SCIENTIFIC CULTURE
www.sci-cult.com

SCIENTIFIC CULTURE, Vol. 12, No. 4, (2026), pp. 8699-8712
Open Access. Online & Print

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.20475204

HOLISTIC LEGAL EDUCATION: NEP 2020 AND THE IMPERATIVE FOR SKILL-BASED LEARNING

Prof (Dr.) Bhavana Sharma[1]*, Dr. Shweta Gupta[2], Dr. Soleman Mozammel[3], Vinutha DN[4], Deepika Paira[5]

[1]Professor, Royal School of law and Administration, The Assam Royal Global University, Guwahati, India, Email: sharmabhavana44@gmail.com
[2]Assistant Professor, Institute of Legal Studies & Research, GLA University, Mathura, India, Email: gupta.shweta.1984@gmail.com
[3]Assistant Professor, University of Bahrain, Kingdom of Bahrain, Email: smozammel@uob.edu.bh
[4]Assistant Professor, Alliance University, Bengaluru, India, Email: vinuachu30@gmail.com
[5]Assistant Professor Cum Research Scholar, Vel Tech Rangarajan Dr Sagunthala R &D Institute of Science and Technology, Avadi, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, Email: deepikapaira89@gmail.com

Received: 28/12/2025
Accepted: 22/04/2026

Corresponding Author: Prof (Dr.) Bhavana Sharma (sharmabhavana44@gmail.com)

ABSTRACT

The reform of legal education in India through the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is characterized by the drastic change in the structure of law education, which is obliged to adopt the skill-based or holistic approach to law education as a reaction to the changes in the world and professional requirements. The study is since theoretical legal education and available practical legal competencies showed a growing distance between the theoretical and practical aspects of legal practice in modern legal practice. It seeks to assess the effectiveness of holistic legal education and NEP 2020 changes in developing interdisciplinary competence, professional competence, and employability in law graduates. Qualitative, descriptive, and analytic approach has been chosen, which is based on secondary sources of information including scholarly literature, policy materials as well as institutional reports. The results show that the experiential learning, outcome-based education, and interdisciplinary integration positively impact the critical thinking, ethical awareness, and practical legal skills. The discussion also determines issues of institutional preparedness, faculty development, as well as constraints in infrastructure. The conclusion highlights the need to address the imbalanced curriculum reforms and real-life exposure to enhance the legal education. The implications point to the necessity to align policy and work together with the industry, whereas constraints are presented by the lack of primary data. The problematic area of future study is to be empirically verified and comparatively analyzed on an institutional level.

KEYWORDS: Holistic Legal Education, NEP 2020, Skill-Based Learning, Professional Competence, Employability.

Copyright: © 2026. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License. (https://cre-ativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Education Transformation, NEP 2020 and Skills

The education system has always played a critical role in the constitutional provisions of the Indian Constitution. It is the tool through which the individual is moulded with the skills required to make him fulfill his potential in the future. With the current dynamic global environment, which is marked by technological advances in various fields, education plays a central role [1]. Qualified and skilled workforce is required and one that can work in more than one field. Educational opportunities should therefore be provided to guarantee the sustainability of the country in the long run. One of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda (which are adopted by all countries in 2015) is designed to foster lifelong learning opportunities and to guarantee fair and inclusive quality education to all people by the year 2030 [2].

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aspires to bring a paradigm shift to the schooling methodology by enforcing the problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity. This policy suggests the skills-based approach with an aim at developing versatile people capable of making positive contributions to society and successfully moving through the difficulties of the modern world. NEP 2020 carries out wholesome educational reforms at all levels. In every educational system, starting early infancy to higher education, interdisciplinary learning, flexibility on courses choice and non-particularistic approach on development are encouraged [2]. The emergence of learning through experience and restructuring of educational systems give more emphasis on acquiring skills rather than memorization. The policy recognizes the importance of equipping the students with competencies that do not just cover their areas of specialization. The twenty-first century has set the notion of digital literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication as irreplaceable proficiencies. The policy facilitates the encouragement of a multidisciplinary strategy, which allows the pupils to explore a broad spectrum of topics and develop a repertoire of skills that is more holistic [3].

An outcome-based education (OBE) is a basic concept, which NEP 2020 emphasizes. It puts more focus on the intended learning outcomes through OBE instead of instructional inputs. When teachers are creating courses to improve skills, proper communication of learning outcomes is mandatory so that it build courses that it focusses on skills improvement and not merely on content delivery. OBE requires highly structured ways of measuring the results of the courses to be successfully implemented. To measure skills besides knowledge, examination systems which were traditional have been restructured [4]. A broader and continued evaluation process comes off as a more holistic view as to the capabilities of the students. NEP 2020 pays a lot of attention to the correspondence between program goals and course outcome. This process involves the balancing of program objectives and unique educational outcomes of individual courses. This mapping process ensures all courses create a significant impact towards the development of desired skills and competence [5].

Education sector is continuously evolving, with the changes happening due to technological changes, changing dynamics of the society and influence of the labor market. Considering the societal changes, the education system should change itself, to equip the students with the necessary skills and knowledge that can make them successful in a complex and interconnected world [5]. The twenty-first century is characterised by rapid changes occurring in the world due to globalisation and digitalisation. New forms of industries are being created, and traditional ones are in a metamorphosis. What is more on top of having academic qualification is that this dynamic environment requires a workforce that portrays a sense of practical knowledge, flexibility, capability of critical thinking, and ability to solve problems [6]

The gap between the competencies received through the formal education and desired by employers has increased. Many of the fresh graduates are facing challenges in getting job opportunities due to the discrepancy between the schooling qualification and the job requirements of the industry. Improving the focus on acquiring skills and the practical application of the knowledge, NEP 2020 helps graduates to obtain the competencies which may guarantee their success in the professional environment [6].

1.2 Holistic Legal Education Framework in India

In India, holistic legal training has been moving away from a rather doctrinal and theory-based model to a more integrated and multidisciplinary one. Historically, legal knowledge concentrated its efforts on the study of statutory interpretation and case law interpretation at the expense of practical expertise training and interdisciplinary exposure [7]. Nonetheless, recent changes guided by the National Education policy 2020 lead to the importance of

introducing critical thinking and ethics, as well as experiential learning and problem-solving skills into national law schools. This change is to result in the production of law graduates who are not only law proficient but also socially responsible, flexible and able to face complex challenges of the real world [8].

