

## LIFE SKILLS AND ARTS INTEGRATION IN NEP 2020: TOWARDS HOLISTIC EDUCATION

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### Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes a transformative educational framework in India, prioritizing holistic, value-driven, and skill-centric learning. A fundamental aspect is the incorporation of life skills and arts education into standard curriculum to guarantee that learners cultivate not only academic proficiency but also social, emotional, and creative talents. This study examines the practical application of life skills and arts under NEP 2020, emphasizing its contribution to fostering holistic education among students in Ajmer and Beawar City. The study evaluates awareness, perceptions, and the effects of integrated life skills and arts-based pedagogy among educators and students using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The results indicate substantial advantages in student involvement, creativity, emotional resilience, and problem-solving skills. Nonetheless, obstacles such as insufficient teacher preparation, resource scarcity, and conventional assessment methods continue to exist. This paper presents practical proposals for the optimal integration of life skills and arts education in accordance with the objectives of NEP 2020.

**Keywords:** National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), Life Skills Education, Arts Integration, Holistic Development, Teacher and Student Perception, Educational Reform in India.

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### Introduction

The NEP 2020 represents a paradigm shift in India's educational landscape by proposing an inclusive and learner-centric approach. Among its most progressive initiative is the integration of life skills and arts education to nurture holistic individuals capable of contributing meaningfully to society. Life skills such as critical thinking, emotional intelligence, collaboration, and communication are indispensable in the 21st century workforce, while arts education enhances creativity, cultural awareness, and emotional expression. Despite their importance, these components have traditionally been marginalized in favor of rote learning and examination-centric pedagogy. This research investigates the incorporation of life skills and arts into the educational practices under NEP 2020 in the Ajmer Beawar region. It evaluates stakeholder perceptions, implementation challenges, and the measurable impact on students' holistic development. The study aims to offer strategic insights to policy makers, educators, and institutions to strengthen the life skills and art education ecosystem as envisioned by the NEP.

## Review of Literature

(Reddy, et al., 2023) This article promotes the reformation of engineering education curricula to align with the objectives of NEP 2020. It promotes adaptability, interdisciplinary integration, and many entry-exit pathways that enhance comprehensive and learner-focused educational frameworks.

(Nolan, et al., 2023) This study investigates the methods by which physical education trainers cultivate life skills within elementary school football programs. It underscores the need of including soft skills & social learning into coaching, along with the holistic education goal of NEP 2020.

(Asagar, S., Kumari, & S., 2023) This research evaluates NEP 2020 via the perspective of university faculty. Educators convey excitement regarding adaptable curriculum, vocational integration, and student-centered approaches, while simultaneously advocating for infrastructural and pedagogical preparedness.

(Desai, G., Narkhede, & P., 2023) The research advocates for physical education as a fundamental component of comprehensive development in creative fields such as architecture. It embodies the NEP's advocacy for equitable development across cognitive, physical, & emotional aspects.

(Sheeba, A., Manjula, & R., 2023) This study examines NEP 2020's position on inclusive education. It emphasizes measures such as accessible infrastructure, educator awareness, & resource centers to provide fair access for children having special needs. (Kasinathan, et al., 2023) This paper provides a supplementary analysis of inclusion under NEP 2020, critiquing implementation deficiencies and proposing policy enhancements on teacher training, curriculum modification, and technology-assisted learning to underrepresented pupils.

(Tam & O., 2023) Tam's work corresponds with NEP's focus on creativity by incorporating divergent thinking methodologies into visual arts. The study emphasizes contemplative methods, visual experimentation, and collaborative efforts in higher education.

(Ngabeni, Cishe, & N., 2023) This study investigates the incorporation of life skills education into everyday instruction in African elementary schools. It embodies NEP aligned goals in preparing pupils for self-management, communication, & resilience competencies.

(Radha, Arumugam, & J., 2023) This document advocates for the connection of NEP 2020 with the goals of sustainable development (SDGs). It underscores the need of Curriculum reform and the enhancement of teacher competencies as essential for cultivating social, environmental, & ethical awareness in students.

(Saxena & P., 2023) Saxena examines the objective of NEP 2020 to cultivate well- rounded persons by incorporating life skills, ethics, as well as into conventional education. The document advocates for interdisciplinary education and competency-based assessments to promote holistic development.

(Ravish & I., 2023) This article assesses the NEP's stipulations for scientific education. Encompassing inquiry-based learning, laboratory integration, and innovation centers. It facilitates a transition from rote memorization to experiential, analytical, and multidisciplinary education.

(Pacheco-Montoya, D., Murphy-Graham, & E., 2021) This case study illustrates how comprehensive education enables adolescents to confront detrimental conventions such as child marriage. It illustrates how critical thinking & life skills education cultivate personal agency and social consciousness.

(Wallrauch & E., 2021) Wallrauch offers arts-based leader training programs which foster creativity, empathy, and cooperation. This corresponds with NEP's focus on comprehensive development and the incorporation of the arts into educational curricula. (Campbell & S., 2020) This article examines music education from an ethnomusicological perspective, promoting diversity and inclusivity in teaching practices. It underscores worldwide cultural representation, reflecting NEP's multilingual and multicultural ambitions.

