

**How to Cite:**

Wani, S. R., Dar, Y. A., & Mir, B. A. (2021). Holistic multi-disciplinary education in light of NEP 2020. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 5(S2), 1032–1039. Retrieved from <https://sciencescholar.us/journal/index.php/ijhs/article/view/14096>

## **Holistic multi-disciplinary education in light of NEP 2020**

**Dr. Showkat Rashid Wani**

Senior Coordinator Directorate of Distance Education, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India

Email: [ainshrashowkat2008@gmail.com](mailto:ainshrashowkat2008@gmail.com)

**Yasir Ahmad Dar**

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India

Email: [dyasir27@gmail.com](mailto:dyasir27@gmail.com)

**Bilal Ahmad Mir**

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, India

Email: [meerbilaledu@gmail.com](mailto:meerbilaledu@gmail.com)

**Abstract**--The need to inculcate a multidisciplinary approach in education has been felt for quite some time now, but the basic idea has so far remained confined to theories and discussions. But lately, there has been an upsurge in its application in the classroom. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims at bringing about a multidisciplinary approach in education – firstly in schools and then eventually in colleges as well. Multidisciplinary education is a concept that has been embraced by the Indian government through the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This approach to learning looks at how different disciplines can interact and overlap with each other to create a comprehensive understanding of a subject. A multidisciplinary approach in education is often seen as the ideal way to tackle complex problems and will be essential for India's continued success in the global economy. With the NEP 2020, India is well positioned to build on its current educational system and move towards a more multidisciplinary approach. This paper provides the modus operandi how Holistic Multi-Disciplinary Education will be implemented at the grass root level in the light of NEP 2020 guidelines.

**Keywords**--NEP 2020, holistic multi-disciplinary education, integrated education, educational diversification, inter-disciplinary research.

## **Introduction**

What is really the supreme objective of your education? Training in the art of living with zest and grace and decency so that you may be equipped to work, in cooperation with others, for the cause of the good life. All the different arts and sciences, the classical and modern disciplines, the skills and the techniques which form part of your curriculum are really the means to an end and not an end in themselves-the end of leading the 'good life' and of making it possible for others to do so. A holistic and multidisciplinary education would aim to develop all capacities of human beings –intellectual, aesthetic, social, emotional in an integrated way. Assessment of educational approaches in undergraduate education that integrates humanities and arts with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) have consistently showed positive learning outcomes, including increasing creativity and innovation, critical thinking, team work and better communication skills.

Research is also improved and enhanced through holistic and multidisciplinary education approach. This example will make it clear, for example a scholar enrolled for integrated PhD programme in the discipline of Education is interested to conduct a study on assessing the scientific temper of university students, for accomplishing his objectives he needs to construct a standardized scientific temper scale, he can take a co-guide from Department of Psychology and for validating the items of scientific temper scale he needs experts from the Department of Science. If he wants to adapt the scale for Urdu speaking population / sample he needs to translate the items into Urdu for which he has to approach Department of Urdu. To translate inter-disciplinary research into reality we need to have a common Board of Research Studies, University has to give a serious thought to it. University of Kashmir will have to focus on research and innovation by setting up start up incubation centers; technology development parks; innovative centers in frontier areas of research; industry-academic linkages; interdisciplinary research by integrating humanities, science and social science research.

For promoting collaborative research supervisors and co-supervisors should be from different departments. When research is made inter-disciplinary we will see mixed method approach (blend of qualitative and quantitative research methodology) being followed by research students in languages, arts and humanities. One of the biggest hurdle in multidisciplinary education is that students are asked to submit migration certificate by the University and registration –related- discrepancies are communicated to the students at the time of submitting examination form, the result is significant number of students particularly out of state category (OSJ) drop from the course or become unmotivated to continue with the programme, this results in a dip in gross enrollment ratio which goes against the principles of NEP 2020. If University has

to grow it has to go away with the practice of demanding migration certificates and make registration related formalities easy and student friendly.

Imaginative and flexible curricular structures will enable creative combinations of disciplines for study and would offer multiple entry and exit points thus removing currently prevalent rigid boundaries and creating new possibilities for lifelong learning. The multi-disciplinary curriculum will cover areas like community engagement and service, environmental education and value based education (NEP, page 36, 11.8).