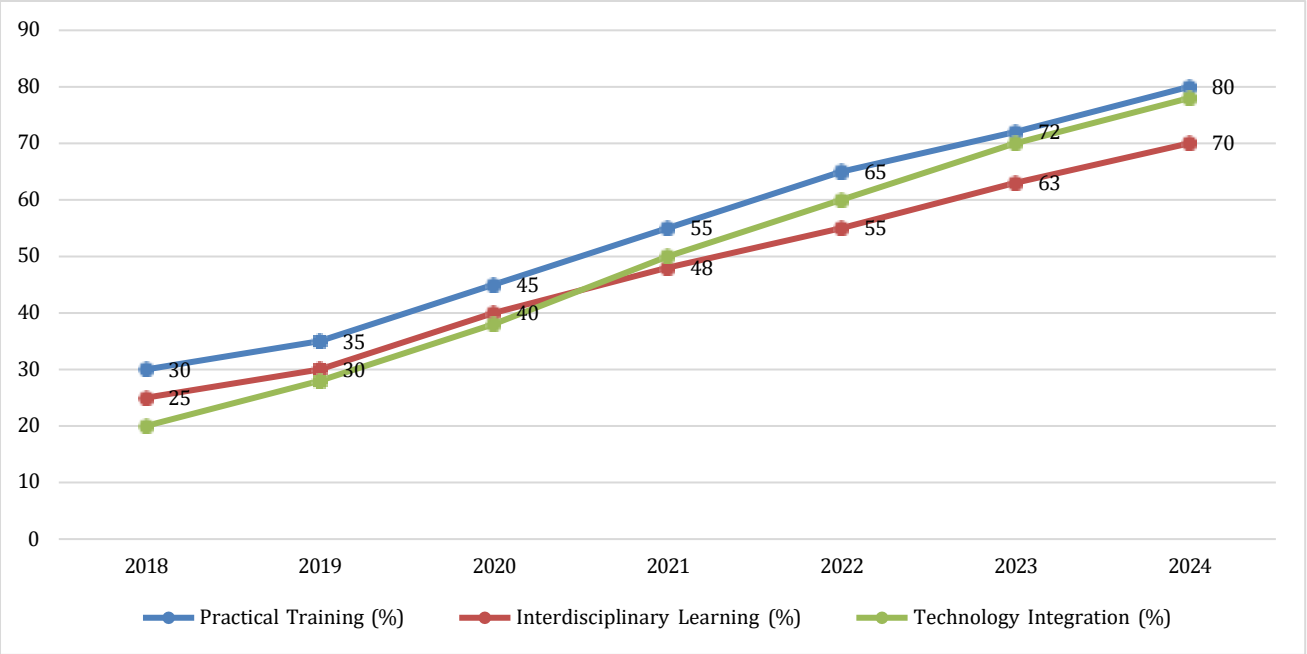


Figure 1: Legal Education Skill Adoption Trends
Source: M Lukose [1]

The framework also highlights the need to ensure the law education is in tandem with the latest professional requirements and international standards. Clinical legal education, moot courts, internship and research-based learning are becoming increasingly popular in institutions in order to develop practical competencies. The combination of technology, interdisciplinary courses and lifelong evaluation techniques is a success factor towards a more dynamic and outcome-based teaching model [9]. Through the development of collaboration, interaction, and critical thinking, holistic legal learning aims at bridging the distance between theory and practice so that upon graduation, graduates are in a good position to address the changing demands of the legal profession and play an important role in the delivery of justice through the justice systems [10].

1.3 Skill-Based Learning and Professional Competence

The skill-based learning has come to pass as a very important element that plays a key role in enhancing professional competency in legal studies. It also focuses on new applied skills like legal drafting, advocacy, negotiation, and intellectual critical thinking, which crosses unconventional rote-based practices in learning [11]. Competency-driven and experiential education is strengthened by the impact that the National Education Policy 2020 makes. Through the incorporation of clinical, case-based instruction, and simulation practices, institutions expect their students to possess practical abilities of problem solving. This is not only added to the knowledge of the subject content, but also the ability and discipline to work efficiently in a wide range of legal contexts [12].

The expression of professional competence in the field of law is becoming increasingly characterized by the skill to use knowledge in practice and remain ethically and socially responsible. The key qualities founded on skill-based learning are communication, critical thinking, teamwork, decision-making, without which the new practice of law is impossible in the twenty-first century [13]. The connection between higher education training and work requirements is further enhanced through continuous evaluation, internship and collaboration with the industry. With the changing face of the legal profession as the world undergoes changes in its technology and interactions, the focus on acquiring skills makes the graduates competitive, receptive, and able to provide efficient legal services by respecting the ideals of justice and accountability [14].

The relevance of the present study is in critically analyzing how the education of law in India changes

in the context of the National Education Policy 2020 and its focus on the holistic and skill-based education. In the present day, when globalization, technological progress, and multifaceted socio-legal issues are increasingly defining the legal profession, the hole between legal learning theory and the reality of professional competence is so pressing that the present study aims to remedy the situation. It also adds to the academic discussion through assessing the role of interdisciplinary strategies, outcome-based education and experiential learning in improving employability and professional readiness among law graduates. In addition, the study is also policy relevant as it provides an insight to educators, institutions, and regulators to reform curricula to meet modern-day demands and thus improve quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of legal education in India.

The study is presented in a systematic way to offer an in-depth examination of the study problem. It has an introduction which are followed by a comprehensive literature review. The study design and data sources are described in the methodology followed by the data analysis and discussion sections. The study concludes with the results, conclusion, limitation and future study suggestions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Holistic Legal Education

An emerging conceptualization of holistic legal education is a multidimensional conceptual framework where legal studies are combined with interdisciplinary areas of expertise [16]. The classic silo-based approach to legal education restrains students to comprehend the complex socio-legal matters. Using social sciences, economics and technology, holistic legal education allows analytical breadth and contextual comprehension to be deepened [17]. The strategy reflects the spirit of the modern educational reforms like the National Education Policy 2020 that proposed the method of multidisciplinary learning as the way to make students intellectually flexible, capable of asking questions and critical study alongside developing all-inclusive legal logic [19].

SP Srivastava, (2026) [9] the importance of ethics and values in holistic legal education cannot be underestimated. The argument is that legal professionals not only need to be technically competent but also to exhibit integrity, accountability as well as social responsibility. Ethical training in law course curriculum makes sure that the law students have a strong moral base as in that way, can exhibit justice and professionalism [17]. As stated, [18] value-based education plays a vital role in the responsible decision-making process and moral courtroom conduct. Therefore, the holistic models focus on the development of ethical consciousness on par with the learning of doctrine where the graduates have become ready to handle tricky moral scenarios within the law [19].

