stage without starting from scratch. This feature is particularly beneficial for working professionals, individuals facing financial crunch, and those seeking to upskill over time.

It is designed to give student more flexibility and control over their learning. It allows student to pursue employment after earning a certificate or diploma and return to school later to our degree. It also enables the student to transfer credit between institution and resume their studies later. Since NEP 2020 is designed in such a manner, it allows multiple entry and exit at various points. Therefore, if a student is willing to put a break in his academic career, he can do it and the credits will remain in the academic bank. Later on one can again resume the study and start gaining credits, which will be added to the previously earned credits.

Another significant aspect of the ABC is its integration with digital education platforms. The system is designed to accommodate credits earned through online learning modules, including those offered by platforms such as *SWAYAM, NPTEL, and MOOCs*, which are recognized by the *University Grants Commission (UGC).* This expansion of credit sources ensures that students can take advantage of global and national educational resources while maintaining a structured degree program. The initiative thus fosters a

lifelong learning culture, empowering students to engage with continuous education beyond traditional institutional frameworks.

Steps to enroll in ABC:
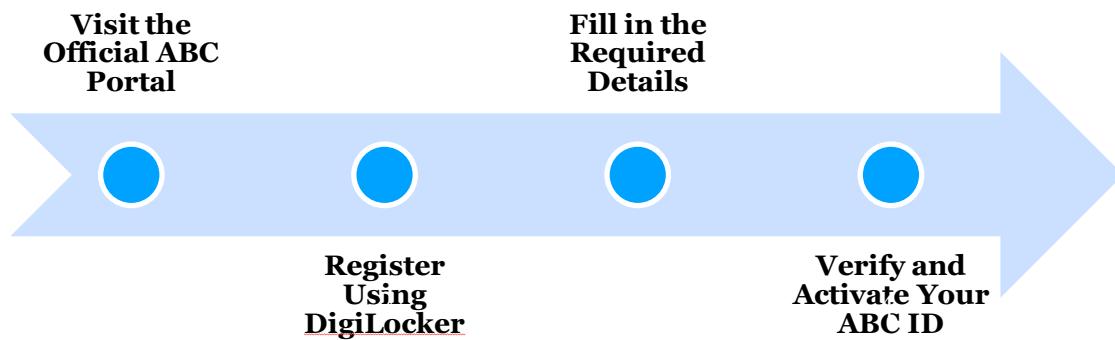
To enroll in the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)**,** one needs to follow the following steps:

Step 1: Visit the Official ABC Portal:
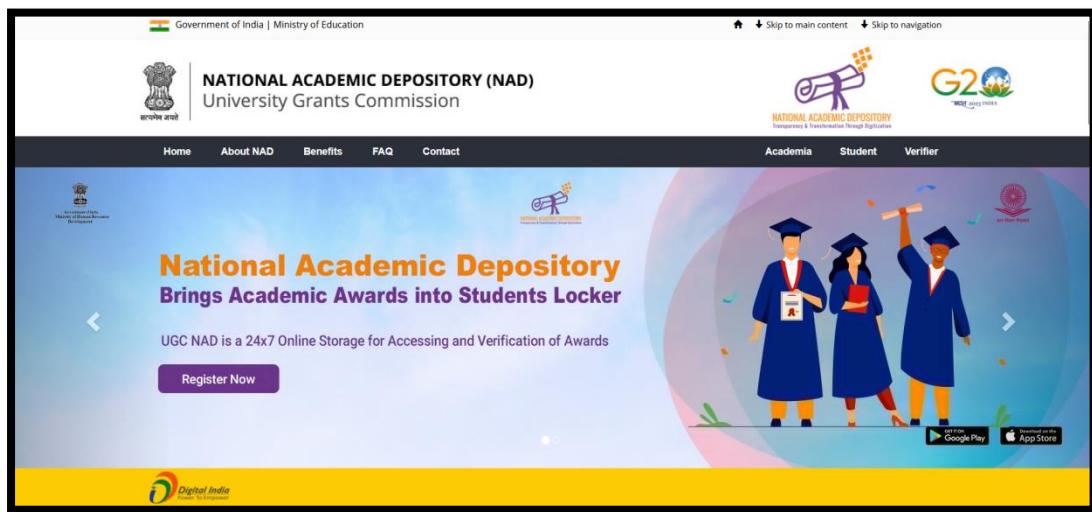
- Go to the National Academic Depository (NAD) website: https://www.abc.gov.in
- Click on "Student Login/Sign Up".

