

ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH AND HOW TO TEACH WITH AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH



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INTRODUCTION

The term 'DISCIPLINE' denotes a branch of learning, a field or subject of study. Thus, history, political science, economics, linguistics, anthropology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, botany, etc. are known as different disciplines.

Systematic studies of the institutions and functioning of human society, man's behaviour in society and the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society are called social sciences.

Thus political science, economics, sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology, etc. are social sciences. Some of the disciplines embrace some features of the physical or natural sciences as well as social sciences.

For instance, physical geography, physical anthropology and clinical psychology belong to the physical sciences while human geography, social or cultural anthropology and social psychology obviously fall in the domain of social science

THE INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

When we rely on more than one discipline for the study of a given problem, or when there is a tendency to draw on or contribute to more than one discipline, our approach is called interdisciplinary.

This approach can obviously be followed in the case of disciplines dealing with some common problems or with different aspects of the same or similar phenomena. The social sciences constitute one such group where interdisciplinary approach would be found most suitable for the study of their common problems

Social sciences make a systematic study of the institutions and functioning of human society, an individual's behaviour in society and the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society.

Each of the social sciences is concerned with a specialised study of the individual in relation to the society and all of them have something in common regarding the study of human beings. (These sciences have human beings as the common subject matter of the study, while they deal with different aspects of human activities).

For this reason, they are inter-dependent and inter-related. Each social science supplements and fortifies the rest.

USE OF THEORIES AND MODELS OF OTHER SOCIAL SCIENCES

The interdisciplinary orientation has also encouraged scientists to make an abundant use of the theories and models evolved by other social sciences. For instance, the elite theory (that in every society, irrespective of its forms of social and political institutions, a small group of the chosen few always assumes a dominant position in relation to the rest of the community) was first systematically developed by Pareto (1848-1923), Mosca (1858-1941) and Michels (1876-1936) in the field of sociology

It was then applied to the analysis of political institutions, leadership and group behaviour, as also for giving new interpretations of democracy. Similarly, the Marxian framework of 'base and superstructure' (which postulates that politics, culture, morals, ideas and institutions in any society are shaped by the prevailing mode of material production) was first evolved in the field of economics and sociology, and then adopted as a tool of political analysis

Some contemporary approaches to the study of politics in fact originated in other social sciences. David Easton's concept of the political system is derived from the concept of the social system originally developed in the field of sociology. The structural-functional approach was originally developed in the field of cultural anthropology by Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown, then adopted in sociology by Talcott Parsons, and subsequently introduced in political science by Almond and Powell

Similarly, Harold Lasswell's model of the 'problem-solving' approach was derived from psychology. Understanding of politics as a process of bargaining is based on the theories of competition (e.g. perfect competition and monopolistic competition) originally evolved in the field of economics. Schumpeter and Anthony Downs have sought to analyse democratic politics using the economist's model of the open market.

Thus, the use of theories and models of other social sciences in the realm of political science is quite common

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN EDUCATION

The need to inculcate a multidisciplinary approach in education has been felt for quite some time now, but the basic idea has so far remained confined to theories and discussions. But lately, there has been an upsurge in its application in the classroom.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims at bringing about a multidisciplinary approach in education – firstly in schools and then eventually in colleges as well.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

With the recently announced National Education Policy 2020, India has taken a giant leap forward in its journey of modernizing its education system. This type of education aims to promote an individual's holistic development by exploring various facets of knowledge.

The NEP 2020 embraces this concept and seeks to strengthen it at all levels. To this end, the NEP outlines several measures that will help facilitate a multidisciplinary approach in education.

Firstly, it promotes interdisciplinary studies across different educational institutions. This includes collaboration between universities, colleges, research institutions, and other organizations.

Secondly, it encourages the integration of traditional Indian knowledge systems into modern curricula. This helps enrich the learning experience by providing students with a more holistic view of different topics.

Finally, the NEP encourages the development of courses and programs that cover diverse disciplines like mathematics, science, arts, technology, and humanities.

Multidisciplinary education is a vital part of India's modern education system. By embracing this concept, the NEP 2020 seeks to give students access to a wider knowledge base and skills and prepare them for a rapidly changing world.