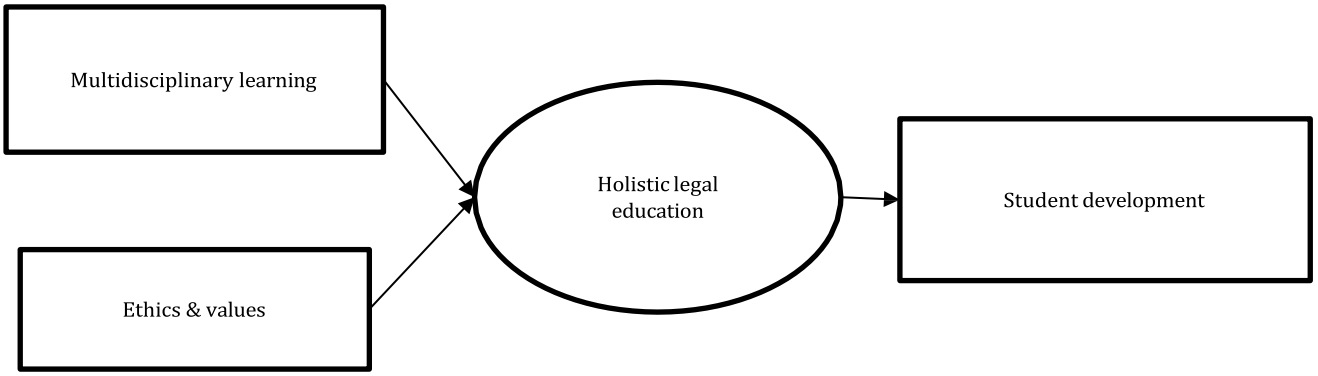


Figure 2: Holistic legal education framework
Source: E Gaile-Sarkan et al., [21]

The other essential dimension that has been established in the studies are the approach of combining cognitive, practical and social skills in facilitating the development of the students [20]. The legal education approach of holistic focuses on the experiential approach to learning, including moot courts, internships, and clinical programs to learn how to integrate theory with practice [21]. The approaches in pedagogy introduce improved problem-solving skills, communication skills, and collaborative learning [22]. Such integrated learning settings have been reported to result in increased adaptability and professional preparedness of students in 7 studies. Hence holistic legal learning can be viewed as a grounded variable that has an impact on the creation of well-balanced legal professionals who can respond to the changing issues of law and the society [23].

Implementation of NEP 2020

Introduction of the National Education Policy 2020 is an initiating step towards change in the education system in India especially, in the sphere of law studies [24]. It also brings out the reforms in the entire policies that seek to improve the quality, availability, and flexibility of academic institutions [3]. The focus is laid on the reorganization of the curricula in accordance with the modern societal and professional requirements [6]. NEP 2020 aims at bringing modernity to the old educational setups by facilitating innovation and flexibility [10]. This shift is a larger initiative to prepare students, given the contemporary competences necessary to find their way in a dynamic and sophisticated legal and professional environment [25].

One of the major aspects of NEP 2020 implementation is curriculum flexibility and interdisciplinary learning introduction [25]. The institutions are being urged to go beyond the traditional program arrangements and give students a chance to explore different subjects' areas [26]. This promotes intellectual flexibility and allow students to establish a more interdisciplinary perspective in their learning [28]. Such flexibility applies in legal training so that the application of economic, technological and social sciences is easier to integrate [29]. Students can thus be in a better position to understand complex legal matters, and this improves the academic experience of the students and brings the educational outputs in line with the dynamic nature of the legal profession [30].

The implementation of NEP 2020 also strives another aspect that is significant implementation of outcome-based education and institutional reforms [26]. A change of emphasis to the delivery of the content is done in Favor of the learnable outcomes and make it possible to assure that educational process is motivated by the skills development goals [27]. Continuous assessment, experiential learning and competency mapping are becoming part of the legal education system [28]. The purpose of these structural reforms is to bring about accountability, transparency and effectiveness in the teaching/learning practice [29]. Consequently, the adoption of NEP 2020 is a causative prerequisite in changing the conceptualisation of legal teaching into a more useful, skills-based, and results-focused model [30].

Professional Competence / Employability

The facet of professional competence in legal education is concerned with the aptitude of the graduates to be able to exercise legal knowledge, abilities as well as morals in everyday settings [29]. It goes beyond the field knowledge in practical skills like the basics of drafting legal terms, advocacy, negotiation and problem-solving [13]. Competence in the framework of reforms developed in the National Education Policy 2020 is more of an outcome of skill-based and experiential learning [30]. The demands of the present-day employers are to find people who can be flexible, technologically competent, and possess the ability to analyze and perceive critically [14]. Thus, professional competence has emerged as one of the primary indicators of how legal education systems are effective in equipping graduates with multiple career opportunities [31].

Employability, which is closely termed with professional competence, is an expression of the ability of law graduates to not only pursue and maintain meaningful employment in an immensely competitive legal market [32]. It involves a mix of technical knowledge, soft skills, and professional attitudes which are in accordance with the industry standards [9]. Modern legal practice requires interdisciplinary sensitivity, verbal communication abilities and moral accountability [11]. To improve employability outcomes, educational institutions are therefore putting emphasis on internships, clinical training as well as collaborating with the industry [31]. As the ability of academic knowledge to address the needs of professions is bridged, the skill-based education guarantees that graduates are not merely knowledge base at all, but more poised to offer efficient legal services to the society and the growth of the justice system in large [35].

Although there is an increasing focus on holistic legal studies, the available study has shown that there are notable missing links regarding its systematic application in the legal courses. It is also true that although interdisciplinary learning, ethics, and competency development are recognized to be critical in enhancing student performance [10], empirical studies that evaluate the interactional effects of both on student outcomes are scarce [17]. Besides, the greater part of studies is dedicated to theoretical debates instead of the methods of its application to the institutional context [16]. The correspondence of the holistic education models and quantifiable learning outcome is also not studied in detail, which means that substantial study needs thorough studies that it assesses the efficacy in different legal learning environments [20].

Moreover, even though the introduction of the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes [30] the aspect of skill-based and outcome-oriented reforms,

no dedicated studies are available to investigate the impact of this policy on the professional competence and employability in legal education [24]. The study [32] tends to examine policy provisions separately, which is not linked to employability outcomes in the real world [31]. Also, [35] the mediating effect of skill-based learning between policy implementation and professional readiness have yet to be fully performed on [27]. This void highlights the importance of reforming studies that it bridges the links between NEP 2020 reforms and competency training and career readiness in legal education.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Method Adopted: Qualitative Methods

The present study is conducted in the framework of qualitative study in order to unravel the specifics of NEP 2020-based holistic legal education. With the help of qualitative methods, it is possible to have a profound comprehension of the notions of interdisciplinary learning, skill-based training, and professional competence. The study is an indication of dynamic complexity of legal education by indulging in descriptive and interpretive analysis. This method allows exploring the impacts of policy interventions on the results of skills development and employability in the Indian system of legal education in a rich way.