Step 2: Register Using DigiLocker:

- Sign up using Aadhaar-linked DigiLocker credentials.
- If you don't have a DigiLocker account, create one at https://digilocker.gov.in

Step 3: Fill in the Required Details:

- Enter Name, Date of Birth, Mobile Number, and Email ID.
- Provide Educational Details (University, Course Name, Year of Admission, etc.).

Step 4: Verify and Activate Your ABC ID:

- The system generates a unique ABC ID.
- Verify details and activate the account.

Step 5: Start Earning and Managing Credits:

- Once enrolled, the university will credit earned academic points to your ABC account.
- You can access, track, and transfer credits digitally.

Operationalisation of Academic Bank of Credit:

The operationalisation of the Academic Bank of Credit involves creating a national level facility that allows students to accumulate transfer and utilize academic credits across institutions. The Academic Bank of Credit serves as a digital platform where students can store their academic credits earned from recognized Higher Education Institution or HEIs. Institutions must register on the Academic Bank of Credit portal and create accounts for the students. HEIs should promote the Academic Bank of Credit system to students through various channels, including social media and institutional websites. It facilitates students to avail facilities of Academic Bank of Credit and become an account holder. Student can easily switch institutions without losing their academic progresses. The greater flexibility is the ability to choose courses and institutions allows student to customize their education to their needs.

The Academic Bank of Credit has several academic aspects that enables students to earn, store and transfer academic credits. A student must earn minimum credits in the core subject area which is necessary for a degree. The credits accumulated in the Academic Bank of Credit are valid for a maximum of seven years. This means that students have a timeframe of seven years to utilise the credits they have earned and stored in the Academic Bank of Credit. This policy motivates students to complete their degree programs within a reasonable timeframe by setting a seven year validity period for credit accumulated in the

Academic Bank of Credit. The system aims to strike a balance between flexibility and relevance, ensuring that students' skills and knowledge remain current and valuable.

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CBCS & NEP 2020: Redefining the Architecture of Indian Education

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From CBCS to NEP 2020: Transforming Higher Education in India:

Higher education in India has historically been characterized by rigid curricula, limited flexibility and a lack of interdisciplinarity. Initially, institutions emphasized discipline-specific learning, leaving little room for innovation or creativity. To address these gaps, reforms like CBCS were introduced in 2015. *CBCS provided students with some flexibility in course selection, though it retained a discipline-centric focus. However, challenges such as limited interdisciplinary, inadequate skill development, etc. led to the introduction of the NEP 2020, which aims to create a student-centric, flexible, and globally competitive education system.* Both frameworks aim to modernize and improve the quality of education by incorporating flexibility, interdisciplinarity, and student-centric approaches. However, the two systems differ in their philosophies, structures and overall goals.

CBCS and NEP 2020: Mapping Similarities

1. **Flexibility in Learning:** Both Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) and National Education Policy (NEP) provide students with the opportunity to shape their educational journeys according to their interests and carrier goals. The emphasis is on flexibility, allowing students to choose from a range of elective and core courses. This flexibility ensures that learners are not confined to one subject, rigid academic structures and can explore diverse areas of knowledge.

2. **Credit-Based System:** A fundamental similarity between the two systems is their reliance on a credit-based system. Students earn credits for completing specific courses, which can be accumulated to fulfill degree requirements. This approach facilitates measurable academic progress and ensures a modular structure for learning.

3. **Interdisciplinary Approach:** Both CBCS and NEP encourage interdisciplinary learning. Under these frameworks, students have the freedom to opt for courses beyond their core discipline, enabling them to develop a broader understanding of various fields and foster a multidisciplinary outlook.

4. **Continuous Assessment:** Both systems emphasize continuous evaluation as a replacement for the traditional reliance an end-term examinations. Through

assignments, quizzes, presentations, and mid-term exams, continuous assessment provides a comprehensive understanding of student's progress and enhances the learning process.