ROLE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

- Interdisciplinary knowledge and application of different discipline can lead to **greater creativity**
- Students beginning to consolidate learning by **synthesising ideas** from many perspectives and consider an **alternative way of acquire knowledge**
- **Exploring topics** across a range of subjects boundaries motivates students to **pursue new knowledge** in different subject area

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- Worthwhile **topics of research can fall in the spaces**, between the traditional disciplines
 - Transferable skills of **critical thinking, synthesis and research** are developed and are applicable to future learning experiences

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- **Critical thinking** skills are used and developed as students look across disciplinary boundaries to consider over viewpoints and also begin to compare and contrast concepts across subject areas
 - Students cover **topics in more depth** because they are considering the many and varied perspectives from which a topic can be explored

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- Students are **highly motivated** when the pursuing topic is interesting to them. As a result, the content is often rooted in life experiences, giving an authentic purpose for the learning and connecting it to real world context
 - Consequently **learning becomes meaningful, purposeful and deeper resulting** in learning experiences that stay with the students for a life time.

AIMS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

- To **establish an integrated curriculum**, that is to say, to organize the educational process in such a way that the learner is placed in meaningful situations
- To **engages in activities** which require abilities relating to more than one subject area, so as to achieve an effective integration of this learning experience.
- To **cater the demand** of ever increasing society in terms of knowledge and population

THE CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN EDUCATION

As India looks to usher in a new era of education with the National Education Policy 2020, one of its central tenets is the implementation of a multidisciplinary approach.

Essentially, a multidisciplinary approach in education requires significant changes in the way curriculum is designed and taught.

Schools need to equip themselves with experienced staff who are capable of delivering such an approach and ensure they have the necessary resources.

Additionally, there needs to be greater collaboration between different departments and institutions to ensure successful implementation.

Lastly, many school systems lack the infrastructure and support needed to successfully integrate multidisciplinary learning.

In order to make multidisciplinary education a success, it is essential that we focus on improving the quality of instruction and making sure students are engaged with their studies. Students should be given the freedom to explore different topics, develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of how different subjects interact with each other. With the right support and resources, multidisciplinary education can revolutionize the Indian education system and provide students with the tools they need to thrive in the modern world.

CONCLUSION

Interdisciplinary approach to the study of Social Sciences is a modern approach which marks a departure from the classical approach.

The **classical approach**, typified by Aristotle's description of politics as the 'master science' failed to distinguish between normative and empirical aspects of the study of politics.

Although it was Aristotle himself who originally identified 'politics' as an independent discipline, yet he could not discern political phenomenon from other aspects of man's social life.

In Aristotle's times all knowledge was covered by philosophy, and Aristotle only sought to distinguish 'political philosophy' from other branches of philosophy.

It was only in the nineteenth century that different aspects of man's social life became independent subjects of empirical study as distinct from their philosophical foundations. Accordingly, psychology, sociology, economics, political science, etc. emerged as independent scientific disciplines

The interdisciplinary approach in social sciences is of recent origin which assumed special importance in the latter part of the twentieth century. It does not seek to merge all social sciences into a single 'master science'.

On the contrary, it insists that the results of our inquiry in any sphere should be based on and verified from the findings of all relevant social sciences.

Moreover, some approaches to the study of Social Sciences cover a limited range of inquiry by relying on a single discipline.

Thus philosophical, historical, legal, economic, sociological, psychological and geographical approaches turn out to be partial approaches. On the contrary, the interdisciplinary approach seeks to overcome this shortcoming by relying on all other relevant disciplines for the purpose of evolving an integrated view of the subject.

Multidisciplinary education is a concept that has been embraced by the Indian government through the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This approach to learning looks at how different disciplines can interact and overlap with each other to create a comprehensive understanding of a subject.

A multidisciplinary approach in education is often seen as the ideal way to tackle complex problems and will be essential for India's continued success in the global economy. With the NEP 2020, India is well positioned to build on its current educational system and move towards a more multidisciplinary approach.

THANK YOU