Study Area: India

The study targets India and the National Education Policy 2020 that brought about major changes in the legal education. The diverse educational institutions that India has such as central university, state law schools offer a wide background in which to evaluate the adoption of the holistic and skill-based approaches. The discussion of the area of influence on interdisciplinary, ethical, and professional skills in the education of lawyers makes it possible to pay attention to the aspects of the implementation of such skills in India and to refer to regional peculiarities, strategies of the institution, and the cultural impacts.

Research Design: Descriptive and Analytical

The study is informed by a descriptive and analytical study design that helps to evaluate systematically the supposed holistic legal education and implications of NEP 2020. The descriptive part records the current practices, curricula, and policy frameworks and the analytical part assesses their success in facilitating skill-based learning. This twofold structure allows the study to determine fashions, difficulties, and voids of legal education. A compilation of description and study guarantees a clear grasp of how reforms are effectively transformed into achievable results of student competence.

Data Collection: Secondary Sources

The study is based on the sources of secondary data, such as scholarly journal articles, policy reports, governmental reports, and study on legal education. These sources shed some light on both theoretical and practical aspects of the holistic legal education and NEP 2020 implementation. Secondary data enables systematic sampling of available information, tracking the patterns, and comparing various practices of institutions. Utilizing the already existing study it guarantees the evidence-based examination and guarantee a rigorous study of the skill-based reforms and their impact on the professional competence.

4. DESCRIPTIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Objective 1: To analyze the role of holistic legal education in developing interdisciplinary skills among students.

In holistic legal education several disciplinary views are brought together into traditional legal studies and this factor increases cognitive flexibility and analytical ability. The interdisciplinary approach of law and social sciences, economics, technology, and ethics enable students to have a more complete view of the legal and societal systems [34]. Interdisciplinary knowledge it enables the learner to solve problems with more than one angle of thinking and therefore enhance problem solving and decision making. Individual institutions may achieve this by introducing experiential learning (through moot courts, internships, clinical programs, etc.) so that the interdisciplinary concepts can be put into practice. Study shows that those students taking such integrative courses show increased adaptability, creativity and critical thinking, which leads to more holistic experience of learning law that is aligned with NEP 2020 goals and current labor market needs [28].

However, in holistic legal education several disciplinary views are brought together into traditional legal studies and this factor increases cognitive flexibility and analytical ability. Integrating law and social sciences, economics, technology, and ethics enable the students to have a wider picture in the societal and legal systems. Interdisciplinary knowledge builds exposure where the learners address the legal problems in many perspectives, which enhance problem-solving and decision-making

[35]. Individual institutions may achieve this by introducing experiential learning (through moot courts, internships, clinical programs, etc.) so that the interdisciplinary concepts can be put into practice. Study has shown that those students studying such integrative programs show greater adaptability, creativity and critical thinking and lead to a more holistic legal education experience that is better aligned with the NEP 2020 purposes and more modern workforce demands [36].

Holistic legal education builds interdisciplinary skills that increase the capability of students to interact, cooperate, and be creative in the workplace. Multidisciplinary exposure results in the development of critical thinking skills and ethical cognition, which helps students to overcome any socio-legal dilemma in an effective manner. Knowledge cross-disciplinary integrations can be favored by programs that focus on teamwork, case simulations, and research-based education, which improve cognitive and social capabilities [37]. Law student surveys show that there is a positive correlation between being enrolled in interdisciplinary curricula and self-reported ability to solve problems, legal reasoning and confidence with handling complex legal issues. As a result, holistic education equips graduates not just to practice law in conventional way but also to develop into policymakers, corporate law and international law [12].

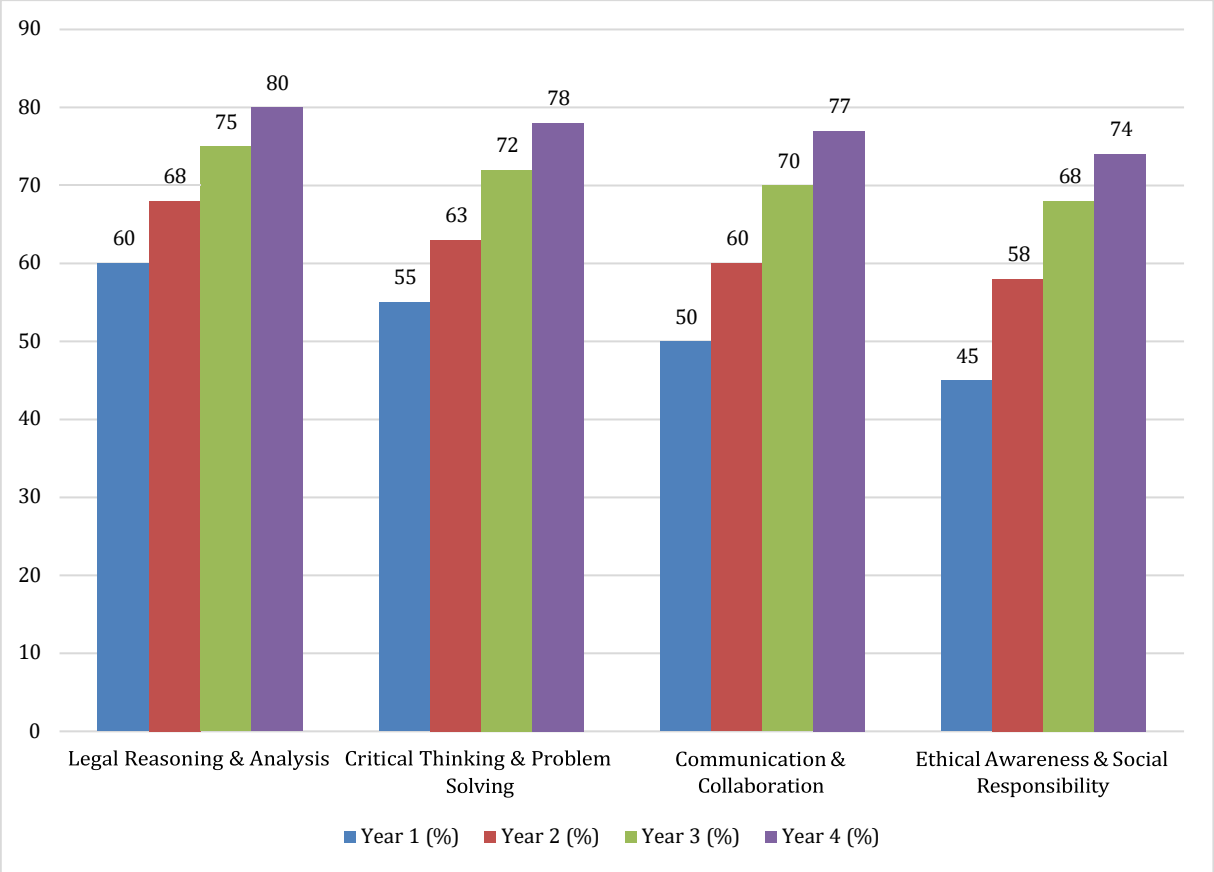


Figure 3: Interdisciplinary Skill Development in Holistic Legal Education
Source: K Maass, et al., [38]