CBCS and NEP 2020: Mapping Differences:

Feature	CBCS	NEP 2020
Philosophy	Discipline-focused, limited interdisciplinarity	Holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary
Duration	Fixed 3-year undergraduate program	Multiple exit options: 1-year (certificate), 2-year (diploma), 3-year (degree), 4-year (research)
Multiple Entry & Exit	Not available	Available
Focus on Research	No research component in UG programs	Strong emphasis on research, 4th-year research specialization
Curriculum Design	Traditional academic framework	Skill-based, vocational training, and multidisciplinary education
Global Perspective	Limited international collaboration	Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), global credit transfer, international partnerships

While CBCS and NEP share some commonalities, their foundational philosophies and implementation strategies differ significantly.

1. Philosophy: The NEP is designed to be holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary, emphasizing the integration of vocational education, life skills, ethics, and values into the academic framework. It aims to create well-rounded individuals prepared for the complexities of the modern world. In contrast, CBCS, while offering flexibility within disciplines, primarily focuses on traditional academic structures. The interdisciplinary approach of CBCS is limited when compared to the broader and more exclusive vision of the NEP.

2. Duration: A major point of distinction is the duration and flexibility of undergraduate programs. The NEP introduces multiple options, allowing students to

complete their education in 1 year (certificate), 2 years (diploma), 3 years (degree), or 4 years (degree with research). This flexibility accommodates diverse student needs and career aspirations. Conversely, CBCS mandates a fixed 3-year undergraduate program, offering no variations in duration or exit points.

3. Multiple Entry and Exit Options: The NEP introduces the concept of multiple entry and exit points in undergraduate programs. Students can leave the program after completing specific milestones and earn corresponding qualifications - a certificate after one year, a diploma after two years, a degree after three years, and a research specialization after four years. In contrast, CBCS lacks this provision and requires students to complete the full program to earn a degree.

4. Focus on Research: The NEP places a strong emphasis on research and innovation. By offering a 4-year undergraduate program with research opportunities, the NEP encourages students to engage in advanced studies, develop critical thinking skills, and contribute to knowledge creation. CBCS, however, does not integrate research components into undergraduate programs, limiting opportunities for students to engage in meaningful research at the early stages of their education.

5. Curriculum design: Under the NEP, the curriculum is holistic and skill-based, with a focus on vocational training and multidisciplinary education. The NEP also prioritizes equipping students with skills relevant to the 21st century, such as critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving. In comparison, CBCS primarily adheres to traditional academic framework, with limited integration of vocational or skill-based components.

6. Global perspective: The NEP incorporates a global perspective by encouraging credit transfers through the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC). This system enables students to transfer credits between institutions, including international universities, fostering a more internationalized curriculum. Additionally, the NEP aims to establish partnerships with global institutions to enhance the quality of education in India. On the other hand, CBCS has a limited global outlook and does not emphasize credit transfer or international collaboration to the same extent.

In essence, while CBCS laid the groundwork for flexibility in higher education, its scope remained discipline-centric and structurally rigid. NEP 2020 builds upon this foundation, offering a more inclusive, research-driven, and internationally aligned framework. By addressing the shortcomings of CBCS and embracing a holistic approach, NEP 2020 aims to modernize India's education system, making it more adaptable to the evolving demands of the global landscape.

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NEP 2020: Transforming Education in India through a Multidisciplinary Approach

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Multidisciplinary Education: The Indian Scenario: Pre NEP 2020:

Education is the source which gives light to the mankind. Education is the medium of knowledge, information, skills, understanding rights and duties as a human being. Education always provides a new direction, dimension and perspective over each and every aspect. It is the foundation for achieving goals, maintaining a balanced and just society and operating towards the development of the society. Preeminent education in the nation is the best way to guide the people to take the country in its best position, maximizing the country's literacy rate, employment rate and many more positive changes in different fields of the country.

The world is going through rapid changes with advance technologies, such as the machine learning, artificial intelligence, etc. But on the other hand, the need for a skilled workforce, particularly involving mathematics, computer science, and data science in conjunction with multidisciplinary abilities across the sciences, the social sciences and humanities are equally important. To move parallelly with the current state, people's multidisciplinary knowledge and abilities must be honed as well.

