

# National Education Policy 2020: Paving the Path for Holistic Management Education in India

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## ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 signifies a paradigm shift in the landscape of education in India. The NEP 2020 envisages a transformative journey towards a holistic and multidisciplinary educational framework. This research delves into the sub-theme of "Focus on holistic, multidisciplinary learning instead of rote learning" within the context of management education. The research explores the rationale behind this shift, analyzing how the NEP 2020 aligns with the need for holistic education in the field of management. It examines various provisions of the policy to understand the policy's inclination to break away from the conventional rote memorization model. It investigates how holistic learning approach fosters a more comprehensive understanding of management concepts, encouraging management students to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. Furthermore, the research explores the integration of multidisciplinary learning and incorporation of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) within the management curriculum. The NEP 2020 advocates for a flexible and broad-based education system, allowing students to explore diverse subjects and develop a well-rounded skill set. This approach not only enhances the adaptability of future managers but also nurtures a holistic perspective essential for effective leadership in today's dynamic business environment. Through an in-depth analysis of the NEP 2020 provisions and their implications for management education, this research sheds light on the challenges and opportunities presented by the shift from rote learning to holistic, multidisciplinary learning. The findings contribute valuable insights into the ongoing educational reforms in India for educators, policymakers and stakeholders in the management education sector.

**Keywords--** National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Management Education, Indian Knowledge System (IKS), Multidisciplinary Learning, Holistic Education

## I. INTRODUCTION

India's history of education policies reflects a continuous effort to adapt to evolving societal needs in

national as well as global perspectives. The roots can be traced back to the post-independence period when the country faced the monumental task of rebuilding its education system. The first major policy, the Education Policy of 1968, laid the foundation for a national framework with an emphasis on access, equality, and quality. This policy set the stage for subsequent educational developments. The National Policy on Education 1986 and its revised version in 1992 aimed to address challenges such as universalizing elementary education, promoting adult literacy, and introducing vocationalization. These policies reflected the country's commitment to catering to the diverse educational needs of its growing population.

In the 21st century, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emerged as a comprehensive and forward-looking document. It not only addressed the limitations of previous policies but also acknowledged the necessity of adapting education to the demands of the modern era. The policy emphasized flexibility, innovation, and a multidisciplinary approach, reflecting a commitment to providing a relevant and high-quality education for India's diverse population (NEP, 2020).

The management education in India serves the purpose of transforming the graduates and aspiring corporate professionals into proficient managers. This educational program is meticulously designed to equip young adults with a comprehensive skill set, encompassing vital aspects such as communication, decision-making, teamwork, leadership, and organizational proficiency. Positioned as both an art and a science, management education harmoniously blends practical application, scientific knowledge, and the professional dimensions required in the corporate landscape (Rukmini, 2022).

One distinctive feature of management education is its inclusivity, welcoming students from various academic backgrounds, including arts, science, engineering, medicine, and more. For many, it marks their initial encounter with the intricacies of management, leading to hesitation and apprehension. The NEP 2020 acknowledges

the significance of multidisciplinary and holistic education, focusing on the development of critical skills and a well-rounded perspective, which is particularly relevant in the context of management studies. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India is well-aligned with the imperative for holistic education by incorporating Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in the field of management. It achieves this alignment by emphasizing key principles that transcend conventional academic boundaries (UGC, 2023).

Extensive research is crucial for understanding and promoting the implementation of NEP 2020, as a significant portion of the population lacks awareness about its functioning (Devi & Cheluvraju, 2020). Researchers should conduct thorough studies in this area to enhance knowledge among stakeholders, accelerating the adoption of NEP 2020 and contributing to economic development. Through an in-depth analysis of the NEP 2020 provisions and their implications for management education, this research sheds light on the challenges and opportunities presented by the shift from rote learning to holistic, multidisciplinary learning in Management.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the need to shift from the rote memorization model of learning to the holistic management education.
2. To analyse NEP 2020 perspectives for Integration of multidisciplinary learning and incorporation of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) within the management studies curriculum.