Objective 2: To examine the implementation of NEP 2020 reforms for enhancing skill-based legal learning.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a policy that brings radical changes in the education of law in India, which focuses on learning based on skills and interdisciplinary methods. The policy provides flexibility in the choice and combination of courses by restructuring curricula and inclusion of new subjects like technology, economics and social sciences [39]. The NEP 2020 also advocates experiential approach of learning, such as moot court, clinical, and internship, to intervene the gap between theory and practice. Such holism guarantees students to have critical thinking, problem-solving and professional skills that are needed in modern legal practice and matches the results of academic education with workforce needs and global standards in legal education [51].

Prominence The curriculum flexibility as stipulated by NEP 2020 enables the legal institutions to switch to outcome-based education (OBE), which aims at acquiring measurable skills as opposed to rote learning. Implementing OBE, instructors can set clear learning outcomes per course, focusing on such practical skills as drafting, negotiation, and ethically specific choices. It stimulated to include continuous evaluation, project-based learning, and interdisciplinary modules that increase student activity and professionalization. Comparative study suggests that more flexible and skill-based curricula lead to increased student satisfaction, better employability, and increased conformity to international standards of legal education, which supports the purpose of the policy, which is to prepare qualified and versatile law students [40].

Faculty development and institutional restructuring are just some of the priorities of the implementation of NEP 2020 reforms. Modern thinking in education Law schools is urged to educate teachers using modern method of teaching and learning approaches as well as interdisciplinary approaches. Among the institutional reforms that have been adopted are use of technology-supported learning platforms, competency-related evaluation systems, and partnership with industry and the law practitioners [2]. These strategies are all in aid of skill-based learning, which can be achieved by establishing the environment in which the students exercise their knowledge in practice and in which it solves real-life legal issues and acquire professional skills. There is some evidence that institutions interested in adopting these reforms experience notable gains in the levels of student engagement, increased capability in analytical skills and better readiness to practice law professionally [41].

The reforms in NEP 2020 also cover the issues of employability and professional competence in the legal education. Through practical, skills based, modules, the students have been exposed to real life legal situations, professional decision making and interdisciplinary working conditions. Comparative statistics present that graduates of NEP-based programs are more adaptable and possess more problem-solving ability and communication skills than those of traditional courses [40]. Moreover, partnerships with industry and law departments also offer mentorship, internship and project-based learning. When combined, these initiatives increase the preparedness of the students to professional practice, so that the education in law is in consonance with the modern needs of society, new technologies, and the international criteria of legal training based on skills [42].

Table 1: Comparative study of Legal Education Reforms

Feature/Dimension	Traditional Legal Education	NEP 2020 Reforms
Curriculum Flexibility	Low, rigid course structure	High, interdisciplinary options
Learning Approach	Lecture-based, theory-focused	Experiential, skill-oriented
Assessment Methods	Exams and memorization	Continuous, outcome-based, project-based
Professional Competence	Limited practical exposure	Emphasis on internships, moot courts, clinical programs
Employability Outcomes	Moderate	Enhanced due to skill development
Interdisciplinary Integration	Minimal	Strong, includes economics, technology, social sciences

Source: Author Compilation based on NEP 2020 Policy and Legal Education Studies

Objective 3: To evaluate the impact of holistic legal education on professional competence and employability outcome.

Holistic legal education refers to the combining of interdisciplinary, ethical as well as experiential learning in law schools to promote professional competence in students of the discipline. It trains graduates to address the most complicated issues of law in an efficient way by focusing on practical skills, including advocacy, legal drafting, negotiation, and counseling customers [34]. Adaptability, communication skills and teamwork problem solving are developed through experiential programs such as internships, moot courts, and clinical programs. The students who receive such learning experiences enjoy greater analytical skills and ethical awareness than traditional theoretical-oriented programs, such that at their graduation the student is well moulded to the legal practice and professional responsibilities in modern houses of law [43].

Holistic legal education refers to the combining of interdisciplinary, ethical as well as experiential learning in law schools to promote professional competence in students of the discipline. It enhances graduates to work around complicated legal cases by giving practical skills like advocacy, legal drafting, negotiation, and client counseling [44]. Adaptability, communication skills and teamwork problem solving are developed through experiential programs such as internships, moot courts, and clinical programs. A student undergoing learning environments such is able to cultivate better analytical skills and moral considerations than when under traditional theory and curriculum and this has ensured that upon graduating,

he is much equipped to handle modern law and professional services [45].

Whole person education is pertinent towards enhancing employability because graduates get hands-on skills that match market demand. There is an emerging trend in favor of legal employers favoring the skill of application of knowledge to a real-world situation, use of critical thinking, and the use of interdisciplinary knowledge [11]. Skilled based PDs also help the students to explore different areas of law such as corporate law, litigation, policy analysis, and public service. Holistic program graduates tend to adjust to the workplace environment faster and are better prepared to work in a typical setting compared to those in standard legal education formats. This solution adequately filled the vulnerability between college training and job requirements [46].