### **Purpose of Multidisciplinary Education**

As a part of holistic development students will be provided an opportunity for internship with local industry, business for a longer exposure so that they may actively engage with practical side of their learning and as a by-product further improves their employability. Even the great scientist or the artist or the scholar, who devotes himself to research or to some form of creative activity and who appears to be primarily concerned with knowledge or scholarship, is really, in the final analysis, serving the cause of man's progress towards better things. He is serving or he should be serving. It is necessary to add this alternative because one knows of many scientists and other men of thought who are as blind to the social consequences of their work as many businessmen, industrialists and political manipulators. This may be due to a number of factors. It may be that their education has been so narrowly specialized or divided into compartments that they have been prevented from seeing the wood for the trees.

They know their little Chemistry, Physics, History, Literature, Engineering or Medicine but have failed to see its relationship to life, its meaning and purpose. It is the tragedy of our education that it fails to train students in the inter-relationships of different subjects and experiences and their bearing on life's purpose. Or, may be, education has failed to quicken the social conscience and we are not concerned much about the impact of their activities on collective welfare. It also happens, in many cases, that a technologist or professional worker starts with high ideals and social awareness but his whole environment, social and professional, is so saturated with wrong values and attitudes that he is unable to resist their downward pull and ends up in being caught in that demoralizing atmosphere. As future citizens and possibly as scientists, artists and thinkers, this question is important for each one of us. The problem, as you will see, is both educational and social.

Education should be so oriented that it will give you a balanced and synoptic view of the world in which you live and inculcate in you ideals, values and standard of efficiency which will aid in tackling successfully its difficult and growing problems. May I confess to you that education all over the world, and particularly in our country, is not performing this function satisfactorily and a large majority of students go out of schools and colleges without their minds being lit up by the vitalizing flame of thought or their hearts being moved by a touch of compassion for the human race? At the same time, if you are to maintain your proper moral and social balance in the world, it is necessary that the community should so organize its activities and social institutions that educated men and women are

able to find proper self-expression in them and the values that they have acquired in universities are not perverted by the impact of anti-social or unethical forces. Various measures are being adopted to improve the quality of education being provided for you but there are so many material and psychological difficulties that it will take a long time before really satisfying system of education can come into being.

One such measure is the introduction of the scheme of multidisciplinary education in the universities and colleges under which an attempt is made to break down the narrow specialism which divides humanities from Sciences, and Sciences from Social Studies, and fine Arts and Music from both. At present the students have a little understanding of their field of specialization but are practically illiterate in other related fields often without any apology-without realizing that they have been deprived of anything of value. They acquire a certain amount of information, large or small which does not usually pass into well assimilated knowledge and knowledge rarely puts on the mantle of wisdom which has been described as the 'grace of knowledge'. It would be worthwhile to elucidate these three words briefly, 'Information' connotes a collection of miscellaneous facts, data and statistics, which are not properly integrated or inter-related, which do not light up any problems and which are mainly held together by memory. In the case of schools and colleges, information is usually acquired because it is necessary to pass examinations and it is painfully stored in the memory but not assimilated in the mind.

Knowledge, on the other hand, is the result of the mind working actively on information, establishing inter-relationships and so fully mastering it that it can use it for achieving any desired results. It is something that becomes a part of one's mind and personality, a tool with the help of which one can find one's way in life. Wisdom is more difficult to define. It is knowledge, applied with understanding to life. It is experience which has become mature and mellow. It is a delicate instrument, as it were, which enables us to distinguish between right and wrong, to differentiate between what is spuriously attractive and what is of abiding value, what is mainly of selfish interest and what has social significance and, in every case, to show loyalty to the higher values, to choose the right ends and means, however powerful may be the appeal on the other side. It also involves the capacity to take the long-range view and -discount the pressure of the immediate. So, wisdom becomes the quintessence of human experience, knowledge wedded to the right values.

I stress its importance here because there is a general tendency in our educational institutions to be concerned only with information or knowledge (to some extent) but to be indifferent to the supreme duty of letting the delicate plant of wisdom grow in the soil of personality. Unless students themselves realize in which direction they are moving and understand the whole meaning and purpose of their education, it will remain lopsided and ineffective. The object of this article is mainly to enlist the interest of the students in their own education in the deeper sense of the word. No activity, whether mechanical or mental, can acquire real appeal and significance unless its purpose is fully appreciated by the worker concerned. It is a clear glimpse of the purpose and its relationship with one's whole life and work that gives meaning to the manual or intellectual processes in

which one may be occupied. One of the chief reasons why education fails to catch the interest and imagination of youth is that they do not clearly see its bearings on their present life or their future and look upon it as an imposed grind which they must go through in order to pass certain examinations which are necessary to earn their living! This is hardly doing the right thing and certainly not doing it for the right reason.

