

## **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.

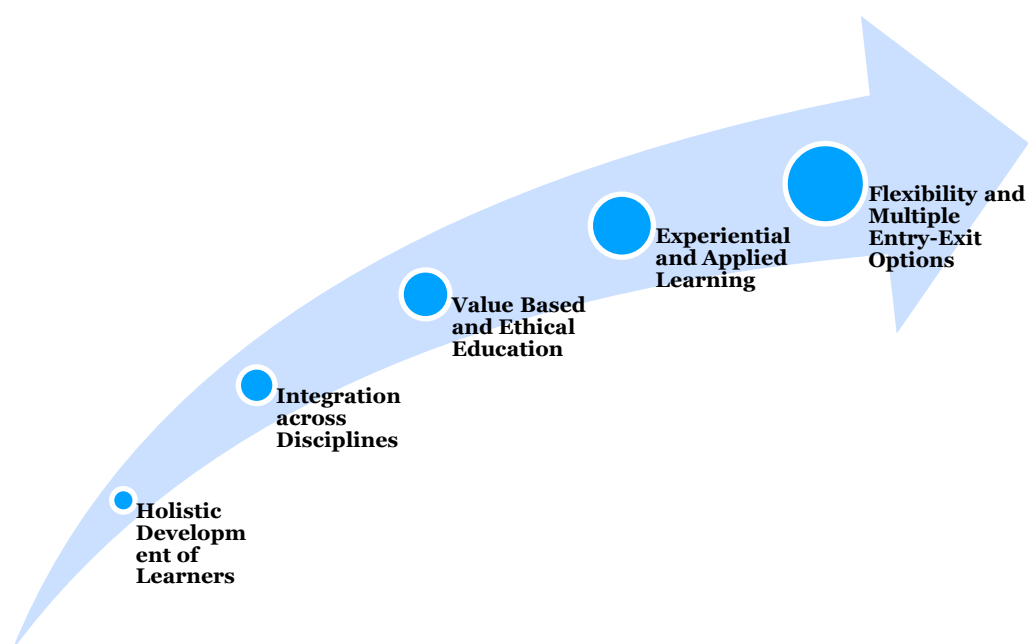
## **Shift to a More Open and Flexible Multidisciplinary Model under NEP 2020:**

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 Institutions, 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-centered 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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# Scope and Challenges of the National Education Policy 2020: Boon or Bane

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## Introduction:

After running “The National Policy on Education 1986” for 34 years, the Union Cabinet approved the National Education Policy (NEP) in July 2020. This policy will usher in sweeping changes to the education policy of the country including a renaming of the Ministry of Human Resource Development as the Education Ministry. The new education policy (NEP)2020 presents a number of opportunities, including a holistic and multi-disciplinary approach, early childhood education, flexibility in subject choices, vocational training technology integration, and enhanced teacher training. *National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) envisions a massive transformation in education through- “an education system written in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society by, providing high-quality education to all, thereby making India global knowledge superpower” (Kumre). However, along with opportunities it also has many challenges which can be discussed as the drawbacks of the new policy.* This article will attempt to discuss the scope and challenges found in the detailed analysis of NEP 2020. Let’s first see the opportunities provided by the New Education Policy in India.

## Opportunities in NEP:

The National Education Policy (NEP)2020 in India has opened up a wide range of opportunities across various levels of education, innovation, and professional development. Some of the major areas where opportunities have emerged include School Education, Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education, Flexible Curriculum, Integration of Technology, Promoting Regional and Local Languages, Vocational Education, Critical Thinking, Research and Innovation.

**School Education:** In the field of education the Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) focuses on foundation learning which opens a various number of opportunities for developing innovative teaching methods, tools and content for early education for children. The NEP also gives emphasises on experiential and skill-based

learning where we can learn through various activities which creates a demand for new age learning kits, teacher training and curriculum redesign.

**Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:** The New Education Policy (NEP )2020 provides students a number of opportunities where they can explore multiple disciplines and develop various skills. For example, a science student can pursue music or arts alongside his/her core subjects. This can enhance their critical thinking, creativity and problem solving skills.

