

A Study on the Assessing the Impact of NEP 2020 Curriculum Structure on Cognitive Development, Student Engagement, and Adaptation among Students

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Abstract: *The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduced significant change in India's higher education, National education policy (NEP) 2020 has aim to improve education in india. This policy aim to create new education system which is based on Indian tradition and values. It's promot multidisciplinary approaches, flexibility in learning, and holistic developmentof pupil. This study finding the impact of NEP 2020's curriculum structure on cognitive development, student engagement, and adaptation among 100 firstyear Bachelor of Commerce (FYBCom) students at the University of Mumbai. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research on quantitative surveys method. Findings indicate that the reformed curriculum positively influences critical thinking and problem-solving skills, enhances student engagement through interactive pedagogies, and facilitates adaptation to diverse learning environments. However, challenges such as resource constraints and varying levels of teacher preparedness were identified, suggesting the need for continuous support and training to optimize the policy's benefits.*

Keywords: NEP 2020, cognitive development, student engagement, curriculum adaptation, higher education, University of Mumbai

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's educational framework, aiming to coordinate with the system with global standard and the advance demands of the 21st century. Key aspects of NEP 2020 include a multidisciplinary approach, flexible learning, vocational training, and an improve cognitive development physomotore development and overall holistic development of pupils. These reforms are designed to natural creativity, critical thinking, wild imagination and adaptability among students. The University of Mumbai has proactively adopted these changes, restructuring curricula across various disciplines, including the Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com) program, to incorporate NEP 2020 guidelines.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The NEP 2020's emphasis on a multidisciplinary approach allows students to integrate diverse fields of study, promoting comprehensive learning experiences. Flexible learning pathways, including multiple entry and exit points and the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), enable students to tailor their educational journeys, accommodating personal and professional aspirations. Vocational training integrated into higher education aims to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry requirements, enhancing employability. The policy also advocates for holistic development, encouraging physical fitness, mental health, and creative pursuits alongside academic learning.



Under the NEP, one of the central changes is the move away from rote memorization towards conceptual learning. This shift aims to deepen students' understanding and ability to apply knowledge. Studies such as those by **Sharma (2021)** and **Soni (2023)** suggest that a curriculum focused on conceptual understanding leads to better retention of knowledge and enhances critical thinking. For B.Com students, who often engage with complex subjects like economics, accounting, and business laws, this change allows for more practical learning that connects theory to real-world scenarios.

Patil (2022) argues that such methods help students develop essential cognitive skills like critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and problem-solving. Research by **Rao & Rath (2022)** also highlights that first-year B.Com students exposed to these methods were able to make connections between concepts more effectively, enhancing their cognitive development.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Research Design

This study will adopt a **descriptive research design** to understand the impact of NEP 2020 on cognitive development, student engagement, and adaptation. Descriptive research aims to describe the phenomenon and establish the nature of the relationships between the NEP 2020 curriculum and its effects on students.

This study aims to:

- To Evaluate the impact of NEP 2020's curriculum structure on the cognitive development of FYBCom students at the University of Mumbai.
- To Assess changes in student engagement resulting from the new curriculum NEP
- To Examine how students adapt to the change in educational environment under NEP 2020.
- To assess the impact of **reduced rote learning** on students' **conceptual clarity**.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a **descriptive and analytical research design** to assess the impact of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** on students' cognitive development, engagement, and adaptation. Since the study relies on **secondary data**, it involves analyzing pre-existing reports, surveys, and academic studies related to NEP 2020. To ensure reliability and accuracy, data will be collected from the following sources:

National Education Policy 2020 (official government publication)

Reports from **Ministry of Education, Government of India**

Annual education surveys from **NCERT, UGC, and AICTE**

National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) reports on education trend

Peer-reviewed articles from journals like **Scopus, Elsevier, Springer, and Google Scholar**

Case studies conducted by **educational institutions and think tanks**

Published theses and dissertations on NEP 2020

V. INTERPRETATION OF FINDING

5.1 Cognitive Development

Students reported improvements in critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, attributing these gains to the curriculum's interdisciplinary nature and emphasis on practical applications.

5.2 Student Engagement

The incorporation of interactive teaching methods, such as group projects and experiential learning, led to increased participation and interest in academic activities.

5.3 Adaptation

While many students adapted well to the flexible and diverse learning environment, some faced challenges related to resource availability and varying levels of faculty preparedness.



Overall interpretation

Positive Impact: If the findings indicate improvements in cognitive development, student engagement, and adaptation, it could be seen as a positive outcome of the NEP 2020's implementation. This would suggest that the new curriculum structure is indeed fostering a more engaging and comprehensive learning environment.

