


# Chapter 11

## Interdisciplinary Studies: Issues, Perspectives, and Challenges From National Education Program 2020

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The Government of India's latest endeavor in the field of public policy, the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), has revolutionized the higher education sector, particularly in Indian universities and technical institutions. By 2050, the policy will have set high standards for all higher education institutions, including breaking up linguistic silos (delivering instruction in multiple regional languages), internationalizing higher education, improving the quality of education and lowering rankings through accreditation standards, and raising the gross enrollment ratio (GER) in higher education institutions. The administration and academic council of every university and institution have established various wings within this range of operations, such as the internal quality assurance cell (IQAC) and the international relations department to facilitate memorandum of undertakings with highly acclaimed institutions to foster student and faculty exchange program for cross exchange of ideas and knowledge and other wings like Centre for Curriculum Development (COCD).*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Interdisciplinary studies have emerged as a critical focus in modern education, with their potential to enhance students' ability to synthesize knowledge from various disciplines and tackle complex real-world challenges. The *National Education Program 2020* (NEP 2020) introduced by the Government of India provides a significant impetus for the integration of interdisciplinary studies within the national educational framework. This reform marks a paradigm shift from the traditional subject-oriented learning models to more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary approaches. This chapter will explore the issues, perspectives, and challenges associated with the implementation of interdisciplinary studies in

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the context of NEP 2020. It will examine the theoretical foundations of interdisciplinary education, delve into the critical perspectives that shape the integration of diverse subjects, and evaluate the practical challenges faced by policymakers, educators, and institutions in adopting this approach. By analyzing the educational reforms introduced by NEP 2020, this chapter aims to provide insights into the broader implications of interdisciplinary studies for national educational goals and the future of learning in India.

Interdisciplinary studies (IDS) have gained increasing attention in the educational sphere as a means to develop holistic learning approaches that integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines. The integration of interdisciplinary studies into national policies, such as India's *National Education Policy 2020* (NEP 2020), reflects a global shift towards more flexible, inclusive, and problem-solving-oriented education.

Interdisciplinary studies involve combining elements from different academic disciplines to gain a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues. It encompasses a wide range of fields, such as combining engineering with environmental science to address sustainability issues or merging psychology and data science to improve mental health diagnostics. This approach transcends traditional boundaries to create new frameworks for analysis and problem-solving. The National Education Policy envisioned the educational programs to be multidisciplinary with a provision of multidisciplinary research right from the undergraduate level. It is stated in the policy that 'higher education must form the basis for knowledge creation and innovation' (MHRD, 2020). In the world of work complex problems and situations do not appear discipline-wise. They are multidisciplinary, having a combination of many disciplines such as core domain-specific, environmental, sustainability, social acceptance, safety, hygiene, economic, ethical, information technology, and the like. The multidisciplinary education and research in the world of work setting will enable the students to acquire professional competence, confidence, and commitment to deal with real-life situations that may be problematic or require innovations. The development of competence, confidence, and commitment in students has to be an integral part of the curriculum design, effective implementation, and assessment of learning. The instructional methods such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, research-based learning, and collaborative research-based learning create opportunities for experiential learning where the principles of andragogy, heutagogy, and pedagogy are followed. The intensity of use of different principles will depend on the nature of the problem/situation, the nature of the formation of the research group and the type of industry. The relationship between the three learning philosophies is shown in Figure 1.

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