**Flexible curriculum:** Students have the choice to select their subjects based on their interests through the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020. It also helps in breaking the rigid boundaries of pursuing science, commerce and arts streams. Now students can pursue their subjects according to their wishes and interests. This increases engagement and students are more involved in their education. It also aligns education with career aspirations. Moreover, NEP 2020 offers flexible entry and exit. Students after the completion of first two semester successfully can achieve the certificate and leave the institute. If any student regrets after choosing the course can go for other opportunities without having loss.

**Integration of Technology:** Nowadays technology is also an important part of our education. Through the development of science, the teaching techniques have also improved in our education system. The use of AI, virtual labs, and digital platforms enhances learning experiences and provides access to quality resources. It also bridges the urban-rural gap and makes education more inclusive for all.

**Promoting Regional and Local Languages:** In the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the regional and local languages are given more emphasis which is very much essential for the students of today's generation. As the students and children of today's generation are no longer interested in their own mother tongues and are fascinated by western culture and languages is a matter of concern today. Therefore, education in mother tongues up to Grade 5 ensures better understanding and preservation of our cultural heritage which is an important aspect of the education policy. It also improves comprehension and reduces drop outs in rural areas.

**Vocational Education:** Vocational Education means the education which prepares the skills which is required in the market as art as an artisan, trade as a trade person and as technician. This kind of education not only gives us job opportunities but also develops one's individual personality and development of the person which helps us to start self-employment and gives employment opportunities to others. NEP 2020, aims to empower students to choose their careers and choose the field, which day want.

**Critical Thinking:** In the 21st century, we have to think critically because there are so many problems in the world which we are facing such as environmental problems, socio-economic problems and medical issues. NEP 2020, gives emphasis on critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students. Critical thinking involves analysing, evaluating and synthesizing information to take decision. NEP 2020 also gives opportunity to the students to think critically and implement in their lives.

**Research and Innovation:** In the world of Research and Technology there is also a need for research and innovation in the field of education. NEP 2020, allows the promotion of research and innovation. It emphasizes a multidisciplinary approach, a flexible atmosphere and sufficient funding for research and innovation. NEP 2020, encourages to establish strong research centres. NEP 2020, encourages collaboration with government, industry and academic institutes and works on small practical projects, which government, industries and academic institutes are facing. This is a good opportunity to develop ourselves find innovative ideas and develop the economic growth of the nation.

**Challenges:**

The NEP 2020 has come with a bunch of new opportunities and promises but it is not free from hurdles. Though it aspires to transform India's education system with a holistic, flexible and skill-oriented approach, its ambitious vision comes with significant challenges. The policy's success is contingent on overcoming deep-rooted challenges - financial constraints, digital inequalities, linguistic barriers and the risks of privatization that threaten to widen existing disparities. Without meticulous execution and systematic reforms, NEP's promise of inclusivity and modernization may remain an unfulfilled dream, creating new roadblocks instead of removing old ones.

One of the most pressing challenges of the NEP is the enormous financial requirement for its implementation. The policy envisions increasing education spending to 6% of GDP, a target that has remained elusive for decades. Without adequate funding, the ambitious reforms – such as improving school infrastructure, training teachers and integrating digital education -may remain mere aspirations. Government schools, particularly in rural areas, suffer from inadequate resources and without adequate funding, or significant investment, these institutions will struggle to implement the NEP's reform effectively. The risk is that elite schools and private institutions with their access to better resources, will seamlessly integrate the changes, leaving Government schools further behind and widening the gap between privileged and underprivileged students.

A second deeply entrenched barrier lies in the proposed linguistic shift. While promoting education in regional languages up to grade 5 has been lauded for fostering cultural identity, it carries potential drawbacks. English remains the dominant global language in higher education and employment sectors. If students are educated primarily in regional languages without a strong foundation in English, they might find themselves at a disadvantage in competitive exams, higher studies and global job markets. This could create a class divide where private school students- who continue to receive an English medium education have greater access to opportunities, while those from vernacular backgrounds face systematic exclusion.