## III. OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India is significant for its comprehensive reforms aimed at transforming the education system. It focuses on holistic development, emphasis on skill-building and integration of technology. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) by emphasizing inclusive and equitable quality education, promoting lifelong learning opportunities, and addressing issues like gender equality, environmental sustainability, and social justice within the education system (NEP, 2020). The National Education Policy 2020 is structured around five core pillars: access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability. This alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is evident in its foundation. The NEP aims to make education more inclusive, promote critical thinking, and prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. It's a step towards aligning education with the evolving needs of society and the economy. The

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) in India is a framework that outlines the vision and goals for the country's education system.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings about a transformative vision for higher education, emphasizing flexibility, multidisciplinary learning, and global exposure. It foresees an educational system that equips students for the complexities of the 21st century. One of the key aspects of NEP 2020 is the emphasis on multidisciplinary education. The policy encourages the breaking down of rigid silos between different streams of knowledge, allowing students to choose a diverse set of subjects. This promotes a holistic understanding of various disciplines and fosters creativity and critical thinking. Moreover, NEP 2020 advocates for the inclusion of vocational education starting at a young age, enabling students to develop practical skills alongside their theoretical understanding. This integration aims to make education more relevant to the evolving needs of the job market, fostering employability and entrepreneurship (Senapati & Singh, 2023).

Another crucial aspect is the emphasis on research and innovation in higher education. NEP 2020 envisions the establishment of a National Research Foundation (NRF) to promote a culture of research and development across disciplines. This is expected to elevate India's position in the global research community. In terms of regulatory frameworks, NEP 2020 proposes the creation of a single overarching regulator for higher education, called the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI). This body is designed to replace multiple regulatory authorities, streamlining processes and promoting autonomy for higher education institutions. The policy also addresses the internationalization of higher education, encouraging collaboration between Indian and foreign institutions. This exchange is expected to enhance the quality of education, promote cultural diversity, and provide students with a global perspective (NEP, 2020).

NEP is designed to align education with the needs of the 21st century. It recognizes the importance of preparing students for the challenges of the modern world, including advancements in technology and a dynamic global economy. The policy encourages critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills. It seeks to move away from a rote memorization approach to education and promotes a deeper understanding of concepts. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 reflects a forward-looking approach to education, aiming to create a system that nurtures well-rounded individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to society.

#### IV. CRITIQUE OF ROTE MEMORIZATION MODEL IN MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

Swami Vivekanand said- "Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man". True learning has holistic approach to education that taps into the innate potential of individuals in contrast to rote learning which focuses on memorizing information without fostering a genuine comprehension of the subject matter. The rote memorization model in management studies in India has faced criticism for several reasons:

**Lack of Critical Thinking:** Rote memorization tends to emphasize memorizing facts and formulas without encouraging critical thinking. In higher education studies, where problem-solving and strategic thinking are crucial, this approach may hinder the development of analytical skills (Sharma, 2020).

**Limited Application in Real-world Scenarios:** Management is inherently practical, requiring the ability to apply theoretical concepts to real-world situations. Rote memorization often results in superficial understanding, and students may struggle to apply their knowledge effectively in dynamic business environments.

**Inhibits Creativity and Innovation:** Management, especially in today's rapidly changing business landscape, demands creativity and innovation. Rote learning tends to stifle creativity as it focuses on repetition rather than encouraging students to explore new ideas and solutions (UGC, 2019).

**Overemphasis on Exams:** Rote memorization is often associated with exam-centric education. The current system places excessive pressure on students, as their pursuit of employment or higher education hinges on obtaining high scores in end examination. Achieving higher marks in this final assessment has become the sole objective for students. This leads to selective learning, rote memorization and reliance on simplified notes. It hampers the cultivation of consistent study habits, the utilization of quality textbooks, and innovative learning methods (Singh, 2015).

**Inequality in Learning:** The rote memorization model may disadvantage students with different learning styles. It often rewards those who excel at memorization but may not be the most effective way of learning for everyone. This can contribute to educational inequality.

**Obsolete Knowledge:** The business environment is dynamic, and management practices evolve. Relying on rote memorization of outdated theories may result in graduates who are not well-prepared for the challenges of the contemporary business world.

**Limited Focus on Soft Skills:** Management is not only about technical knowledge but also about interpersonal skills, communication, and leadership. Rote

memorization tends to overlook the development of these essential soft skills, which are crucial for success in managerial roles.

**Undermines Lifelong Learning:** Rote learning may create a mindset that values short-term memorization for exams over a commitment to lifelong learning. Students may focus on memorizing information to perform well in exams rather than gaining a deeper understanding of the subject. This can lead to a lack of retention and application of knowledge in the long run. In management, where staying updated with industry trends is vital, this approach may hinder continuous professional development.

In response to these critiques, there is a growing emphasis on adopting more interactive and experiential learning methods in management education in India. The aim is to move away from a purely memorization-based approach and cultivate critical thinking, practical application, and a holistic skill set among students.