The document on NEP 2020 by MHRD states how India has a long tradition of holistic and multidisciplinary learning, from universities such as Takshashila and Nalanda, to the extensive literatures of India combining subjects across fields. Ancient Indian literary works such as Banabhatta's *Kadambari* described a good education as knowledge of the 64 Kalaas or arts; and among these 64 'arts' were not only subjects, such as singing and painting, but also 'scientific' fields, such as chemistry and mathematics, 'vocational' fields such as carpentry and clothes-making, 'professional' fields, such as medicine and engineering, as well as 'soft skills' such as communication, discussion and debate. The very idea that all branches of creative human endeavour, including mathematics, science, vocational subjects, professional subjects and soft skills should be considered 'arts', has distinctly Indian origins. This notion of a 'knowledge of many arts' or what in modern times is often called the 'liberal arts' (i.e., a liberal notion of the arts) must be brought back to Indian education, as it is exactly the kind of education that will be required for the 21st century.

Introduction of the CBCS System: Altering Traditional Models:

Before the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020, India's higher education system was largely structured around a disciplinary silo-based model, where students were expected to specialize in a single stream—Science, Commerce, or Humanities. Multidisciplinary education was limited and students had little flexibility in choosing subjects outside their designated fields. While some universities/institutions had introduced elective courses, the overall structure remained rigid, preventing holistic and interconnected learning. Efforts to introduce a credit-based and flexible system were made through the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS), which was implemented in Indian universities in the mid-2010s. However, CBCS leaned more towards an interdisciplinary approach rather than a truly multidisciplinary one. Students were given some freedom to choose electives, but these were largely confined within their broad discipline. For instance, a student pursuing a degree in Physics could opt for an elective in Mathematics or Computer Science but had little to no access to courses in Literature, Philosophy or Political Science. This prevented the cross-disciplinary integration that is essential for a truly multidisciplinary education model.

The interdisciplinary nature of CBCS meant that while students could study related subjects, they could not freely explore disciplines outside their academic stream. This system allowed for integration within domains but lacked the openness required for a multidisciplinary framework, where subjects from entirely different fields could be combined. For example, CBCS permitted a combination like Sociology and Economics but made it difficult for students to take courses across vastly different disciplines, such as combining Physics with History or Chemistry with Literature. Moreover, CBCS was rigid in structure, as universities and institutions often provided pre-fixed elective options rather than a truly open-ended selection of courses. As a result, the CBCS framework, though an improvement over the traditional rigid model, failed to achieve the true spirit of multidisciplinary education.

Shift to a More Open and Flexible Multidisciplinary Model under NEP 2020:

With the introduction of NEP 2020, the education system moved toward a fully multidisciplinary model, breaking the silos of specialization and allowing students greater flexibility in subject choices. Unlike CBCS, which was partially interdisciplinary, NEP enables students to explore a holistic blend of humanities, sciences, arts, and vocational

education**,** fostering a more integrated approach to learning. Its main motive is to transform the education system into a more holistic, multidisciplinary, flexible and inclusive one. The NEP 2020 document by MHRD states that the new education system shall be-

> A holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings -intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, and moral in an integrated manner. Such an education will help develop well-rounded individuals that possess critical 21st century capacities in fields across the arts, humanities, languages, sciences, social sciences, and professional, technical, and vocational fields; an ethic of social engagement; soft skills, such as communication, discussion and debate; and rigorous specialization in a chosen field or fields. Such a holistic education shall be, in the long term, the approach of all undergraduate programmes, including those in professional, technical, and vocational disciplines. (36)