Digital education, a significant component of NEP, presents another paradox. On the one hand, it aims to democratize learning through online platforms and virtual resources. On the other, the stark digital divide in India threatens to turn these advantages into a barrier. Millions of students in rural areas lack access to high-speed internet, smartphones or even reliable electricity. While urban students might benefit from cutting-edge technological integration, their rural counterparts could be left struggling, exacerbating educational inequalities rather than reducing them. The very tool meant to bridge gaps may, in reality, reinforce them, leaving a vast section of students stranded in a system that no longer caters to their needs.

Equally concerning is the policy restructuring of the school system from the traditional 10 + 2 model to the 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 framework. The first stage known as the foundation stage covers 5 years of education. It includes 3 years of Pre-primary and 2 years of primary school. Next comes the Preparatory stage, which spans 3 years. This phase marks the beginning of more structured education, where children are introduced to subjects such as Language, Mathematics, Science and Social sciences. The third stage is the Middle stage also lasting three years. At this point, students transition to a more subject-oriented approach. Finally, the Secondary stage spans 4 years and focuses on multi-disciplinary learning. Students have greater flexibility in choosing subjects across different streams. While this aligns with global education structures, its execution is fraught with complications. Teacher training programs need to be entirely revamped, curriculums rewritten and new assessment methods developed. However, India already faces a shortage of qualified teachers, particularly in rural areas. Without adequate training, Educators might struggle to transition to the new pedagogical approach, leading to inconsistencies in learning outcomes. This gap could create a chaotic transition period, with some institutions adopting faster than others, again deepening educational disparities.

Higher education reforms under NEP, particularly the push for multi-disciplinary learning and the restructuring of regulatory bodies present another set of hurdles. While flexibility in degree programs is a welcome change, its execution remains ambiguous. If Universities fail to establish clear guidelines on credit transfers and interdisciplinary programs, students may find themselves lost in a system that offers choices without the proper direction. Furthermore, the move to establish a single regulatory body, The Higher Education Commission of India(HECI), raises concerns about excessive centralisation. Bureaucratic control over Universities stifles institutional autonomy, limiting innovation rather than fostering it.

Privatisation of education a silent undercurrent in NEP, poses another significant threat. While the policy promotes investment in education, there is little clarity on how it will ensure that private institutions do not exploit students through exorbitant fees. If government institutions fail to implement NEP effectively due to financial constraints, Private Universities and schools may dominate the system, making quality education an expensive privilege rather than a fundamental right. This commercialisation could drive a deeper wedge between social classes, where only the economically privileged can afford world-class education, while the majority struggle with Sub-per institutions.

Furthermore, the NEP envisions a stronger integration of vocational training into school education. While skill-based learning is crucial for employment, the lack of clear industry-academia collaboration raises concerns. There is a shortage of qualified trainers who can effectively teach vocational subjects. Many schools especially in rural areas face a lack of adequate teachers with industry expertise, making it difficult for students to receive high-quality vocational education. Additionally, the absence of a well-structured syllabus further hinders progress, without a standardized curriculum aligned with industry requirements, students often learn outdated skills that do not match the current employment trends.

### **Conclusion:**

The National Education Policy 2020 stands as a crossroads, one that leads either to a brighter more equitable future or to a system riddled with disparities and confusion. Its vision is undeniably ambitious, offering a road map to an education system that is flexible, inclusive and aligned with global standards. However, its success hinges on meticulous execution, unwavering financial commitment and willingness to address its inherent challenges. Yet amid these challenges hope lingers. The potential of NEP is vast and if stakeholders, Government, Educators and communities work in unison, these obstacles can

be overcome. A reform education system free from the shackles of inequality and inefficiency is not an impossible dream. It is a challenge that India must rise to meet for within its resolution lies the promise of a truly enlightened and empowered future.