Education would be necessary for the fullness of life and cultivation of personality even if people did not have the over-all problem of earning a livelihood. But many students neither know nor care whether, and how far, the education they are receiving is enriching their mind or deepening their personality. This article is an attempt to break through the crust of their indifference and, possibly, cynicism and make them active participants in the process of their education. It is addressed to the readers. I would like to take you into confidence and place all my cards on the table. My effort is to make you realize that you are living in a new kind of world where the old landmarks and means of physical and intellectual locomotion have almost vanished, where old comfortable grooves have become irrelevant, where slackness, laziness, slipshod work and inefficiency will not pay, where properties of the world stage have been, and are being, so radically reshuffled that we need not merely a new compass but a new heart and a new mind to take our bearings and find our way.

If we are to be equipped to play our part worthily in this new set-up we will have to reorient our educational policy and pattern in the light of new National Education Policy 2020. We will have to clarify the relationship of learning to life and the relationship of all the studies and disciplines to one another. We will have to break down the walls which divide the curricular subjects from one another and illumine whatever we learn from light drawn from different quarters. We will have to remember constantly that, while each subject has its specific boundaries and its own special methods of approach, they are all focused on the different phases of the same panorama of human life. The "multidisciplinary education courses are designed to give all students a fuller view of life than they can possibly get by devoting themselves exclusively to their own special subjects and it is hoped that, through these courses, students may learn something of the significant contributions that modern Biology, Freud's theory of the Unconscious, the Scientific method or the creative inspiration that expresses itself in Art and Philosophy, Literature and Music, have made to man's growing heritage of large areas of which they may well have remained ignorant.

But, while they gain this valuable knowledge about fields not directly their own but vitally related to their life as citizens of today's world, there is a danger that they may dimly see too many trees and miss the wood altogether! In that case, multidisciplinary education would fail to achieve its real objective which is to provide illumination and not stack the memory with half assimilated facts and theories and ideas. Hence, there would appear to be some need for a fresh document which attempts, however modestly, to give the students a bird's eye view of their total domain, intellectual and practical, and enable them to find their bearings in it. This document has been gifted to us by the Honorable Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi in the form of new National Education Policy 2020. Through the study of reading materials on natural and social sciences,

humanities and art, you will certainly acquire a great deal of useful information and understanding in these fields and fill up the lacuna in your knowledge. But it is important for you to realize that there is a focusing point for all this knowledge, which draws the threads together and gives it a unity and a purpose.

That point is life—individual and social and an educated man is a person who learns to see life steadily and see it whole, who can appreciate the light that falls on it from different angles and quarters—from science, philosophy, psychology, religion, technology, art, etc.—and can thus understand it in its depth and fullness. It is not, however, merely an understanding of the pattern of the modern world that is required but a cultivation of the qualities and capacities that are needed for leading an efficient and decent life in it. If a new world has come and is continuously coming into being, we should be prepared to confront it with a new mind which can intelligently unravel its complexities and a new heart which can respond to its emergent forces. As someone has rightly said, you cannot function in an atomic age with cow-dung as the source of energy. The cow dung may be a good thing in its place but, if you burn it, you cannot generate enough energy to run an atomic reactor! While most persons would be quite willing to concede the soundness of this example, they cannot as readily realize that a mind, which is insensitive to the new urges of the age and is content with out-moded or reactionary ideas and attitudes, is not only a silly but a dangerous anachronism.

Similarly, a heart-by which I mean man's emotional reactions and his appreciation of values which is parochial in its sympathies in any sense caste or creed or race or geography is out of place in a world in which science and technology have abolished distances and made the whole world kin, binding it together irretrievably, for weal or woe. The supreme object of education is to equip you with this new intellectual and emotional apparatus for finding your way, and directing your behavior in this bewildering world. It cannot obviously be done by reading this or any other particular book, which can at best only help you to realize that there are significant issues at stake and possibly quicken your sensitiveness to these issues. It is the function of multidisciplinary education' as a whole to present all its readings and courses in such a way that you may be able to appreciate their relationship with, and significance for, life and its basic purpose, practical, intellectual and moral. Nay, it is the function of the whole of education the University curricula and courses, its social life and activities, its methods and techniques of work, the personal influence of its staff—to contribute to the training of the students' mind and personality in this challenging context.