This holistic education will primarily focus on overall personality of an individual- physical, mental, emotional and intellectual wellbeing of individuals. In holistic education, it is not only about acquiring knowledge but also about character development, values, skills that will help the individual in the future. Multidisciplinary education on the other hand, focuses on merging different subjects and disciplines to provide more comprehensive and interconnected understanding of the world. This policy also seeks to emphasize on experimental, inquiry-based approach to education and to enable students to have better critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills. The NEP also prioritizes to promote vocational education into mainstream of education to make students' skills better which can help them at some point in the future.
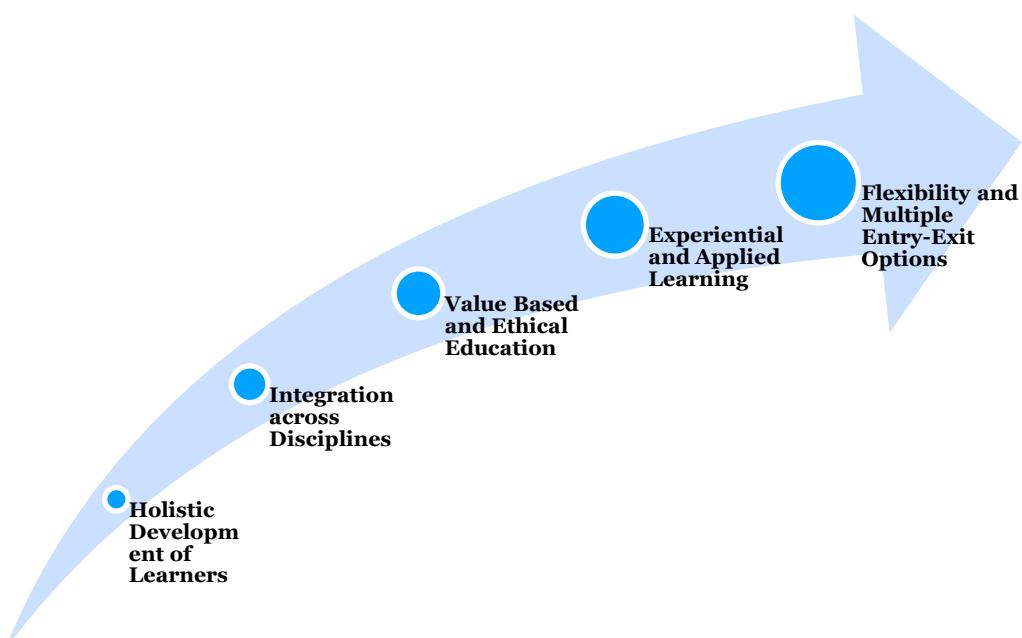
Mapping the Components of a Multidisciplinary Approach:

Multidisciplinary education is a vital part of India's modern education system. The NEP 2020 seeks to give students access to a wider knowledge base and skills and prepare them for a rapidly changing world. Multidisciplinary education focuses on teaching and learning that relate to the combination of different subject areas and disciplines to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the world. It has studied the challenges that are faced in the advance society today which require solutions to the problem in more advance manner. So, it seeks the combination of knowledge and skills from various areas and factors to address real-world problems and issues. It is designed to foster an understanding of the interconnectedness of various fields and how they can be integrated for better problem-solving. This disciplinary approach makes the student skilled enough to adapt any kind of situation related to job or studies as it provides boundaryless knowledge and skills on different areas. It equips individuals with critical thinking ability, broader mindset, collaboration among different disciplines.

Multidisciplinary education prioritizes the holistic development of students by addressing intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and ethical dimensions. It goes beyond academic learning, encouraging students to develop empathy, cultural awareness, and emotional intelligence. Engaging with diverse subjects fosters adaptability and prepares students for a dynamic world. For instance, while studying arts or literature, students might cultivate emotional sensitivity, whereas learning about technology or economics enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This balanced development nurtures individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also socially responsible and emotionally mature. *Flexibility is a cornerstone of multidisciplinary education. Unlike rigid traditional curricula, this approach allows students to design their academic paths by choosing subjects from various fields. This freedom empowers learners to explore their interests and align their studies with personal aspirations, whether they pursue conventional career paths or explore emerging fields.* For instance, a student interested in entrepreneurship could combine business studies with psychology and digital marketing, crafting a tailored academic journey. Such flexibility encourages self-directed learning and cultivates a sense of ownership over one's education. The fusion of diverse disciplines often sparks creativity and innovation. Exposure to different fields encourages students to think beyond traditional boundaries, combining ideas in unique ways. For instance, combining design principles with engineering can lead to groundbreaking solutions in architecture or product development.