#### V. SIGNIFICANCE OF HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT EDUCATION IN INDIA

At present, India ranks among the world's most youthful nations, boasting the largest population within the age group eligible for higher education. Despite the considerable increase in universities and colleges, which has provided access to a substantial portion of the population, it has also introduced specific problems as well (Sharma, 2020). For example, higher education institutions (HEIs) providing management education nowadays prioritize producing graduates essentially for the competitive job market. It is resulting in students struggling with corporate demands, often leading to stress, depression, anxiety and other tragic outcomes. Recognizing the importance of education beyond professional knowledge is crucial to promote emotional & mental stability. Conventional education systems often prioritize cognitive intelligence, but it's crucial to recognize that socio-emotional development is just as vital for success in personal, academic and professional aspects of life (Tiwari, 2023). Holistic management education can cultivate a wise response to workplace challenges, discouraging negative tendencies. This involves transcending mundane knowledge and understanding life's essence. Holistic management education in India is imperative for producing well-rounded management professionals. The concept of multidisciplinary learning in management studies in India is gaining importance with the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This approach encourages students to acquire knowledge and skills from various disciplines beyond traditional business studies. Such students not only excel in their chosen fields but also possess the skills, values, and

mindset necessary to thrive in a dynamic and interconnected global business environment.

Significance of holistic management education in India can be understood in following points:

**Integrated Skill Development:** Holistic education ensures a comprehensive development of individuals, combining technical skills with soft skills. This approach addresses the growing need for professionals who not only excel in their field but also possess effective communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Senapati & Singh, 2023).

**Global Competitiveness:** In an increasingly interconnected world, professionals need a global mindset. Holistic management education equips students with a broader understanding of international markets, cultural sensitivity, and the ability to navigate diverse business environments. This enhances India's workforce competitiveness on a global scale.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** Holistic education promotes diversity and inclusion, recognizing the value of varied perspectives and backgrounds. This prepares students to work in diverse teams and fosters a more inclusive corporate culture, contributing to organizational success and societal progress.

**Adaptability to Change:** Holistic education emphasizes adaptability and resilience. Given the rapid changes in technology and business landscapes, professionals need to be agile learners. A holistic approach ensures that students are prepared to embrace change, innovate, and stay relevant in evolving industries.

**Entrepreneurial Mindset:** Holistic education fosters an entrepreneurial mindset, encouraging students to think creatively, take calculated risks, and drive innovation. This approach encourages self-dependent attitude and problem-solving mindset among students. This is vital for India's aspiration to become a hub for startups and innovation, fostering economic growth and job creation.

**Personal Development:** Holistic education emphasizes personal development, including emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness. These attributes are crucial for effective teamwork, leadership, and building positive workplace relationship (Tiwari, 2023).

India has a longstanding tradition of disseminating knowledge and providing education, with a history that include globally renowned centers of higher learning like Takshashila, Nalanda, and Mithila. Despite facing destruction from foreigner invasions, the holistic teachings and traditions endured through the "Gurukul" system in India (Panditrao & Panditrao, 2020).

## VI. INTEGRATION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY LEARNING AND INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM (IKS) WITHIN THE MANAGEMENT CURRICULUM

The management educational curriculum should encompass fundamental arts, crafts, humanities, sports, literature, culture and values alongside commerce, science and mathematics. This holistic approach aims to nurture all facets of learners, promoting a well-rounded, beneficial, and satisfying educational experience. Education should instill character, fostering ethical, rational, compassionate individuals, while also equipping them for meaningful employment (NEP, 2020). The Indian Knowledge System (IKS) encompasses diverse traditional practices, philosophies, and sciences rooted in Indian culture. It includes ancient texts like Vedas, Upanishads, Ayurveda, Yoga and various schools of philosophy. IKS integrates spiritual, social, and scientific dimensions, emphasizing holistic understanding and interconnectedness. The NEP 2020 suggests integrating the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into educational curricula across all levels (UGC, 2023). The integration of multidisciplinary learning and the incorporation of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) within the management studies curriculum can bring about a more comprehensive and culturally relevant approach to business education in India. The Indian knowledge system strives to aid and encourage ongoing research in addressing present-day societal challenges across various domains (Mandavkar, 2023).

Implementation of NEP 2020 to achieve these goals involves various opportunities and challenges.