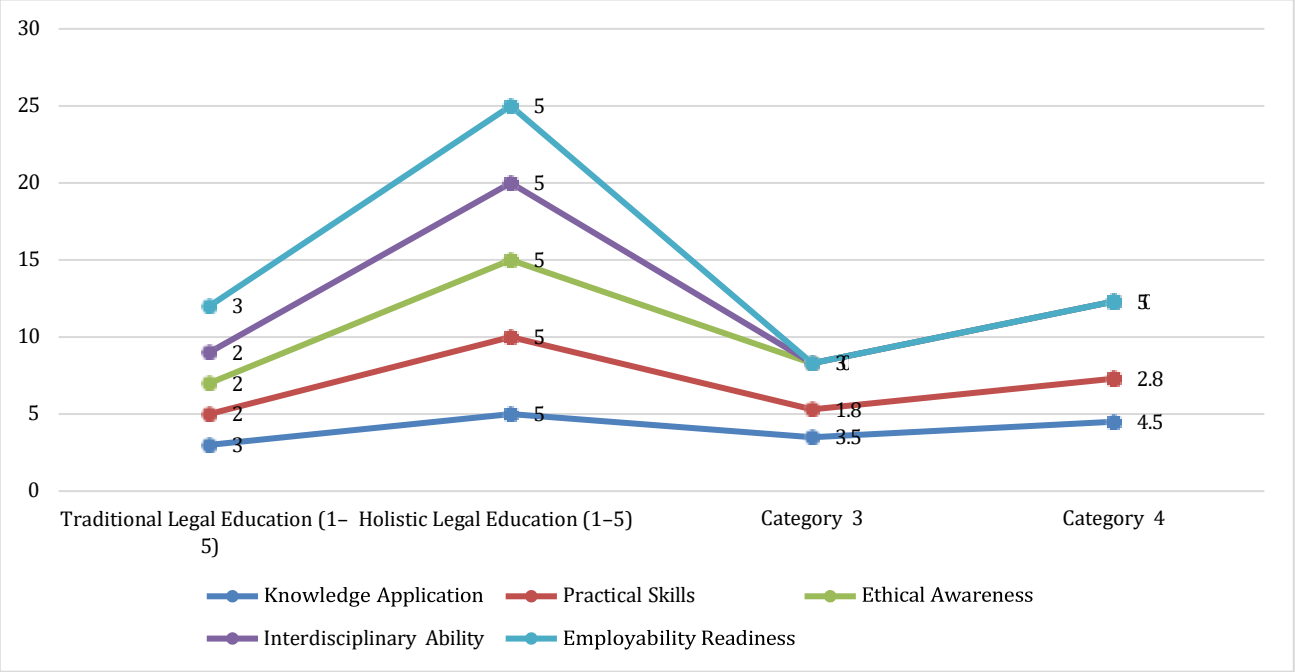


Figure 4: Holistic vs Traditional Legal Education
Source: LA Bradberry and J De Maio, [47]

5. DISCUSSION

R Murugesan and DS Kumar (2020) [48], acclaim in the adoption of holistic legal education that enhances interdisciplinarity and critical thinking in law students. [50] posit that incorporating social sciences, ethics, and hands-on exercises in the curriculum are functional in enabling students to have adaptive skills essential in the modern legal practice [15]. This practice is similar to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 that pays attention to skill-based education and experience-based pedagogies [13]. Institutions can equip graduates with a wider range of career paths by including problem-solving, communication, and digital literacy in the curriculum of their core legal courses. [49] argue that through this correspondence the traditional distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge is closed, making graduates to be both legally competent and generally professional [3].

Nevertheless, P Mishra (2025) [51] warn that such holistic solutions can lead to the erosion of professional knowledge of doctrines necessary to achieve high degree of legal thinking [11]. opine that when more emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary or experiential learning, students might lose their command of the basics of the law. [22] argue that education in law has been traditionally based on rigorous training in the doctrine of law to keep up professional standards and that anything that is deviant may jeopardize the scholarly quality. Moreover, holistic structures involve a lot of faculty training, investing in infrastructure, and redesigning the curriculum, which most Indian institutions are yet to undertake [39]. Therefore, just as the advantages of a holistic approach to legal education are recognized, its mindless use in lack of equilibrium with the usual legal rigors might not deliver the desired professional results [50].

The other issue of concern is the role of ethics and values in the holistic education. [28] recommend the idea that incorporation of ethical reasoning and social responsibility in the legal

education system is important to make graduates both competent and rightful. This is related to the priority of NEP 2020 of value-based education and life-long learning [41]. In contrast, certain study shows that ethical training programs are taken too lightly and thus minimize their effectiveness. [48] emphasize that, though theoretic ethics are discussed, it hardly always leads into acquired skills and law graduates even in practice can encounter ethical dilemmas. Thus, effective integration of ethics has become a key issue of concern, and it needs a blend of experiences, mentoring and constant evaluation [49].

The effects of holistic legal education on employability have caused some optimism and scepticism [50]. A study by [52] has it that programs which focus more on clinical internships, moot courts, and collaborative projects increase professional competence that results in more market ready graduates. According to [17], experience of the real-world legal practice contributes to better communication, negotiation and problem-solving skills as a direct factor affecting the outcome of employability. To the contrary, [51] argue that employability is not just reliant on skills only, but also on the systemic constraints prevailing in the labour market, e.g., limited legal opportunities, and socio-economic barriers. [39] warn that even holistic education is not a guarantee of securing employment and the development of professions, unless institutions are connected to the profession, improvement of skills can only be hypothetical. The necessity of joint policies involving curriculum reform and career aids policies is stressed [53].

The introduction of NEP 2020 reforms into legal education has received conflicting reactions [52]. According to [7], skills-oriented education is triggered by the availability of flexible curriculum, interdisciplinary exposure, and outcome-based education. Highlight that these reforms entice students to devour into the various fields of technology, business and social sciences, intellectually versatile. [51], however, makes concerns regarding efficiency on the ground. [44] observe that a lot of institutions do not have trained faculty, proper infrastructure, and assessment measures that make its implementation successful. Also, meeting the high goals of NEP with regulatory and accreditation requirements is a challenge [35]. Therefore, NEP 2020 offers guidance, but its implementation into qualifiable educational results must be closely planned in institutions and the allocation of resources [43].

R Murugesan and DS Kumar, (2024) [48], there are the wider implications in the society and profession in general. [49] imply that interdisciplinary training which is skill-based makes legal professionals who can provide solutions to complex social issues to provide support in the delivery of justice and take part in formulation of policies. On the other hand, [52] maintain that the emphasis on marketable competencies can lead to emphasizing employability at the expense of more substantive intellectual cultivation, developing graduates who are technically good at their jobs but taking their study findings less seriously or mindlessly [50]. The element of professional preparedness and academic depth, which is essential to the modern legal education, introduces a dilemma of core to contemporary legal teaching in [54]. Thus, continuous research, feedback of the stakeholders and recursive curriculum development are necessary to streamline whole person legal education in India [55].

6. CONCLUSION

The study finds that changes to legal education in India as outlined in the National Education Policy 2020 signify a paradigm shift of linear and theory-based learning to a comprehensive, skill-based framework. Through inter-disciplinary knowledge, experiential education, and outcome-based knowledge, legal education is becoming widely responsive to the modern professional needs. The results indicate that the holistic approach is an important tool in developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical awareness in students. This change enhances not only the academic knowledge but also provides the graduates with practical skills that it needs to operate in a highly complicated legal setting, which subsequently enhances the overall quality and applicability of legal education in India.

Also, the study expresses the fact that the successful execution of NEP 2020 reforms is instrumental in the formation of the gap between the educational systems of the law and the rates of employability. Professional competence and workplace foresight are provided through skill-based learning through the aid of internships and clinical programs and in addition to exposure to inequality. These reforms however are based on institutional flexibility, training of all staffs as well as the development of infrastructure. The study underlines the fact that an equal combination of the doctrinal knowledge and practical skills is needed to retain academic rigor and increase employability. All in all, holistic legal education becomes one of the

viable approaches towards producing competent, ethical, and flexible legal practitioners.

