

Impact of Multidisciplinary Approach of NEP 2020 on Commerce Education: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a paradigm shift in Indian higher education by promoting a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to learning. Commerce education, traditionally discipline-bound and theory-oriented, is expected to undergo significant transformation under this policy. The present empirical study examines the impact of the multidisciplinary approach of NEP 2020 on commerce education with special reference to academic performance, skill development, and employability of students. Primary data were collected from 420 commerce students and 45 faculty members of selected higher education institutions through structured questionnaires and interviews. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, and t-test were applied for data analysis. The findings reveal that multidisciplinary exposure has a significant positive impact on students' academic achievement, critical thinking, communication skills, and employability. The study concludes that the multidisciplinary framework of NEP 2020 has the potential to make commerce education more flexible, relevant, and industry-oriented, provided effective implementation and adequate faculty training are ensured.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Multidisciplinary Education, Commerce Education, Skill Development, Employability, Higher Education

Introduction

Commerce education occupies a vital place in the Indian higher education system as it prepares human resources for business, industry, finance, banking, entrepreneurship, and public administration. Despite its importance, commerce education has often been criticized for being rigid, examination-centric, and disconnected from practical and interdisciplinary realities of the modern economy.

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Rapid globalization, digitalization, and technological advancement have increased the demand for graduates who possess not only domain knowledge but also analytical ability, communication skills, technological competence, and adaptability.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to address these challenges by introducing a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to higher education. The policy emphasizes flexibility in curriculum, choice-based learning, integration of vocational and skill-based courses, and removal of rigid disciplinary boundaries. For commerce students, this approach enables the integration of subjects such as data analytics, information technology, psychology, environmental studies, law, and communication along with core commerce disciplines.

In this context, it becomes essential to empirically examine whether the multidisciplinary approach proposed by NEP 2020 has actually influenced commerce education in terms of learning outcomes and employability. The present study is an attempt to analyze this impact using primary data from students and teachers.

Concept of Multidisciplinary Approach under NEP 2020

NEP 2020 defines multidisciplinary education as an approach that encourages students to study multiple disciplines simultaneously in order to develop intellectual flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving ability. The policy advocates the transformation of higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities and colleges.

Key features relevant to commerce education include:

- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)
- Major–Minor and elective system
- Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)
- Multiple Entry and Exit options
- Integration of vocational education and internships
- Emphasis on experiential and project-based learning

Through this framework, commerce students are expected to acquire both breadth and depth of knowledge, making them more competent for contemporary professional roles.

Review of the Literature

Several scholars have examined the relevance of multidisciplinary education in higher learning. Sharma and Verma (2021) highlighted that interdisciplinary exposure enhances critical thinking and creativity among students. Rao (2022) emphasized that commerce education must integrate data analytics and digital tools to remain relevant in the modern business environment. Singh (2023) observed that NEP 2020 strengthens employability by promoting skill-based and flexible learning pathways. Patel (2024) found that while the policy vision is progressive, successful implementation depends heavily on faculty readiness and institutional infrastructure.

Most existing studies on NEP 2020 and commerce education are conceptual in nature. Empirical, data-driven studies focusing specifically on the multidisciplinary approach and its measurable impact on commerce students' academic performance and employability are limited. The present study attempts to bridge this gap.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the extent of implementation of the multidisciplinary approach in commerce education.
- To analyze its impact on academic performance of commerce students.
- To assess the effect on skill development and employability.
- To study the perception of students and teachers towards multidisciplinary education under NEP 2020.

Hypotheses of the Study

- H_{01} : There is no significant impact of the multidisciplinary approach on the academic performance of commerce students.
- H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between multidisciplinary education and employability of commerce students.

Methodology

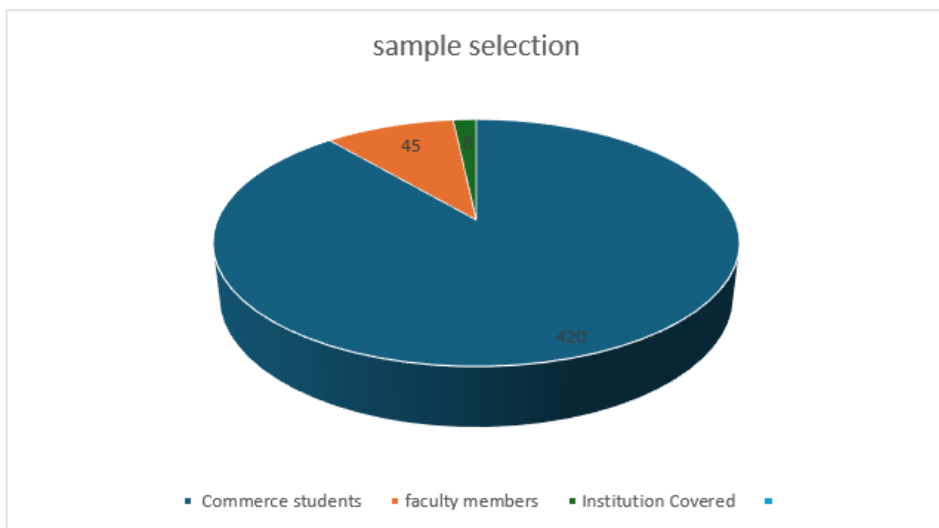
❖ Research Design

The study follows a descriptive and analytical research design.

