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EVALUATING THE EFFECTS OF NEP 2020 ON INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: INSIGHTS FROM STUDENT EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT
This study investigates how students in the Arts, Science, and Commerce streams perceive the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Data from 250 students were gathered to better understand their awareness, changes in teaching techniques, learning flexibility, technology use, skill development, and inclusion initiatives. The findings suggest that 44% of students are aware of NEP 2020, with Commerce students being the most knowledgeable. Teaching methods are trending toward practical skills, particularly in science and commerce, but the arts lag behind. The usage of technology has increased dramatically, and the majority of students find it advantageous. However, academic flexibility and research options are limited, particularly for Arts and Commerce majors. The findings indicates that colleges should raise awareness, improve practical teaching, offer additional course options, and encourage impoverished students to correspond with the NEP 2020 goals.

Keywords: *NEP 2020, Higher Education, Student Perspectives, Educational Reforms*

INTRODUCTION
The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the Indian government's new initiative to improve and enhance education for all pupils. It aims to improve the way students learn by emphasizing practical activities such as experiments, projects, and real-world problem solving rather than simply reading and memorizing textbooks. The policy also attempts to provide students more choice to pursue their favorite courses, such as allowing a Commerce student to study psychology or an Arts student to try accountancy. It promotes leveraging technology, such as online classes, educational apps, and e-books, to make learning easier and more enjoyable. Another major purpose is to assist students from low-income or underprivileged households by providing financial assistance, such as scholarships or free books, so that they can have equal access to the education.

This study aims to learn what students believe about NEP 2020. It determines whether students are aware of the policy and where they learned about it, such as from their college or via social media. It also inquires whether their teachers use innovative teaching methods, if they have more course options, and if technology is assisting them in learning more effectively. The survey interviewed 250 students from three different streams: arts, science, and commerce. By listening to these students, the study determines what works and what needs to be improved. It also provides easy strategies, such as conducting seminars or using more hands-on activities, to help colleges improve NEP 2020.

OBJECTIVES
- To find out how aware students are about NEP 2020 and where they get their information.
- To check how teaching methods have changed since NEP 2020 and if they focus more on practical skills.
- To understand if students have more freedom to choose courses and access multidisciplinary learning.
- To see how technology is used in education and whether it helps students learn better.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Sharma and Gupta (2021) investigated how NEP 2020's emphasis on flexible courses is implemented in Delhi colleges. They discovered that students prefer having more topic alternatives, yet many colleges lack the necessary teachers and resources to provide these possibilities. This demonstrates how difficult it is in practice to give students the flexibility to choose their studies.

Kumar et al. (2022) investigated how technology, such as online classes, is being employed in Indian universities after NEP 2020. They discovered that technology enables students to learn from anywhere, yet poor internet and a shortage of computers made it difficult for some pupils, particularly those in remote locations.

Patel and Singh (2023) surveyed Bangalore students regarding NEP 2020's emphasis on practical skills. They discovered that Science and Commerce students are gaining more job-related skills, whereas Arts students feel left out because their courses continue to focus on theory.

Verma (2022) investigated whether NEP 2020 benefits students from poor or rural communities. The study found that, while some universities provide scholarships, many students continue to struggle to fund education

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or receive adequate support, indicating that inclusion is improving but not enough. Joshi and Reddy (2024) investigated research opportunities for students after NEP 2020 in Mumbai colleges. They discovered that science students had more opportunity to conduct research, whereas arts and commerce students frequently lack such opportunities, limiting their learning.

These studies show that NEP 2020 is bringing changes like more technology and flexible courses, but challenges like lack of resources, unequal benefits across subjects, and limited support for disadvantaged students are slowing progress. The study builds on these findings by asking Mumbai students directly about their experiences.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study employs a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to completely assess the impact of NEP 2020 on Indian higher education from the perspective of students. The research used a descriptive survey methodology to obtain students' perspectives on the implementation and consequences of NEP 2020 in their educational institutions.