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## **NEP Internships: Bridging Education with Real-World Experience**

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The NEP internship refers to the internship program introduced as a part of the ‘National Education Policy 2020’ in India. It is a bold and transformative initiative aimed at overhauling India’s education system to better prepare students for the challenges of the modern world by embedding internships and experiential learning into academic programs. This forward-thinking initiative recognises the urgent need for practical exposure and skill development, ensuring that students are academically qualified and industry-ready. In a job market that demands real-world experience, the NEP empowers students by emphasizing hands-on learning, as highlighted in the India Skill Report (ISR) 2022, which reveals that a staggering 88.6% of graduates actively seek out internships. This growing trend highlights a newfound understanding of the value of practical experience before stepping into full-time employment.

Internships are more than just an addition to a résumé; they are a transformative force in shaping a student’s career. They provide invaluable industry insights, foster essential professional skills, and enhance practical problem-solving abilities. The ISR points out that commerce graduates boasted the highest employability rate at 60.62% in 2023, underscoring the profound impact of hands-on experience through internships. To support this innovative approach, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has rolled out the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programs (CCFUP) under the NEP. This groundbreaking framework introduces a flexible choice-based credit system, allowing for multiple entry and exit points while embracing a multidisciplinary approach. It ensures that internships are not merely optional; instead, they are recognized as credit-bearing activities that integrate education with hands-on industry experience.

*The internships facilitated by the CCFUP are designed to be inclusive and diverse, encompassing sectors ranging from government institutions and private companies to research labs, NGOs, higher education institutions, and entrepreneurial ventures. Students engaged in real-world learning under the guidance of seasoned experts, cultivating critical thinking, innovation, and adaptability. These enriching experiences empower students to build professional networks, develop industry-relevant skills, and foster workplace ethics, which significantly enhances their employability and career prospects. By weaving internships into the fabric of higher education, the NEP aspires to*

*mold well-rounded individuals armed with technical expertise, creativity, ethical values, and problem-solving skills.*

The vision for internships is not just as a means of gaining experience; they are seen as a powerful learning journey that enables students to apply their academic knowledge to address real-world challenges while nurturing an entrepreneurial and research-oriented mindset. Ultimately, this approach aims to bridge the chasm between education and employment, ensuring that graduates emerge as productive, engaged, and responsible citizens—ready to contribute to the sustainable growth and development of the nation.

### **Key Objectives of NEP Internship 2020:**

Research and analysis suggest that internships are instrumental in providing students with invaluable hands-on experience while helping them acclimatize to workplace dynamics. They serve as a crucial link between academic knowledge and practical application, allowing students to cultivate job-specific skills, enhance their research capabilities, and navigate various professional environments. A thoughtfully designed internship program should ideally offer advantages to both the interns and the host organizations by encouraging skill development, facilitating industry exposure, and promoting meaningful learning experiences. In light of these insights, it can be said that internships in undergraduate level play a crucial role in helping students gain hands-on experience while familiarizing themselves with workplace dynamics. They serve as a bridge between academic learning and real-world applications, allowing students to develop job-specific skills, strengthen their research capabilities, and explore professional environments. A well-structured internship program should benefit both the intern and the host organization by fostering skill development, industry exposure, and practical learning.

Based on these findings, the key objectives of undergraduate internships, particularly in employability and research, can be outlined as follows:

1. **Connecting Learning with Practical Work:** – Internships serve as a vital bridge between academic knowledge acquired in classrooms, workshops, and research labs and real-world professional experiences. This seamless integration empowers students to apply their learning in diverse settings ranging from innovative startups to NGOs and established corporations ensuring their readiness to navigate the complexities of the job market.
2. **Understanding Workplace Dynamics:** – Engaging directly in professional environments equips students with invaluable insights into workplace challenges and

opportunities. This firsthand exposure cultivates adaptability to various cultures and expectations, positioning students to thrive amid emerging job trends and industry shifts.