6.1 Implication of the study

The self-directed learning study provides very strong implications to the policy makers, educational institutions, and legal educators by highlighting the importance of the curriculum redesign that align with the skill-based and outcome-oriented education. It emphasizes the need to incorporate experiential learning, interdisciplinary and continuous assessment in promoting professional competence. Facilities should invest in faculty development and technological infrastructure to be able to implement NEP 2020 reforms. The results also promote the partnership between the legal industry and academia to guarantee that the educational results can fulfil professional expectations contributing to the employability and to have an efficient and responsive legal system.

6.2 Limitation of the study

Limitations of the study also include the use of secondary data sources, which might not be comprehensive enough to capture the real time institutional practices and experiences of the students in different learning environments in legal education in India. The correlation between the outcomes of holistic education and NEP 2020 on student performance and employability is not possible due to the lack of primary empirical data. Finally, the differences in institutional realization and territorial inequality are not studied in detail. Such limitations indicate that results may be used mostly as a reflection of theoretical and literature-based knowledge and may not be field-based validation.

6.3 Recommendation for future study

The qualitative (empirical) study design should be integrated into future studies, which should encompass the surveys, interviews, and case-studies to evaluate the practical usefulness of holistic legal education and NEP 2020 reforms. The comparison of the institutions and regional studies offer more information on the issues of implementation and best practices. The study can also be extended on the long-term effects of skill-based learning on career development and career success. Moreover, the study of the role of technology, digital education of lawyers, and cooperations at the global level should be useful to provide impactful insights into changing legal educational systems to keep pace with the requirements of the profession and society.

REFERENCES

1. M Lukose, 'A Study on the Role of NEP 2020: Skill Development of Students' (2023) 9(1) *Amity International Journal of Teacher Education (AIJTE)*.
2. SB Malviya, '21st Century Skills in Education: A Review of Frameworks and Implementation' (2024) *AG Volumes* 45–55.
3. N Parikh, 'Empowering India's Future: Unleashing the Potential of Youth through Skill Development' (Express Computer, 12 January 2024) https://www.expresscomputer.in/guest-blogs/empowering-indias-future-unleashingthe-potential-of-youth-through-skill-development/108172/
4. Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, *National Education Policy 2020* (2020).
5. R.R. Venkata, P. Bhattacharya, A. Lakhtakia and S.T. Krishnasamy, "Recommendations of India's National Education Policy 2020 for Higher Education" 91(1) *Proceedings of the Indian National Science Academy* 356 (2025).https://doi.org/10.1007/s43538-025-00386-2
6. D Sharma, 'Skill India: Education to Employment Bridge' (Invest India, 4 January 2024) https://www.investindia.gov.in/team-indiablogs/skill-india-education-employment-bridge
7. TG Puthucherril and others, 'Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into India's Legal Education Landscape: The What, Why and How of a Reform Paradigm' (2025) 12(1) *Asian Journal of Legal Education* 40–60. DOI: 10.1177/23220058241265614
8. A Yadav and others, 'The Prospects of Indian Legal Education under the National Educational Policy 2020: A Paradigm Shift' (2025) *Krytyka Prawa* 97. DOI: 10.7206/kp.2080-1084.775
9. S.P. Srivastava, "Integrating Indian Languages and Knowledge Systems to Decolonize Legal Education in India" 5(1) *International Journal of Judicial Law* 17 (2026). DOI: https://doi.org/10.54660/IJJL.2026.5.1.17-25
10. Popovski, V., Mehrotra, A., & Pundir, K. (2025). The human capabilities approach in legal education: a case study of Jindal Global Law School in India. *European Journal of Legal Education*, *6*(1), 101-122.
11. Yayan Adrianova, E. T., Putu, S., Farid, M., & Wahyu Mustafa, K. (2021). The competency of

pedagogic and professional of vocational teachers in implementing 21st century skill-based learning. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.23887/jpp.v54i2

12. P Ali, 'Skill-Based Education and Its Impact on Lifelong Learning and Career Advancement' (2025) 10(4) International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology 1383–1388. https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/25apr935
13. M Rafiq-uz-Zaman, 'Teacher Training Needs for Skill-Based Education: A Review of Competencies, Barriers, and Professional Development Gaps' (2023) 2(3) Inverge Journal of Social Sciences 166–182. DOI: https://doi.org/10.63544/ijss.v2i3.212
14. C Bailey and L Ragland, 'Developing Students Skill-Based Competencies: A Strategic Learning Approach' (2022) 32 *The Accounting Educators' Journal*.
15. JM Anderson, M Buenaventura and P Heaton, 'The Effects of Holistic Defense on Criminal Justice Outcomes' (2019) 132(3) *Harvard Law Review* 819–893.
16. D Gedera, 'A Holistic Approach to Authentic Assessment' (2023) 13(2) *Asian Journal of Assessment in Teaching and Learning* 23–34. https://doi.org/10.37134/ajatel.vol13.2.3.2023
17. T Hamami and Z Nuryana, 'A Holistic–Integrative Approach of the Muhammadiyah Education System in Indonesia' (2022) 78(4) *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 7607.https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7607
18. D Franco and others, 'Sustainable Education: Essential Contributions to a "Quadruple Helix" Interaction and Sustainable Paradigm Shift' in DB Zandvliet (ed), *Culture and Environment: Weaving New Connections, Researching Environmental Learning*, vol 4 (Brill Publishers 2019) 367–393. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004396685_022
19. T Schlegel, C Pfister, D Harhoff and U Backes-Gellner, 'Innovation Effects of Universities of Applied Sciences: An Assessment of Regional Heterogeneity' (2021) *The Journal of Technology Transfer* https://doi.org/10.1007/s10961-020-09839-w.
20. UIIN, 'Enhancing Quality in Higher and Continuing Education with and for SME' in *Universities of Applied Sciences as Regional Powerhouses* (University Industry Innovation Magazine 2020).
21. E Gaile-Sarkane, JP Segers, D Franco, D Van Caillie and J Macke, 'Holistic Approach to Innovation Projects: The Perspective of Higher Educational Institutions' (Paper presented at the 25th World Multi-Conference on Systemics, Cybernetics and Informatics (WMSCI), June 2021).
22. H Widodo, S Sutrisno and F Hanum, 'The Urgency of Holistic Education in Muhammadiyah Schools' (2019) 26(2) *Al-Ta Lim Journal* 160–174. http://dx.doi.org/10.15548/jt.v26i2.549
23. A Bozkurt, 'From Distance Education to Open and Distance Learning: A Holistic Evaluation of History, Definitions, and Theories' in *Handbook of Research on Learning in the Age of Transhumanism* (IGI Global Scientific Publishing 2019) 252–273. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-8431-5.ch016
24. SP Shinde, MEK Pasa, R Waghmare and B Saikia, *NEP-2020: Challenges and Opportunities* (Bhumi Publication 2024).
25. B. Venkateshwarlu, "A Critical Study of NEP 2020: Issues, Approaches, Challenges, Opportunities and Criticism" 10(2) *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research* 5 (2021).
26. EST Abumandour, 'Public Libraries' Role in Supporting E-Learning and Spreading Lifelong Education: A Case Study' (2020) 14(2) *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning* 178–217. DOI 10.1108/JRIT-06-2019-0063
27. PS Aithal and S Aithal, 'Analysis of the Indian National Education Policy 2020 towards Achieving Its Objectives' (2020) 5(2) *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences (IJMTS)* 19–41. DOI: http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3988767.
28. M Soni, 'A Literature Survey on National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) and Libraries' (2023) 3(34) *Journal of Learning and Educational Policy* 13–23. DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jlep.34.13.23
29. GW Bates, A Rixon, A Carbone and C Pilgrim, 'Beyond Employability Skills: Developing Professional Purpose' (2019) 10(1) *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability* 7–26. /doi/10.3316/informit.580460025452033.
30. M Bargsted, J Yeves, C Merino and JI Venegas-Muggli, 'Career Success Is Not Always an Outcome: Its Mediating Role between Competence Employability Model and Perceived Employability' (2021) 26(2) *Career Development International* 119–139. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-06-2020-0141
31. D Leadbeatter, S Nanayakkara, X Zhou and J Gao, 'Employability in Health Professional Education: A Scoping Review' (2023) 23(1) *BMC Medical Education* 33. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-022-03913-7