Population and Sampling

- The research focuses on college students in Mumbai pursuing bachelor's degrees (B.A., B.Sc., B.Com).
- Stratified random sampling is used to include students from diverse backgrounds. The study gathered responses from 250 students while ensuring a balanced representation across categories.

Data Collection:

The primary data collection tool was an organized survey that captured both quantitative and qualitative findings. The data analysis was carried out using Excel to organize and examine fundamental patterns in the responses.

Limitations:

Study is limited to students of arts, science, and commerce colleges in the Mumbai region.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

Section 1: NEP 2020 awareness

Table 1: Awareness of NEP 2020 by Stream

Stream	Well Aware	Heard but Don't Know Much	Not Aware	Total
Arts	36 (40%)	36 (40%)	18 (20%)	90 (100%)
Science	39 (43%)	36 (40%)	15 (17%)	90 (100%)
Commerce	36 (51%)	25 (36%)	9 (13%)	70 (100%)
Overall	**111 (44%)**	**97 (39%)**	**42 (17%)**	**250 (100%)**

- Across all streams, 44% students are well aware about the key points of NEP 2020, 39% have heard but don't know much, and 17% students are still not aware
- Commerce students (51%) are most aware, followed by Science (43%), and Arts (40%) students are least aware.

Table 2: Sources of Information about NEP 2020

Information Source	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
College	35	43	34	112	45%
Social media/news	32	32	21	85	34%
Friends/peers	16	15	12	43	17%
Other	9	0	3	12	4%
Total	**92**	**90**	**70**	**252**	**100%**

Most students (45%) learn about NEP 2020 from colleges. Social media/news are the medium of information for NEP 2020 for 34% of students. 17% students learnt about NEP 2020 from Friends/peers. 4% students got information about NEP 2020 from other sources like neighbors, Govt. Website etc.

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Section 2: Changes in Teaching

Table 3: Changes in Teaching Methods Since NEP 2020

Level of Change	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Significant changes	29 (32%)	41 (46%)	35 (50%)	105	42%
Minor changes	34 (38%)	32 (36%)	22 (31%)	88	35%
No changes	27 (30%)	17 (19%)	13 (19%)	57	23%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

- 42% of students report significant changes in teaching methods since NEP 2020, with Commerce (50%) highest and Arts (32%) lowest.
- Minor changes are seen by 35% of students, and 23% notice no changes, least in Science and Commerce (19%).

Table 4: Focus on Practical Skills vs. Theoretical Learning

Learning Approach	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Mostly practical/skill-based	23 (26%)	41 (46%)	31 (44%)	95	38%
Some shift, still theoretical	49 (54%)	40 (44%)	28 (40%)	117	47%
Still memorization-focused	18 (20%)	9 (10%)	11 (16%)	38	15%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

- 47% of students notice a slight shift toward practical skills in learning, but theory still dominates, especially in Arts (54%). Science (46%) and Commerce (44%) see more skill-based teaching.
- About 15% of students, mostly in Arts (20%), say learning remains focused on memorization.

Section 3: Flexibility in Learning

Table 5: Flexibility in Course Selection

Course Selection Freedom	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
More options available	23 (26%)	32 (36%)	30 (43%)	85	34%
Some options, still limited	39 (43%)	37 (41%)	27 (39%)	103	41%
No change	28 (31%)	21 (23%)	13 (19%)	62	25%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

41% of students feel they have some options but still face limitations in course selection, while only 34% believe more options are available out of that 43% Commerce students are most satisfied with course flexibility compared to Science and Arts students.