3. **Developing Research Skills:**– Fostering a research-oriented mindset is imperative in today’s competitive landscape. Internships should encourage students to master research methodologies, data analysis, and ethical practices, along with understanding intellectual property rights. By cultivating the ability to prepare research papers and patents, students will be equipped to address and solve complex real-world problems with confidence.
4. **Exposure to Emerging Technologies:** – Internships are crucial in introducing students to cutting-edge technologies and automation, illuminating their transformative effects across various job roles and industries. Such exposure not only keeps students abreast of advancements but also positions them as forward-thinking contributors to their fields.
5. **Fostering Entrepreneurship:** – Developing a nuanced understanding of business operations fosters an entrepreneurial spirit in students. Internships should ignite innovation and problem-solving skills, empowering students to become proactive job creators, enhancing their employability and leadership potential.
6. **Encouraging Social Responsibility:**–A strong emphasis on social responsibility within internship programs is vital. By raising awareness of pressing societal issues, students are inspired to become proactive change-makers who contribute positively to their communities.
7. **Promoting Industry-Academia Collaboration:**–Strengthening partnerships between educational institutions and industry leaders is essential for cultivating exceptional internship opportunities. This collaborative approach enriches the learning environment for students, researchers, and professionals alike, fostering a culture of shared knowledge and innovation.
8. **Building Professionalism and Work Ethics:**–Beyond acquiring technical and research skills, internships must instill the core values of professionalism, ethics, and integrity. Emphasizing these qualities is paramount in preparing students to meet and exceed the expectations of today's competitive job market, ensuring they emerge as well-rounded, capable professionals.

## Academic Credentials & Internship

### A. Internship:

As per the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and the Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programs (CCFUP), undergraduate students pursuing a 3-year degree, 4-year degree (Honours), or 4-year degree (Honours with Research) must complete a minimum of 2-4 internship credits out of the total 120/160 credits required for graduation.

Students are mandated to complete an internship spanning 60 to 120 hours after their 4th semester. Each internship credit corresponds to two hours of weekly engagement, meaning that over a 15-week semester, one internship credit equates to 30 hours of total engagement.

### B. Research Project/Dissertations/Thesis/Project Work

For students enrolled in a 4-year UG (Honours with Research) program, undertaking a research project or dissertation is a mandatory component in the 8th semester. This research work, accounting for 12 credits, must be submitted to an assigned mentor and evaluated through a viva examination.

The research/dissertation work should involve at least 360 hours during the 8th semester and is a compulsory requirement for students pursuing Honours with Research.

A table has been given below to have a clear idea of internship duration and credit:

Sl. No.	Program Type	Suggested Schedule	Duration	Credits	Activities
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3 year UG Degree</li><li>4 year UG Degree (honours)</li><li>4 year UG Degree (honours</li></ul>	After 4th Semester	60-120 hours	02-04	Hands-on training Short research project, Attending seminars, Reviewing research journals ,

	with research)				Studying entrepreneurs, Social projects, Analyzing enterprises & agricultural sectors.
2.	4-year UG (Honours with Research)	8th Semester	One full semester	08-12	Research methodology, tools, and techniques Research ability enhancement courses Dissertation/Thesis/Project work Policy framework studies

### Challenges Face by NEP internship 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) internship credentials aim to provide students with practical experience, but several challenges arise, especially for students in rural areas. Here are some key issues:

#### 1. Limited Availability of Industries in Rural Areas:

Since NEP internships are primarily focused on industrial and revolutionary sectors, rural students might not find relevant opportunities nearby. Unlike urban students, they may have to travel long distances or relocate temporarily, which can be costly and inconvenient.

#### 2. Lack of Infrastructure and Resources:

Rural areas often lack industries, modern technology, and training facilities. Even if local businesses like agriculture, handicrafts, or small-scale enterprises exist, they may not meet the structured learning requirements of an NEP internship.

### **3. Digital Divide and Connectivity Issues:**

Internships today often involve digital platforms for communication, training, and evaluation. However, rural areas may suffer from poor internet connectivity and a lack of digital literacy, making it difficult for students to access online resources.

### **4. Mismatch Between Internship Sectors and Local Economy:**

NEP internships emphasize modern industries like AI, robotics, and automation. However, rural economies are primarily based on agriculture, traditional crafts, and small-scale businesses. Without proper alignment, rural students may struggle to find relevant internship opportunities.

### **5. Lack of Awareness and Guidance:**

Many rural students are unaware of internship opportunities or how to apply for them. Schools and colleges in villages may not have the same level of career counseling as urban institutions, leading to fewer students benefiting from the internship system.