## VII. OPPORTUNITIES

**Diverse Perspectives:** Multidisciplinary learning introduces diverse perspectives by integrating insights from various fields. Multidisciplinary learning allows management students to gain a holistic perspective by incorporating insights from diverse fields such as psychology, sociology, economics, and technology. This broader understanding enhances decision-making abilities. Incorporating IKS adds another layer of diversity, allowing students to understand business concepts through the lens of traditional Indian wisdom and practices. Students gain insights not only from conventional business theories but also from indigenous knowledge, fostering a more well-rounded education.

**Industry-Academia Collaboration:** Holistic management education encourages strong ties between academia and industry. Such collaborative initiatives ensure that academic curricula align with industry

requirements. This collaboration enhances the practical relevance of education and improves graduates' employability. The connection between academics and industry in management studies is crucial for preparing students for real-world challenges. Academic programs should incorporate industry-relevant content, guest lectures from professionals, internships, and collaborative projects to bridge the gap between theory and practical application. This connection enhances students' employability and ensures they acquire skills aligned with industry needs. Additionally, industry partnerships can provide valuable insights for academia, fostering a dynamic and responsive educational environment.

**Holistic Understanding:** By blending Western management principles with traditional Indian knowledge, the integrated curriculum aims to produce well-rounded professionals who can navigate complex challenges with a nuanced and culturally aware approach. Student-centered curriculum is crucial across higher education, particularly in business management. The accelerated pace of change in management field, driven by globalized competition, underscores the need for innovative approaches in planning, designing, and implementing student-centered holistic curriculum (Aithal, 2016).

**Global Competence:** Multidisciplinary learning prepares management students to navigate global challenges by developing a well-rounded skill set that goes beyond traditional business knowledge. This global competence is increasingly valuable in an interconnected world. Integrating multidisciplinary perspectives in management studies helps students understand how concepts from different fields can be applied in real-world business scenarios.

**Ethical Leadership and Social Responsibility:** Beyond technical expertise, holistic management education instills values of ethical leadership and social responsibility. This is crucial for developing responsible leaders who consider the impact of their decisions on society and the environment, contributing to sustainable and ethical business practices. IKS often emphasizes ethical values and sustainability. Integrating these principles into management studies encourages the development of responsible and ethical business leaders, aligning with the growing emphasis on corporate social responsibility.

**Innovation and Creativity:** IKS can inspire innovative thinking. By incorporating traditional Indian practices that encourage creativity and adaptability, students can develop a more nuanced approach to problem-solving and innovation in the business context. One aspect can be motivating and equipping students to initiate online businesses while concurrently striving for their desired placements (Aithal, 2016).

**Interdisciplinary Problem Solving:** Multidisciplinary learning combined with IKS equips students with a diverse skill set for interdisciplinary problem-solving. This approach is valuable in addressing complex business challenges that require a synthesis of knowledge from various domains. This practical application enhances their adaptability and problem-solving capabilities.

**Local Relevance & Cultural Sensitivity:** Integrating IKS ensures that the curriculum is relevant to the local business landscape. Understanding traditional Indian business practices, market dynamics, and societal norms prepares students to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities within the Indian context. Business operations often extend across cultural boundaries. Integrating IKS into the curriculum helps students develop cultural sensitivity and an appreciation for diverse approaches to problem-solving, crucial skills for global business environments.

**Collaboration Skills:** Exposure to diverse disciplines encourages collaboration among students with different academic backgrounds. This collaborative learning environment mirrors the teamwork and interdisciplinary collaboration often required in the professional world.

## VIII. FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR INTEGRATION

1. Adopting the fundamental concept of 'Karma yoga' from Gita can serve as the alternative framework for enhancing organizational management quality (Mahadevan, 2008). Designing a curriculum based on the Bhagavad Gita for management studies can offer a unique approach, integrating timeless wisdom into modern education (Rukmini, 2022).

2. Maharishi Patanjali's says, "yogaha chitta vritti nirodhaha", which translates to "yoga is the cessation of fluctuations in the mind." The concept emphasizes achieving mental stillness, which is crucial in the demanding field of management. Integrating lessons from Patanjali's yoga sutras into management studies curriculum can provide a holistic understanding of work-life balance. By incorporating these teachings, students can learn techniques to manage stress, maintain focus, and achieve a balanced mindset in both personal and professional aspects of life.

3. In Vedic philosophy, 'Dharma' is synonymous with 'ethical behavior,' contrasting with 'Adharma,' which represents 'unethical behavior.' Dharma also involves fulfilling one's duties to the best of their ability. Organizations must adhere to their own dharma to maintain integrity and avoid consequences. When organizations steadfastly pursue their dharma without

violations, they thrive and prosper. The principles of dharma can be applied to cultivate business ethics, enhance corporate culture and develop corporate social responsibility.