(Mota, B., Cilento, & I., 2020) This research proposes a paradigm for digital literacy that integrates cognitive, technological, and ethical components. This contributes to NEP aligned technological skill development efforts targeted at future-ready educational institutions.

(Crowhurst, M., Emslie, & M., 2020) The writers emphasize the significance of the arts in promoting abstract reasoning and profound learning. The chapter advocates for embodied, arts-integrated pedagogies that improve cognitive and emotional development-fundamental tenets of the NEP.

(Mullins & Z., 2020) This paper advocates for the incorporation of entrepreneurship into dance instruction, in accordance with NEP 2020's emphasis on the integration of vocational and life skills across all fields, including the performing arts.

(Robbie, S., Warren, & B., 2020) Robbie and Warren utilize theatrical arts as a vehicle for imparting essential life skills. The article advocates for embodied educational methods that foster empathy, creativity, and flexibility in accordance with the learner-centered objectives of the NEP.

(Al-Matiry & F., 2020) The research indicates that blended education improves children's motor abilities by integrating physical and digital training approaches, hence endorsing the NEP's advocacy for hybrid & active learning models.

(Cromer & L., 1986) Cromer promotes the integration of aesthetics in education to enhance creativity and comprehensive development, a notion heavily reflected in NEP 2020.

(Roucher & N., 1986) Education article views perceptual learning in a foundation for cognitive & emotional engagement with modern arts-supporting NEP's experiential objectives.

(Stern & A., 1985) Stern posits that the arts are fundamental to cultivating the "new basic skills" including interaction, creativity, and collaboration-central tenets of NEP 2020.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To analyze the awareness and perception of teachers and students towards the integration of life skills and arts under NEP 2020 in Ajmer-Beawar.
2. To assess the impact of life skills and arts-based education on students' holistic development.
3. To identify the challenges faced by schools in implementing life skills and arts integration.

## **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

H0: There is no significant relationship between life skills and arts education integration and students' holistic development.

H1: There is a significant relationship between life skills and arts education integration and students' holistic development.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

- a. Type of Research: This study follows a mixed-method approach combining descriptive and analytical research.
- b. Population and Sample Size: The population comprises teachers and students from public and private schools in Ajmer and Beawar. A sample size of 150 respondents (100 students and 50 teachers) is selected using stratified random sampling.
- c. Research Design: The research employs a cross-sectional survey design with structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.
- d. Functional and Geographical Scope: Functionally, the study focuses on educational institutions implementing NEP 2020 mandates. Geographically, the study is limited to Ajmer and Beawar cities in Rajasthan.
- e. Limitations of the Study: Limited to two cities; findings may not generalize across India. Depends on self-reported data, which may be biased. Time-bound data collection may not capture long-term effects. Variations in school infrastructure not fully accounted for.
- f. Data Collection: Data was collected through structured questionnaires for quantitative analysis and interviews with educators for qualitative insights.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Table 1: Awareness of NEP 2020 among Teachers and Students**

Response Category	Teachers (%)	Students (%)
Fully Aware	60%	40%
Partially Aware	30%	45%
Not aware	10%	15%

**Interpretation:** Most teachers (60%) and the significant portion of students (40%) are fully aware of NEP 2020 provisions, indicating a moderate level of policy dissemination.

**Table 2: Perceived impact on Holistic Development**

Indicator	Positive Impact (%)
Creativity and Expression	78%
Emotional Intelligence	65%
Problem Solving and Critical Thinking	70%
Teamwork and Communication	72%

**Interpretation:** The integration of arts and life skills correlates with enhance creative, emotional, and cognitive outcomes among students, supporting the research hypothesis H1.

**Table 3: Implementation Challenges**

Challenge	Percentage of Respondents Affected
Lack of Trained Teachers	68%
Limited Class Time	55%
Inadequate Infrastructure	48%
Lack of Teaching Materials	42%

**Interpretation:** The most common challenge faced is the lack of trained teachers, followed by time constraints and infrastructural inadequacies.

## Findings

1. Majority of teachers are aware of NEP 2020, but student awareness needs enhancement.
2. Schools implementing arts and life skills education observed improvement in creativity, collaboration, and emotional well-being.
3. Students with access to integrated arts and life skills curricula showed better academic and social performance.
4. Teachers expressed a positive attitude but highlighted a lack of training and support.
5. Major implementation gaps include in sufficient time allocation, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of learning materials.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct regular NEP 2020 orientation workshops for students and teachers.
2. Incorporate dedicated periods for life skills and arts in school time tables.
3. Provide training programs and continuous professional development for teachers.
4. Allocate funding for infrastructure development and resource creation.
5. Develop assessment tools get evaluate creativity, collaboration, and emotional intelligence.

## CONCLUSION

This research highlights the transformative potential of incorporating life skills and arts education into school curricula as per NEP 2020. This integration substantially enhances holistic education by improving emotional resilience, creativity, teamwork, and preparedness for real-life situations. Despite a considerable level of awareness among educators, the actual execution is variable owing to constraints related to resources and training.

The report promotes systemic reforms such as improved teacher training, curriculum reconfiguration, and supportive infrastructure to achieve the comprehensive objectives of NEP 2020. As India advances towards education for life rather than solely for examinations, integrating arts and life skills as fundamental elements would be essential in cultivating sympathetic, capable, and innovative citizens.

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