### **6. Difficulty in Meeting Certification Requirements:**

Internship credentials require students to complete specific tasks and assessments. If rural students lack access to relevant industries or mentors, they may struggle to meet these requirements, putting them at a disadvantage compared to urban students.

### **Conclusion:**

The NEP 2020 Internship was a groundbreaking initiative aimed at bridging the gap between theoretical learning and real-world application. By emphasizing hands-on experience, industry exposure, and skill development, it empowered students to explore career paths, enhance their competencies, and build a strong foundation for the future. The program successfully introduced students to emerging sectors, fostering innovation, adaptability, and a problem-solving mindset—key qualities for the modern workforce.

However, the internship also faced certain challenges. While urban students had access to diverse industries and cutting-edge technology, rural students struggled with limited internship opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and logistical difficulties such as poor connectivity and financial constraints. Additionally, the program's focus on industrial and revolutionary sectors overlooked traditional and rural-based professions, creating an uneven playing field for students from different backgrounds.

Despite these hurdles, the NEP 2020 Internship is a major step forward in transforming India's education system. It has set a precedent for experiential learning, highlighting both successes and areas for improvement. Moving forward, efforts must be made to ensure greater inclusivity, rural accessibility, and a broader range of internship opportunities. By addressing these challenges, future internship programs can truly empower every student, making skill-based education a reality for all.

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# **Skill Enhancement & Vocational Education under NEP 2020: An in-depth Discussion of the Optimistic and Pessimistic Aspects of this Course**

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## **Introduction:**

In today's fast-changing world, having skills is crucial. They are all about learning practical, hands-on skills that businesses need. Unlike regular educational institutions that focus a lot on theory, these programs train individuals for specific jobs and real-world problems. They help individuals get ready to work. It's like connecting what an individual learns in school with what a person needs to know to do a job. This helps everyone and makes the country's economy and society stronger. The government in the new education plan called the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has introduced skill enhancement and vocational education. It's like a big makeover for our education system. It wants to make learning more flexible and include everyone. A key part of this is focusing on skills and vocational training. They want to start teaching these skills from Class 6. This means students get to try different things and see what they like early on. NEP 2020 also wants schools to team up with companies and local businesses. This way, people can get real-world experience and learn about new ideas. They're also using technology like online classes and virtual tools to teach skills, so everyone, whether they live in a village or a city, they can learn. The goal is to create a system where people are not just smart in reading books but also job-ready, independent, and always learning new things throughout their lives.

## **Reimagining Skill Enhancement and Vocational Education:**

*Traditional education, like the way many people learn in school now, is really important for building a strong foundation. It teaches an individual things like math, science, history, and literature. These subjects help individuals think critically and understand the world around them. But sometimes, it can be like learning about how a car engine works without ever actually seeing one, let alone taking it apart and putting it back together. They might know the theory, but not the practical side.* For example, students might learn about computer programming in theory, like the different types of code, but never actually write a program that does something. Or students might learn about

business in a textbook, but never actually run a small business. That's where the gap comes in. Traditional education gives the knowledge but sometimes misses the practical skills that employers are looking for.

Vocational education, on the other hand, is like getting hands-on experience with that car engine. It focuses on specific job skills. So, instead of just learning about coding, students would actually learn to write code and build apps. Instead of just reading about business, students might learn how to manage money or market a product. This makes them much more prepared for the actual workplace and more likely to get a job. It's like learning by doing. India has a huge number of young people, and that's a real strength. But to make the most of it, people need to focus on skill development.

Skill development isn't just about getting a job, though. It also helps people become entrepreneurs, which means they can start their own businesses. For example, someone learning carpentry, they could open their own furniture shop. Or someone learning tailoring could start their own clothing shop. And with skills in digital marketing, someone could help businesses reach more customers online. When people start their own businesses, they not only earn a living for themselves but also create jobs for others, which boosts the entire economy. The new education plan, NEP 2020, isn't just about learning new tech skills; it also cares about keeping the traditional crafts and trades alive. Things like pottery, weaving, or traditional painting are part of the culture and heritage. NEP 2020 wants to make sure these skills aren't lost and that people who practice them can earn a good living, especially in villages and less fortunate areas.