Table 6: Multidisciplinary Learning Opportunities

Multidisciplinary Options	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Available	19 (26%)	29 (35%)	24 (25%)	72	29%
Limited options	49 (68%)	52 (63%)	68 (72%)	169	68%
Not available	4 (6%)	2 (2%)	3 (3%)	9	3%
Total	**72 (100%)**	**83 (100%)**	**95 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

- 68% of students say multidisciplinary learning options are limited, especially in Commerce (72%) and Arts (68%).
- Only 29% students report that multidisciplinary options are available options.
- Very few 3% of students say no options exist

Section 4: Technology Use

Table 7: Technology Integration in Education

Technology Use Level	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Significant increase	49 (54%)	59 (66%)	44 (63%)	152	61%
Slight increase	28 (31%)	25 (28%)	17 (24%)	70	28%
No change	13 (14%)	6 (7%)	9 (13%)	28	11%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

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61% students find a significant increase in use of technology (like online classes/ e-content and more) in education, especially in Science and Commerce colleges. About 28% notice a slight increase, while 11% see no change in use of technology in teaching and learning.

Table 8: Effectiveness of Technology in Learning

Technology Helpfulness	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Very helpful	56 (62%)	63 (70%)	49 (70%)	168	67%
Sometimes helpful	25 (28%)	22 (24%)	16 (23%)	63	25%
Prefer traditional methods	9 (10%)	5 (6%)	5 (7%)	19	8%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

67% of students find technology very helpful, 25% students find it helpful sometimes but face issues, and 8% still prefer traditional methods.

Section 5: Skills and Research

Table 9: Career-Relevant Skills Development

Skill Development Level	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Gaining useful skills	32 (36%)	37 (41%)	41 (59%)	110	44%
Somewhat, not enough	38 (42%)	37 (41%)	20 (29%)	95	38%
No difference	20 (22%)	16 (18%)	9 (13%)	45	18%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

The data shows that 44% of students believe they are gaining useful career-relevant skills (like problem-solving). Around 38% feel they are gaining some skills but not enough. About 18% notice no difference in skill development, with Arts (22%) having the most students feeling unchanged.

Table 10: Research and Innovation Opportunities

Research Opportunities	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Plenty of opportunities	13 (14%)	32 (36%)	20 (29%)	65	26%
Limited opportunities	45 (50%)	45 (50%)	30 (43%)	120	48%
No opportunities	32 (36%)	13 (14%)	20 (29%)	65	26%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

- About 26% of students see plenty of research opportunities, Nearly half (48%) find opportunities limited. Another 26% report no opportunities, especially in Arts (36%) and Commerce (29%).
- 86% Science colleges find plenty of or some research and innovation opportunities and align best with NEP 2020's research goals.

Section 6: Inclusion and Accessibility

Table 11: Inclusion and Accessibility Improvements

Accessibility Level	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
More inclusive	29 (32%)	35 (39%)	28 (40%)	92	37%
Some improvements	40 (44%)	38 (42%)	27 (39%)	105	42%
No significant change	21 (23%)	17 (19%)	15 (21%)	53	21%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

- 37% say education is more inclusive for diverse students. with Commerce (40%) and Science (39%) leading over Arts (32%).
- 42% student see some accessibility improvements, while 21% report no significant change.

Table 13: Institutional Support for Underprivileged Students

Support Level	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Robust support	23 (26%)	29 (32%)	25 (36%)	77	31%
Limited support	42 (47%)	41 (46%)	30 (43%)	113	45%
No support	25 (28%)	20 (22%)	15 (21%)	60	24%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

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31% of students see robust support for underprivileged students (like book bank, scholarships, admission privilege etc.) . 45% find limited support and 24% report no support.

Table 14: Overall Quality Improvement Expectations

Quality Improvement	Arts	Science	Commerce	Total	Percentage
Significant improvement	45 (50%)	52 (58%)	43 (61%)	140	56%
Maybe/Uncertain	32 (36%)	27 (30%)	19 (27%)	78	31%
No improvement expected	13 (14%)	11 (12%)	8 (11%)	32	13%
Total	**90 (100%)**	**90 (100%)**	**70 (100%)**	**250**	**100%**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is expected to significantly improve education quality, with 56% of respondents (140 out of 250) across Arts, Science, and Commerce streams anticipating notable enhancements. About 31% students are uncertain about the impact, while 13% students see no improvement.

