

## **A Study of the Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education and Its Major Challenges in the Special Perspectives of National Education Policy, 2020**

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### **Abstract**

National Education Policy 2020 is the education policy in which special emphasis has been given on promoting the use of technology to facilitate education, as well as encouraging creative thinking, logical judgment, the art of continuous learning and the spirit of innovation in students. This education policy lays the special emphasis on the development of the creative abilities inherent in every individual. According to this education policy, to bring the idea of holistic and multi-disciplinary education to the real ground, the flexible and innovative curricula of all higher educational institutions will include credit-based curriculum and areas of community engagement and service, environmental education and value education etc. The main aim of education will be to develop all the capabilities of man in an integrated manner. In fact, The National Education Policy, 2020 is based on the basic pillars of easy access, equality, quality and accountability for all and aims at making schools and colleges suitable for the needs of the 21st century and gives special emphasis and importance on holistic and multi-disciplinary education.

**Key Words:** *National Education Policy, Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education, Credit Based Curriculum, Institute of Higher Education, Sustainable Development, Constitutional and Universal Values, Humanities and Arts Education, MERU.*

### **Introduction**

National Education Policy 2020 is the third education policy of independent India. The first education policy was presented to the country in 1968 and the second education

policy in 1986. In the context of the formulation of the current National Education Policy 2020, in the year 2017 a committee was constituted under the chairmanship of former ISRO chief Dr. K. Kasturirangan and the

world's largest consultation process was organized in the context of formulation of this policy. This education policy lays special emphasis on the development of the creative abilities inherent in every individual and in this education policy, instead of the currently active 10+2 educational model, the educational curriculum is divided on the basis of 5+3+3+4 system has been said, with emphasis on early childhood care and education, the 10+2 structure of the school curriculum will be replaced by a new curriculum structure of 5+3+3+4 which is 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years children respectively. In this National Education Policy, there is a provision to bring children of 3-6 years who have been kept away till now under the school curriculum. In the new education system, there will be 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi / Pre-schooling and this period will be of 15 years including pre-schooling and schooling. In the National Education Policy 2020, along with promoting the use of technology to facilitate education, special emphasis has also been laid on encouraging creative thinking, logical judgment, the art of continuous learning and the spirit of innovation in students. . In fact, this policy is built on the basic pillars of easy access to education, equity, quality and accountability etc. and has given special emphasis and importance on holistic and

multi-disciplinary education under this education policy. In this National Education Policy, it has been mentioned about holistic and multi-disciplinary education that- *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 –* **National Education Policy 2020, Page-36**

#### **Discussion of Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education in the Context of National Education Policy 2020-**

In the context of National Education Policy 2020, holistic and multidisciplinary education can be presented and discussed on the following grounds-

**1. Promoting the possibilities of lifelong learning by removing rigid disciplinary boundaries-** This education policy emphasizes that imaginative and flexible

curriculum structures will enable a creative combination of disciplines for study as well as access and exit points. There will be options. According to this policy, such an arrangement will promote the possibilities of lifelong learning by removing today's rigid disciplinary boundaries. As per the National Policy 2020, large multidisciplinary universities will provide graduate level (master's and doctoral) education providing rigorous research-based expertise as well as opportunities for multidisciplinary work including academia and industry.

**2. To develop all the capabilities of man in an integrated manner through holistic and multi-disciplinary education-** According to this policy, the main objective of holistic and multi-disciplinary education is to develop all the capabilities of man; For example, intellectual, social, physical, aesthetic, emotional and moral have to be developed in an integrated manner. This policy recognizes that such education is an all-round development of the individual, important 21st century potential in the arts, humanities, languages, social sciences, sciences and vocational and technical fields, ethics of social engagement, practical skills; Such as communication, debate, discussion and good specialization in a chosen field or areas will help as well as such holistic education will be

the approach of all undergraduate programs including vocational, technical and professional subjects in the long run. This policy emphasizes that the main objective of holistic and multi-disciplinary education would be to develop all the potentialities of human beings in an integrated manner.

### **3. Holistic and Multi-disciplinary Education**

**Need of Today's Schools** - This policy firmly believes that holistic and multi-disciplinary education which has been beautifully described in the history of India, is really the need of today's schools. So that we can lead the 21st century and the fourth industrial revolution. Under this policy it has been mentioned that engineering institutes; Like- IIT We will move towards holistic and multidisciplinary education with arts and humanities and students of arts and humanities will also learn science. According to this policy, the endeavour will be that all students acquire vocational subjects and practical skills. In the context of holistic and multi-disciplinary education, it has been described in this National Education Policy that- *Assessments of educational approaches in undergraduate education that integrate the humanities and arts with Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) have consistently showed positive learning outcomes, including increased creativity and*

*innovation, critical thinking and higher-order thinking capacities, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, communication skills, more in-depth learning and mastery of curricula across fields, increases in social and moral awareness, etc., besides general engagement and enjoyment of learning. Research is also improved and enhanced through a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach.* –

**National Education Policy 2020, Page-36**

**4. To make the departments of subjects multi-disciplinary to encourage Indian education and environment-** It has been very clearly described in this National Education Policy that literature, language, philosophy, literature, language, philosophy, Departments of Music, Art, Dance, Education, Drama, Mathematics, Statistics, Sociology, Economics, Sports, Applied Science, Translation and Interpretation and other such disciplines were established and strengthened to promote multidisciplinary, Indian education and environment. Will go in addition, the credit system will also be implemented in all undergraduate degree programs in these disciplines.