32. A Rakowska and S de Juana-Espinosa, 'Ready for the Future? Employability Skills and Competencies in the Twenty-First Century: The View of International Experts' (2021) 40(5) *Human Systems Management* 669–684. https://doi.org/10.3233/HSM-201118
33. DE Froehlich, M Liu and BIJ Maria Van der Heijden, 'Work in Progress: The Progression of Competence-Based Employability' (2018) 23(2) *Career Development International* 230–244. https://doi.org/10.1108/CDI-06-2017-0098
34. E Jorovlea, 'Contemporary Approaches to Legal Education: Enhancing Competencies for Effective Professional Practice in Law' (2025) (sge42-06) *European Science* 256–266. DOI: 10.30890/2709-2313.2025-42-06-013
35. RK Yadav, 'Essential Skills for Effective Clinical Legal Education and Their Integration into the Curriculum' (2025) SSRN 5164165 https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=5164165
36. AL Aziz and SH Sain, 'Sustainable Legal Education: Aligning Curricula with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (2025) 2(1) *GAS Journal of Law and Society* 10–19.
37. LK Allen and P Kendeou, 'ED-AI Lit: An Interdisciplinary Framework for AI Literacy in Education' (2024) 11(1) *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 3–10. DOI: 10.1177/23727322231220339
38. K Maass, V Geiger, MR Ariza and M Goos, 'The Role of Mathematics in Interdisciplinary STEM Education' (2019) 51(6) *ZDM* 869–884.
39. C Veerabhadraiah, 'NEP 2020 and Skill Development: Bridging the Gap between Education and Employment' (2024) *AG Volumes* 70–81.
40. P Kumar and A Singh, 'Five Years of NEP 2020: A Review of Structural Transformations in Indian Education' (2025) 51(12) *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies* 154–164. DOI: https://doi.org/10.9734/ajess/2025/v51i122683
41. P Dhar and P Dhara, 'National Education Policy 2020: Transforming Classrooms to Career through Entrepreneurial Journey and Skill Based Education' (2025).
42. D Banerjee, 'Revolutionizing Education in India: An Analysis of the New Education Policy 2020 and Its Potential to Bridge the Talent-Skill Gap' (2024) *Social Vision*.
43. JJ Turner, PS Amirnuddin and HS I Singh, 'University Legal Learning Spaces Effectiveness in Developing Employability Skills of Future Law Graduates' (2019) 16(1) *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction* 49–79.
44. J Alexander, 'Modelling Employability through Clinical Legal Education: Building Confidence and Professional Identity' (2023) 57(2) *The Law Teacher* 135–154. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2023.2179306
45. F Cantatore, D McQuoid-Mason, V Geldres-Weiss and JC Guajardo-Puga, 'A Comparative Study into Legal Education and Graduate Employability Skills in Law Students through Pro Bono Law Clinics' (2021) 55(3) *The Law Teacher* 314–336. DOI: 10.1080/03069400.2020.1818464
46. N. Hamilton, "The Gap between the Foundational Competencies Clients and Legal Employers Need and the Learning Outcomes Law Schools Are Adopting" 89 *UMKC Law Review* 559 (2020).
47. LA Bradberry and J De Maio, 'Learning by Doing: The Long-Term Impact of Experiential Learning Programs on Student Success' (2019) 15(1) *Journal of Political Science Education* 94–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2018.1485571
48. R Murugesan and DS Kumar, *National Education Policy 2020 – The Key to Development in India* (Vol 1, AG Volumes 2024) 1–177.
49. R. Sharma, "Integrating Life Skills into Inclusive Education" (2025), available at: https://www.dei.ac.in/foera/files/volume3/M2509.pdf.
50. Dash, S., Tallapragada, R., & Abba, E. (2023). Nurturing sustainable careers: How New India's NEP 2020 is driving employability through skills-based education. *Journal of Management for Global Sustainability*, *11*(2), 7. https://doi.org/10.13185/2244-6893.1212
51. P Mishra, *National Education Policy 2020: The Key to Development in India* (Vol 2, AG Volumes 2025) 1–93.
52. N K Shukla, *Revolutionizing Learning: Harnessing NEP Reforms to Elevate Professional Education* (2024).
53. Sharma, B. (2022). A Study of Teachers' Human Rights Consciousness in Reference to "Human Rights Education" [Review of *A Study of Teachers' Human Rights Consciousness in Reference to "Human Rights Education"*]. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL of EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION*, *14*(1), 786–790. WOS. https://doi.org/10.9756/INT-JECSE/V14I1.221092

54. Sharma, B. (2024) Environmental education within the right to education framework, Journal - E-Learning and Digital Media (Sage Publication) ISSN: 2042-7530, Online ISSN: 2042-7530 DOI: https://doi.org/10.1177/20427530241276139
55. Sharma, B. , Sahoo, D. K, & Sundary, D, (2026) Role of the Supreme Court of India in Developing a Fundamental Right to Education through Its Constitutional Jurisprudence', in 'MSW MANAGEMENT -Multidisciplinary, Scientific Work and Management Journal', https://doi.org/10.7492/f874qm28