The plan aims to get at least half of all students involved in some kind of vocational training by 2025. That's a big goal. They will make a detailed plan with clear targets to make this happen. This is also part of a global goal to make sure everyone has access to quality education and skills. Basically, they want to use India's huge young population to its full potential. When they count how many kids are in school, they'll also count those learning vocational skills. The idea is that learning job skills and academic subjects should go hand in hand, not one or the other. Over the next ten years, all high schools will gradually start offering vocational training. To do this, they'll team up with places like ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes), polytechnics, and local businesses. Schools will also have special "skill labs" – kind of like science labs, but for learning trades. These labs will be set up in a way that other schools can also use them. Even colleges and universities will offer vocational training, either on their own or by working with businesses and non-profit organizations. So,

the whole system will be geared towards giving students both academic knowledge and practical skills.

### **Challenges of Vocational Education:**

Although India has already achieved notable success in creating a skilled workforce, there are still several serious challenges that the country has to overcome in order to achieve its goals. These challenges encompass various dimensions and require comprehensive solutions to ensure the successful integration of vocational education into the Indian education system.

- Changing the current education system from only focusing on regular studies to including job-related skills is a big challenge.
- Many people still think that some jobs are less important than others, and they believe that learning skills for work is not as good as regular studies. This is a big problem.
- It is difficult to maintain a balance between regular subjects like math and science and skill-based learning like carpentry, plumbing, or coding.
- Teaching job-related skills in schools and colleges across the country is not easy. We need good teachers who have real work experience and know how to teach students practical skills.
- Setting up well-equipped training centers with proper tools and machines requires a lot of money. Many schools, especially in villages, may not have enough money or resources to provide good skill-based education.
- There is no proper system to test students on their vocational skills, which makes it hard to know how well they have learned.
- To make vocational education successful in the long run, the government needs to support it with proper plans, enough funds, and regular checks to improve the system.

### **Way Forward:**

The NEP 2020 acknowledges the shortcomings in the existing education system and aims at making it inclusive and aspirational. To maximize the potential of skill enhancement and vocational education under NEP 2020, several steps need to be taken:

- **Infrastructure Development:** Schools and training institutes should be equipped with modern tools such as CNC machines for mechanical training, industrial-grade ovens for culinary arts, and diagnostic equipment for healthcare courses. Smart classrooms with AR/VR tools can enhance practical learning.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Automobile companies can partner with vocational institutes to provide hands-on training in car repair and maintenance. Similarly, hospitality businesses can offer internships to culinary and hotel management students, ensuring their skills match industry demands.
- **Teacher Training:** Educators should undergo periodic training sessions with industry experts to stay updated on the latest technologies and market trends. Government-supported programs can provide certification courses for teachers in specialized vocational subjects.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** Through Workshops and Seminars Schools can organize career guidance sessions where professionals discuss the benefits of vocational careers. Success Stories: Sharing real-life examples of individuals who built successful careers through vocational education can inspire students and parents. Social Media Campaigns: Government and educational institutions can use YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to showcase vocational training programs.
- **Community Outreach:** Conducting counseling sessions in rural areas can help break the stigma associated with vocational education.
- **Technology Integration:** Online platforms like SWAYAM and DIKSHA can provide free vocational courses in fields such as coding, graphic design, and digital marketing. Virtual reality (VR) simulations can allow students to practice welding, surgery, or automobile repair without physical tools, making education more accessible in remote areas.

### **Conclusion:**

The focus on skill development and vocational education in NEP 2020 is a great step forward, but its success depends on proper implementation. Challenges like a lack of trained teachers, proper facilities, and industry connections need to be addressed. However, these issues can be solved through good planning, partnerships with businesses, and the use of technology.

By giving importance to skill-based learning, NEP 2020 aims to prepare students for real jobs, helping them build successful careers and support the country's growth. A strong

vocational education system can make India more self-reliant and create a skilled workforce that can compete globally.

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