**5. Flexibility in Curriculum, New and Interesting Course Options for Students** – In this policy, special emphasis has been laid on flexibility in the curriculum for students, options for innovative and interesting courses.

In this context, it has been mentioned in this education policy that steps will be taken towards higher quality holistic and multidisciplinary education in large multidisciplinary universities and colleges. In addition to this, apart from rigorous specialization in subjects, flexibility in curricular, innovative and interesting course options will also be given to the students, as well as special importance will be given to the faculty and institutional autonomy in the matter of setting the curriculum. In addition, greater emphasis will be placed on opportunities for communication, debate, discussion, research and interdisciplinary thinking in pedagogy.

**6. Incorporation of credit-based curriculum and various areas to bring the idea of holistic and multi-disciplinary education on the ground** – In this education policy it has been clearly described that the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education should be taken on the real ground. The flexible and innovative curriculum of all higher educational institutions will include credit-based curriculum and areas of community engagement and service, environmental education and value education etc. According to this policy- *“Value-based education will include the development of humanistic, ethical, Constitutional, and universal human values of*

*truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love (prem), nonviolence (ahimsa), scientific temper, citizenship values, and also life-skills; lessons in seva/service and participation in community service programmes will be considered an integral part of a holistic education. As the world is becoming increasingly interconnected, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), a response to contemporary global challenges, will be provided to empower learners to become aware of and understand global issues and to become active promoters of more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure, and sustainable societies.” – National Education Policy 2020, Page-37*

For example, environmental education would include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources, forest and wildlife conservation and sustainable development. In addition, under Samagra Shiksha, higher education institutions shall provide suitable internship opportunities in their own institutions or in other higher education or research institutions; Such as internships with local industries, artists, businesses, craftsmen etc. and research internships with teachers and researchers so that students can actively engage with the

practical side of their learning as well as enhance their own employment prospects.

**7. Exemption of postgraduate programs in various formats-** According to the National Education Policy 2020, higher educational institutions will be allowed to offer or provide postgraduate programs in various formats. According to this education policy- 1. For students who have completed a three-year undergraduate program, a two-year program may be offered, with the second year focused entirely on research. 2. Students who have completed a four-year undergraduate program with research may have a one-year master's program, and 3. There may be a five-year integrated/postgraduate programme Ph.D. For Ph.D. either a post-graduate degree or a bachelor's degree obtained with four years of research will be mandatory. Apart from this, it has been recommended to discontinue the M.Phil. program under this policy.

**8. Change in the duration and structure of degree programs -** This education policy strongly supports changes in the duration and structure of degree programs. This policy clearly states that the duration and structure of degree programs will be changed accordingly. The Bachelor's degree will be of 3- or 4-years duration with appropriate certificate and multiple exit options. For example, it can be clarified as follows-

Certificate on completion of one year in any subject or field including vocational and professional field, Diploma on completion of two years and Bachelor's degree after three years programme. a four-year undergraduate program that will promote multidisciplinary learning as it provides an opportunity to experience holistic and multidisciplinary learning, in addition to focusing on majors and minors chosen according to the student's or student's interest; On the other hand, in addition to this, an Academic Credit Bank will be set up which will digitally compile the credits received from different recognized higher educational institutions so that the degree can be awarded by the higher educational institution on the basis of the credits received. In addition, this education policy also stipulates that if a student completes a rigorous research project in his or her core area or areas of study as specified by the Higher Educational Institution, he/she will also be awarded a 'with research' degree in a four-year programme.

**9. Focus on inter-disciplinary research and innovation-** This National Education Policy also mentions that higher educational institutions, start-ups, incubation centres, technology development centres, centres of major areas of research, maximum industry academic will focus on research and

innovation by establishing linkages and interdisciplinary research including humanities and social sciences research, as well as keeping in view the current global perspective of infectious diseases and global pandemics, it is particularly important that higher Academic institutions should take the lead in conducting research in infectious diseases, virology, epidemiology, diagnostic, instrumentation, vaccinology and other related and relevant areas. In addition to this policy, higher educational institutions will develop specific handholding mechanisms in the context of promoting innovation among the student community and in this context the National Research Foundation (NRF) will enable and support a vibrant research and innovation culture and will work in terms of helping.

**10. Establishment of model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education-** It has also been mentioned in this policy that IIMs for holistic and multidisciplinary education. Model Public Universities named MERU (Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities) will be set up on the lines of IITs etc. and the main objective of these universities will be to achieve the highest global standards in quality education and at the same time they will be available all over the country. It will also set the

highest standards of multidisciplinary education in the country.