❖ Sample Selection

Respondents	Number
Commerce Students	420
Faculty Members	45
Institutions Covered	08

Stratified random sampling technique was used.



Tools for Data Collection

- Structured questionnaire (5-point Likert scale)
- Interview schedule
- Academic performance records

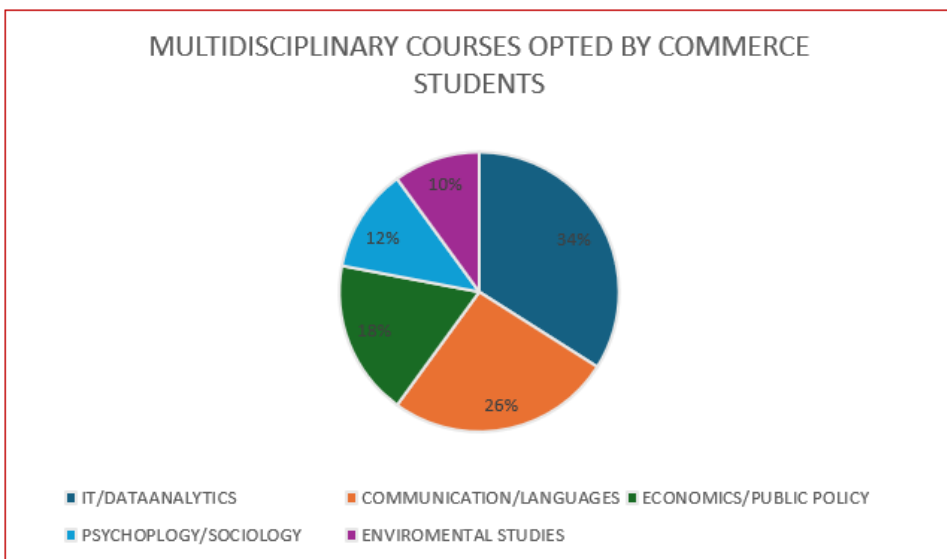
Statistical Techniques

Percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, and t-test were used for analysis.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Multidisciplinary Courses Opted by Commerce Students

Discipline	Percentage
IT / Data Analytics	34%
Communication / Languages	26%
Economics / Public Policy	18%
Psychology / Sociology	12%
Environmental Studies	10%



Interpretation

The data show a strong preference for technology and communication-related disciplines, indicating market-oriented learning choices among commerce students.

Table 2: Academic Performance [Mean GPA]

CURRICULAM TYPE	MEAN GPA
Traditional	6.8
Multidisciplinary	7.9

Calculated t-value=4.21 [significant at 0.05 level]

Interpretation

Since the calculated t-value exceeds the critical value, the null hypothesis [H₀₁] rejected multidisciplinary education has a significant positive impact on academic performance.

Table 3: Skill Development (Mean Scores out of 5)

Skill	Mean Score
Critical Thinking	4.2
Communication Skills	4.4
Digital Skills	4.1
Problem Solving	4.0
Team Work	4.3

Table 4: Employability Indicators (Before and After NEP 2020)

Indicator	Before (%)	After (%)
Campus Placement	61	79
Internship	55	82
Entrepreneurial	38	64

Interpretation

The improvement in employability indicators suggests that multidisciplinary exposure enhance job readiness. Hence, H₀₂ is rejected.

Findings of the Study

- Multidisciplinary approach significantly improves academic performance of commerce students.
- Students develop better communication, analytical, and digital skills.
- Employability and internship opportunities increase after multidisciplinary exposure.
- Students and faculty show a positive perception towards NEP 2020.

Discussion

The findings are consistent with earlier studies emphasizing the relevance of interdisciplinary learning in higher education. The integration of technology, analytics, and soft skills with commerce subjects equips students to meet contemporary business challenges. NEP 2020 thus aligns commerce education with global educational and industry trends.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the multidisciplinary approach of NEP 2020 has a significant and positive impact on commerce education. It transforms commerce learning from a narrow, content-based model to a flexible, skill-oriented, and industry-relevant framework. Effective implementation, faculty training, and infrastructure development are essential to fully realize the benefits of this reform.

Suggestions

- Regular faculty development programs on interdisciplinary teaching.
- Strengthening industry-academia collaboration.
- Inclusion of more technology- and skill-based electives.
- Continuous review of curriculum as per market needs.

Limitations of the Study

- Limited geographical coverage.
- Short-term impact assessment.
- Dependence on self-reported data.

Scope for Future Research

Future studies may focus on longitudinal career outcomes of commerce graduates, comparative regional studies, and discipline-wise impact of multidisciplinary education.

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Article Information:

<i>Received</i>	2-Jan-2026
<i>Revised</i>	27-Feb-2026
<i>Accepted</i>	9-Mar-2026
<i>Published</i>	30-Mar-2026

Declarations:

Author's Contribution:

- **Conceptualization, and intellectual revisions**
- **Data collection, interpretation, and drafting of manuscript**
- The author agrees to take responsibility for every facet of the work, making sure that any concerns about its integrity or veracity are thoroughly examined and addressed

• **Conflict of Interest:** NIL

• **Funding Sources:** NIL

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