4. The Ayurvedic concept of gunas – 'satva', 'raja', and 'tama' – holds relevance in organizational behavior, encompassing traits like purity, passion, and ignorance. Satva signifies qualities such as clarity and transparency, while raja is associated with a desire for fame and power. Tama involves characteristics like anger and greed. Individuals may possess a mix of gunas, allowing organizations to tailor roles to their preferences, fostering both individual and organizational growth (Chaya et al., 2013). Management education can use this philosophy to understand students' behaviour & potential as well (Sharma et al., 2022).

5. The philosophical thoughts from Jainism, Buddhism & Kautilya Arthashastra can be used to understand corporate governance. (Chattopadhyaya, 2012)

Multidisciplinary learning in management studies in India aligns with the evolving educational landscape, providing students with a comprehensive skill set and a broader understanding of the complexities of the business world. This approach is in line with the NEP's goal of promoting flexibility, creativity, and a holistic approach to education. To implement this integration successfully, curriculum designers and educators need to collaborate to identify relevant IKS principles and seamlessly incorporate them into the existing multidisciplinary framework. This approach can contribute to a more inclusive, culturally rich, and globally competent generation of business professionals emerging from Indian management programs.

## IX. CHALLENGES

Integrating Multidisciplinary Learning and the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into the management curriculum to foster holistic management education in India faces several challenges:

**Curricular Rigidity:** Existing structures may be rigid, making it challenging to incorporate diverse disciplines and IKS seamlessly.

**Resistance to Change:** Stakeholders, including students and parents, may resist changes to the traditional curriculum, affecting the acceptance and success of multidisciplinary learning and IKS integration.

**Faculty Training:** Faculty members may require training to teach across disciplines and integrate IKS into their courses. A lack of awareness or understanding about IKS can hinder effective implementation.

**Resource Constraints:** Limited availability of resources, including textbooks, reference materials, and experts in IKS, can hinder the development and execution

of a multidisciplinary curriculum (Anilkumar & Deshpande, 2023).

**Industry Relevance:** Ensuring that the integrated curriculum remains relevant to industry needs while incorporating IKS elements may be a delicate balancing act.

**Assessment Methods:** Conventional assessment methods may not align with the holistic and multidisciplinary nature of IKS. Developing appropriate evaluation tools poses a challenge.

**Standardization Challenges:** Achieving a balance between standardization and flexibility in curriculum design can be difficult, especially when incorporating diverse elements like IKS.

**Interdisciplinary Collaboration:** Facilitating collaboration between departments and experts from various fields to create a cohesive curriculum may face challenges due to organizational silos (Anilkumar & Deshpande, 2023).

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from educational institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders to embrace change, invest in faculty development, and create an environment conducive to multidisciplinary learning and the incorporation of the Indian Knowledge System.

## X. CONCLUSION

Ancient Indian scripture says, "Sa Vidya ya Vimuktaye", emphasizing that true knowledge is liberating. It is crucial to reconsider, redesign, and transform the current education system. The existing emphasis on placements and higher salary packages has led to a competitive and divisive atmosphere in management education. To counter this, there is a call for a shift in education towards a more holistic approach that integrates different elements. Shifting towards an education that synthesizes rather than segregates is essential to address ongoing global conflicts and confrontations in management education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India paves the way for a comprehensive approach to management education, emphasizing a holistic perspective, multidisciplinary learning and practical skill development.

Management education, through its comprehensive curriculum, diverse teaching methodologies, and inclusive approach, aims to mold individuals into professional managers and conscientious leaders, ensuring their readiness for the dynamic corporate world. The multifaceted nature of management is encapsulated in the understanding that it is not merely a discipline but an amalgamation of artistry, scientific principles, and a dedicated profession. This synthesis demands active practice, a solid foundation in scientific

knowledge, and a nuanced understanding of professional dynamics. Management is encapsulated in the triad of knowing, doing, and being, requiring a holistic approach to learning and development.

The culmination of a management program ideally results in the emergence of young adults as not just managers but as conscious leaders. Business schools worldwide employ a myriad of practices aimed at facilitating this transformation and ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for the corporate challenges that lie ahead. There are several opportunities and challenges associated with the implementation of National education policy (NEP) 2020 in management education. The faculty members play a pivotal role in overcoming the challenges of shifting management education from rote learning to holistic education. In this process, educators can utilize diverse teaching pedagogies and evaluation methods to create an effective and engaging learning environment for holistic management education in India.

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### DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

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