### **Major challenges in realizing the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education**

In the context of National Education Policy 2020, there are some major challenges related to bringing the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education on the ground which may create obstacles in its path. These challenges can be described as follows-

1. In order to give ground to the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education, all the policies related to it have to be implemented in a time bound manner in a very orderly and systematic manner and also a variety of activities and programs etc. also have to start. But it is often seen that the related policies and programs are not implemented in a time bound manner and systematic manner, in the absence of which it will be a difficult task to give ground to the idea of such education.
2. In this context, financial assistance and special packages will have to be provided to the educational institutions by the Central and State Governments expeditiously so that proper direction and basis can be provided to holistic and multidisciplinary education. Due to the lack of financial assistance, many types of obstacles and obstacles may arise in its path.
3. In the context of bringing the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education on the ground, special changes or changes will have to be brought or will have to be done in the infrastructure or institutional structure of all educational institutions, colleges and universities etc. It is not such an easy task to bring such changes or changes simultaneously in the educational institutions of the whole nation. Therefore, changing the infrastructure and institutional structure in the path of holistic and multi-disciplinary education can be said to be a major challenge in the path of this education, which can block its path.
4. This policy emphasizes on the development of all human potentialities in an integrated manner in the context of holistic and multi-disciplinary education. But coordinating various types of humanities, vocational and technical fields in the context of integrated development of capabilities is a difficult and complex task which cannot be accomplished so easily.
5. In this policy, emphasis has been laid on making the departments of the subjects multidisciplinary, but in the context of making the departments multidisciplinary, various types of institutional and administrative changes will have to be implemented, which is a difficult task.

6. Engineering Institutes covered under this policy; For example, IITs will move towards holistic and multi-disciplinary education with arts and humanities and students of arts and humanities will also learn science. But for those students who are not already interested in or in the subject of science or students who are not interested in the subjects of arts or humanities, then what will be the justification of holistic and multidisciplinary education for them and how can they do this type of education? and how will they be able to coordinate or harmonize this type of education.
7. The biggest challenge in this context is about the implementation of holistic and multi-disciplinary education, that is, what will be the basis for the implementation of such education? There is a lack of clarity in how the curriculum will be changed or what will be their process for holistic and multi-disciplinary education and how the objectives and goals related to it will be accomplished, that is, how they will be implemented and executed in practice.
8. Establishment of public universities called MERU in the context of holistic and multi-disciplinary education would be a challenging task for the Central and State Governments; Like how many universities will be established, where will they be established, what will be their jurisdiction, what will be the role of central and state governments in them, will the existing universities also be included in public universities called MERU etc.; Moreover, achieving the highest global standards of quality education in these universities will be a challenging task in itself.
9. Another special challenge in the context of this education can be about local or regional languages. Language conflicts may arise in the context of teaching process and learning, as well as challenges related to the widening gap in employment opportunities between students learning or studying English and non-English mediums.
10. Inclusive and multidisciplinary education expresses or manifests commitment to quality. But how will the commitment to quality be ensured or how will its practical application be implemented, that is, how will it be implemented, what will be its main aspects and what will be their main basis, this is also a major challenge reflected in this context.
11. Another challenge in the context of holistic and multi-disciplinary education may also be in the context of setting up foreign universities in India. Foreign universities will work with a specific ideology and profit and at the same time they will adopt a strategy of competition with local universities. Apart from this, it can be

expensive for students to take admission and get education in foreign universities, so in such situation many types of obstacles may arise in the way of bringing the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education on the ground and its practical application.

**Conclusion-** On the basis of the discussion of the above grounds and aspects, it can be said that the National Education Policy, 2020 is based on the basic pillars of easy access, equality, quality and accountability for all and aims at making schools and colleges suitable for the needs of the 21st century and to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and global superpower of knowledge by making education more holistic and resilient and to bring out the unique abilities inherent in every student. Some of the major provisions related to holistic and multidisciplinary educations under this education policy are; to develop all the potentialities of human beings in an integrated manner through holistic and multi-disciplinary education, to promote the possibilities of lifelong learning by removing rigid disciplinary boundaries, to make the departments of disciplines multidisciplinary to encourage Indian education and environment, holistic and multidisciplinary education is the need of today's schools, flexibility in curriculum for the students, providing options of innovative and

interesting courses, credit based curriculum and inclusion of various areas to bring the idea of holistic and multidisciplinary education on the ground, change in the duration and structure of degree programmes, relaxation of postgraduate programs in various formats, setting up of model public universities for holistic and multidisciplinary education, focusing on interdisciplinary research and innovation, etc. In the present times, in the context of holistic and multi-disciplinary education, make a specific and important education policy. Apart from this, although there are some challenges and problems in the context of bringing the idea of this education on the ground, which can block its path, but if we face these challenges and problems boldly and make special strategies in their context in a time bound and systematic manner and apply them practically, then the ideas of holistic and multi-disciplinary education of National Education Policy 2020 can be easily landed on the ground.

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