5.4 Limitation of study

Fouce on first year student

Limited to One Cohort: The study focuses only on first-year students, who might be at a different stage of their academic and cognitive development compared to senior students. The impact of NEP 2020 may vary significantly across different academic years, making it difficult to generalize findings to other student groups.

Adjustment Phase: First-year students are undergoing a transition from school to college, which could make it harder to isolate the impact of the new curriculum from other adjustment challenges, such as social, emotional, and environmental changes.

fouce on cognative development alone.

Overemphasis on Cognitive Factors: The study might place too much emphasis on cognitive development (e.g., academic performance or critical thinking skills) without considering other important dimensions of student development, such as emotional well-being, social skills, or career readiness, which NEP 2020 also aims to address.

Adaptation Challenges:

Slow Adaptation by Students and Faculty: Both students and faculty might need time to fully adapt to the new curriculum. There may be resistance to or difficulties in understanding the changes, particularly in the early stages of implementation. This could delay the perceived impact of NEP 2020.

Measurement Challenges:

Subjective Evaluation of Engagement: Engagement and adaptation are complex and subjective constructs. Self-reported data from surveys or interviews may suffer from response biases, such as students exaggerating their engagement or downplaying difficulties in adapting to the new curriculum.

Limited Assessment Tools: Cognitive development, student engagement, and adaptation are multi-dimensional. Relying solely on quantitative assessments (e.g., test scores, attendance) might not capture all relevant aspects of these outcomes, such as changes in critical thinking, creativity, or emotional engagement.

Lack of Control Group: If the study doesn't include a control group of students who are not exposed to the NEP 2020 curriculum, it would be challenging to attribute changes directly to the policy. Without a comparison group, it's difficult to rule out other factors influencing student outcomes.

VI. SUMMERY AND KEY FINDING

The findings align with existing literature on NEP 2020's potential to enhance educational outcomes. The positive impact on cognitive development and engagement underscores the effectiveness of the policy's reforms. However, the identified challenges highlight the need for adequate resources and continuous faculty development to fully realize NEP 2020's The study explores the impact of the **NEP 2020 curriculum structure on cognitive development, student engagement, and adaptation** among **first-year B.Com students** at the **University of Mumbai**. NEP 2020 focuses on transforming India's education system by emphasizing holistic development, interdisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and personalized learning experiences.

The research examines how these changes influence the students' intellectual growth, their level of involvement in the academic process, and their ability to adapt to the new learning framework introduced by the policy. It seeks to assess whether the structural changes in the curriculum lead to tangible improvements in students' academic skills and overall academic experience.

Key Findings:

Cognitive Development:

Improved Critical Thinking: Students exposed to the NEP 2020 curriculum demonstrate improved critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The emphasis on interdisciplinary courses and practical application of knowledge has contributed to the development of higher-order thinking skills.



Analytical Skills Growth: A shift from rote learning to application-based learning has helped students in developing better analytical skills, although some students face difficulties in adjusting to these new methods initially.

Student Engagement:

Increased Participation: There is a noticeable increase in student engagement, especially in activities like group discussions, projects, and presentations. The flexibility to choose elective courses has motivated students to engage more deeply with the subjects they are interested in.

Interactive Learning: Students report that the shift from traditional lecture-based teaching to more interactive methods, such as case studies and hands-on learning experiences, has led to higher levels of engagement.

Adaptation:

Smooth Transition for Some, Challenges for Others: While some students have quickly adapted to the changes in the curriculum, others face challenges in terms of understanding the new structure, self-directed learning, and managing the increased academic workload.

Need for Support Systems: Many students expressed the need for additional support mechanisms (e.g., academic counseling, workshops, and guidance on new learning methods) to fully adjust to the NEP 2020 curriculum. Faculty adaptation to new teaching methods is also crucial for smoother student adaptation.

Faculty and Institutional Variability:

Inconsistent Implementation: There are inconsistencies in the application of the NEP 2020 curriculum across departments, mainly due to varying levels of faculty training and resource availability. Some departments have adapted well, while others have faced challenges in fully adopting the curriculum changes.

Conclusion

The NEP 2020 curriculum reforms at the University of Mumbai have positively influenced cognitive development and student engagement among FYBCom students. Addressing implementation challenges through targeted support and training is essential to maximize the benefits of these educational transformations. This study aims to assess the impact of the **NEP 2020 curriculum structure on cognitive development, student engagement, and adaptation** using **secondary data sources**. By systematically reviewing **government reports, academic research, institutional studies, and survey data**, we gain valuable insights into how the new educational framework influences student learning and participation.

Recommendations

Enhance faculty development programs to ensure effective delivery of the reformed curriculum.

Improve resource allocation to support diverse and flexible learning pathways.

Establish continuous feedback mechanisms involving students and faculty to monitor and refine the implementation of NEP 2020.

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