Key Findings

NEP 2020 awareness
44% of students know about NEP 2020, but more than half don't fully understand it. Arts students need more information, and colleges are the main source of awareness about NEP 2020

Changes in Teaching Methods
- Commerce feels the strongest impact of NEP 2020 on teaching methods; Arts needs more visible teaching improvements.
- Many students notice a small shift toward practical, skill-based learning since NEP 2020, but theoretical learning is still common, especially in the Arts stream. Science and Commerce streams report more focus on practical skills compared to Arts, where memorization-based learning remains more prevalent

Flexibility in Learning
- 65% students experience limited or no flexibility in course selection
- Commerce and Arts need more multidisciplinary opportunities to align with NEP 2020 goals. Science shows slightly better progress, but still faces limitations

Technology Use
66% of Science and 63% of Commerce colleges show stronger technology integration. Arts college needs more focus to align with NEP 2020's tech-driven goals. Most students find it helpful, but some face challenges like technical problems.

Skills and Research
59% of Commerce and 41% of science students feel they are gaining more skills through skill oriented courses than arts students. Commerce colleges align well with NEP 2020's focus on career-oriented skills, but arts lags, needing more practical, job-focused training. Science colleges show moderate progress but could benefit from enhanced skill-building efforts to meet NEP 2020 goals.

86% of science students finding plenty of / limited research opportunities, aligning best with NEP 2020's goals. 36% of Arts students and 29% o commerce students find no opportunities for research, face significant gaps, needing more research programs.

Inclusion and Accessibility Improvements
Inclusion efforts are advancing, but the Arts needs a stronger focus to meet NEP 2020's accessibility goals.

NEP 2020 is making education somewhat more inclusive, but support for underprivileged students is still limited. All streams need enhanced efforts to better assist underprivileged students.

Overall Quality Improvement Expectations
The policy's impact is viewed most positively in Commerce, followed by Science and Arts. Overall, NEP 2020 holds strong potential for uplifting educational standards.

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SUGGESTIONS

- **Raise Awareness**: The colleges should spread clear information about NEP 2020 by hosting seminars, workshops, or using posters, etc., to explain the NEP benefits.
- **Focus on Practical Teaching**: The colleges should use more hands-on learning methods, like :
- **For Arts:** Creation of short film, Designing of posters, role-play debates and more.
- **For Science**: Laboratory experiments, building simple circuits, coding science apps, and more
- **For Commerce**: Simulate stock trading, prepare business plans, analyze financial data, and more.
- **Offer More Course Choices**: The colleges should give students more and flexible subject options, like allowing Commerce students to take a psychology course, or Arts students to take accountancy, and science students to take Economics/Finance.
- **Improve Technology Access**: The colleges should make tech tools easier to use, like Wi-Fi, e-learning apps, remote access of e-resources and more.
- **Build Job-Ready Skills**: The colleges should conduct workshops and add-on courses for resume-writing, personality development, coding, communication skills, and many more to teach skills for careers.
- **Create Research Programs**: The colleges should encourage students to start small research projects like market surveys for Commerce/social cause, research for science, technology and more.
- **Support Underprivileged Students**: The colleges should offer students in need with book bank facilities, fee waivers, and more to support for underprivileged students.

CONCLUSION

According to the report, NEP 2020 is delivering good changes, such as increased technology use and practical learning, particularly in the Science and Commerce streams. However, many students, particularly in the arts, are unaware of the policy, and course flexibility and research opportunities remain limited. Colleges have to spread more information about NEP 2020, employ hands-on teaching methods, give more subject options, and provide better support to vulnerable students. These initiatives will help NEP 2020 become more effective and improve education for all kids.

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