Once this is sincerely understood, the teachers and students alike will refuse to act on the assumption that the purpose of the several years that they spend together in a college is either to give them a 'good time' or to enable them to pass the final examination so as to find some post or another. And, thereafter, they are free to go about the world with uneducated minds, with uncouth personalities and without civilized manners and values, perpetuating narrow and outworn patterns of thought and behavior! Above all, it is for the students themselves to take an active share in their own education. It has long been known to observant keepers of horses that one can take them to water but cannot make them drink! It has, however, taken the presumably more intelligent psychologists and teachers much longer to realize that the same rule applies to the humans. If interest is not

kindled and curiosity is not awakened, if students are not actively concerned about their own intellectual and moral welfare, the elaborate educational paraphernalia provided in our institutions is not likely to be of much use. It is for the teachers and the students alike to strive and create the right atmosphere of study and learning.

But particularly for the students with whom I am specially concerned here. You should learn to read widely and intelligently, to cultivate an interest in books and in things of the mind in general, to let your minds roam not only over your special subjects but other fields of study and human experience. Let them, through contact with great minds and great literature, contemporary as well as classic, develop in their own minds a love for truth, goodness, beauty and justice so that, reversing Gresham's Law, the good money will drive out counterfeit coins and, to some extent at any rate, whatever is shoddy and cheap and inconsistent with human dignity will arouse only aversion in them.

### References

1. Chopra, Ritika (2 August 2020). "Explained: Reading the new National Education Policy 2020". *The Indian Express*. Retrieved 2 August 2020.
2. Chaturvedi, Amit (30 July 2020). "'Transformative': Leaders, academicians welcome National Education Policy". *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved 30 July 2020. While the last policy was announced in 1992, it was essentially a rehash of a 1986 one.
3. Dr. D P Sharma On The Challenges In Indian Education Systems". *Eduvoice | The Voice of Education Industry*. 25 May 2020. Retrieved 29 September 2020.
4. NEP to be implemented in phases by 2022, says UP CM Yogi Adityanath". *India Today*. 20 November 2020. Retrieved 15 September 2021
5. Aithal, P. S.; Aithal, Shubhrajyotsna (2019). "Analysis of Higher Education in Indian National Education Policy Proposal 2019 and Its Implementation Challenges". *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters*. 3 (2): 1–35. doi:10.47992/IJAEM.L.2581.7000.0039. SSRN 3417517.
6. Malhotra, Smriti (November 2019), "The Draft National Education Policy: A Distressing Attempt to Redefine India", *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, 21 (11)
7. Maniar, Vikas (14 September 2019), "Overlooking the Idea of Common School in the Education Policy" (PDF), *Economic and Political Weekly*, 54 (37): 18–19
8. Puri, Natasha (30 August 2019). A Review of the National Education Policy of the Government of India - The Need for Data and Dynamism in the 21st Century. SSRN.
9. Jeebanlata Salam, Draft National Education Policy (NEP), 2019 and jingoistic nationalism, *The People's Chronicle*, 27 June 2019.
10. Tilak, Jandhyala B. G. (2019). "Promising but Perplexing Solutions: A Critique of the Draft National Education Policy 2019". *Social Change*. 49 (4): 686–712. doi:10.1177/0049085719876831. ISSN 0049-0857. S2CID 213369494.
11. Vedhathiri, Thanikachalam (January 2020), "Critical Assessment of Draft Indian National Education Policy 2019 with Respect to National Institutes of

- Technical Teachers Training and Research", Journal of Engineering Education,
12. Jebaraj, Priscilla (2 August 2020). "The Hindu Explains | What has the National Education Policy 2020 proposed?". The Hindu. ISSN 0971-751X. Retrieved 2 August 2020.
  13. Vishnoi, Anubhuti (31 July 2020). "No switch in instruction medium from English to regional languages with NEP '20: HRD". The Economic Times. Retrieved 31 July 2020.