NEP 2020 also champions experiential and applied learning, shifting the focus from rote memorization to hands-on, real-world problem-solving. The NEP 2020 document states,

> Specific sets of skills and values across domains will be identified for integration and incorporation at each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education. Curriculum frameworks and transaction mechanisms will be developed for ensuring that these skills and values are imbibed through engaging processes of teaching and learning. (12)

This approach ensures that students can apply their theoretical knowledge to practical situations, making education more engaging, dynamic, and skill-oriented. In Higher Education Institutuions, this is done through subjects like the Skill-Enhancement and Ability Enhancement Courses (SEC and AEC) embedded in the curriculum. One of the most transformative changes in NEP's multidisciplinary education is the integration of internships, community service and fieldwork into academic programs. Multidisciplinary education plays a crucial role in enabling students to explore and pursue their interests by offering a holistic and interconnected learning experience.

A 'Multiple Entry and Exit System' also exists which allows the students to join academics and leave the course in between if any individual is unable to continue their academics. Students can also earn a certificate, diploma and degree based on the duration of time of the course. This system focuses on reducing the dropout rates of the students in higher education.

Challenges of Multidisciplinary Education:

One of the most prominent challenges of multidisciplinary education is the complexity of designing a balanced curriculum. Integrating multiple disciplines requires careful planning to ensure that the curriculum is not overloaded and maintains coherence. Institutions often struggle to provide a structure that allows students to explore diverse subjects without compromising depth in any particular area. Additionally, aligning multidisciplinary courses with existing educational standards and frameworks can be difficult, leading to inconsistencies in quality and outcomes. While the flexibility of multidisciplinary education is an advantage, it can also overwhelm students. Navigating through a broad range of subjects and designing their own academic pathways requires a high degree of self-awareness and decision-making skills, which many students may lack.

This can lead to confusion, stress, and difficulty in managing workloads, especially if students are not provided with adequate guidance and support. Also it is seen that though Multidisciplinary System allows a greater flexibility for students to choose subjects, yet Humanities students do not opt for Science subjects. And many students opt for subjects where they can score more marks instead of actually engaging with the subjects. Also, effective multidisciplinary education demands educators who are not only experts in their respective fields but also capable of teaching across disciplines and fostering connections between them. However, there is often a shortage of such skilled teachers. This type of education system also demands large infrastructure facilities which are not present in many institutions. Implementing multidisciplinary education requires significant investment in resources, including infrastructure, technology and materials. Institutions may need to set up new laboratories, libraries, and collaborative spaces to support diverse learning activities.

Addressing the Challenges:

In conclusion, Multidisciplinary education represents more than a shift in academic methods; it is a transformative mindset that values integration, adaptability and collaboration. By embracing holistic development and flexibility, it equips learners with the tools to navigate the complexities of the modern world. As the demands of the 21st century grow increasingly interconnected and multifaceted, the need for multidisciplinary thinkers and problem solvers becomes paramount. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the significance of multidisciplinary education, marking a paradigm shift in India's education system. The policy addresses the rigid structures and shortcomings of the earlier system by promoting flexibility, inclusivity and skill development. By integrating diverse disciplines, the NEP fosters a student-cantered approach that emphasizes experiential learning and critical thinking. This transition from traditional, linear models to a flexible, forward-looking framework signifies a critical step toward creating a more equitable, innovative, and globally competitive society. Despite its transformative potential, the implementation of multidisciplinary education faces challenges. These include designing balanced curricula, training skilled educators, and addressing resource constraints. Additionally, resistance to change from stakeholders and the need for industry alignment pose significant hurdles. Effective assessment methods that measure interdisciplinary learning outcomes must also be developed to ensure the true value of this approach is realized. More multidisciplinary courses are to be designed so that Humanities students can opt for Science subjects as well. Overcoming these challenges requires collaborative efforts

from policymakers, educators, industries and communities. Investing in teacher training, infrastructure and technology will be crucial for fostering the seamless integration of multidisciplinary education into existing systems. The benefits of multidisciplinary education, however, far outweigh these challenges. It promotes flexibility by allowing students to explore diverse interests and career paths, breaking away from rigid subject boundaries.

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