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# Crafting Educational Syllabi for Community Engagement within the Framework of the New Education Policy 2020



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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Received:</b> 15-11-2023 <b>Received in revised form:</b> 26-12-2023 <b>Accepted:</b> 28-12-2023 <b>Available online:</b> 30-12-2023</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Educational Syllabi; Community Engagement; NEP; New Education Policy.</p>	<p>HEIs have heterogeneous functions; the most pivotal are teaching, research, and community outreach involving direct interface with civil society. All these three functions are interlinked and associated. However, due to various factors, HEIs have given the least importance to Community engagement. But now, NEP 2020 has prioritized community engagement, which is the societal commitment of HEIs towards the society where they operate. In this direction, this paper outlines the scope for inserting community engagement opportunities in the course curriculum in the Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit Model proposed by the NEP 2020 and the evaluation criteria for awarding credit to the students and faculty members.</p>

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) must focus on teaching, research, and outreach pertaining to direct association with the community. They are linked and hooked together. However, over some time, HEIs paid much importance to academics and research and offered negligible roles to community engagement due to various supply and demand factors. HEIs have realized that community engagement is their social concern towards the society where they function. According

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to the New Education Policy 2020, HEIs must promote social responsibility in the academic and research spheres. Through community engagement programmes, HEIs need to facilitate the teachers and students to seek theoretical knowledge into real-life situations, thereby improving the dimensions of academic programmes and research activities. In this direction, the New Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) reiterated that towards “the attainment of such a holistic and multidisciplinary education, the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education” (GoI, 2020). Hence, all HEIs in India need to introduce a course on community engagement programmes in their course curriculum. In this direction, this paper highlights the need to craft educational syllabi for community engagement within the framework of the Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit Model (Table 1) proposed by the NEP 2020 and the evaluation criteria for awarding student credit.

## **2.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COURSE AND MULTIPLE ENTRY AND EXIST**

### **2.1 Model Curriculum at HEIs Level**

NEP 2020 states that inventive and blended curricular structures will offer students multiple entry and exit points, thus removing the common obstacles. These would create alternatives for students to acquire knowledge of the subject at their convenience or necessity. Hence, the NEP 2020 envisaged modifications in the framework of the academic programmes. Also, the introduction of a programme of an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) system ensures seamless student ability to move between or within degree-granting HEIs through a regular system of credit recognition, credit accumulation, credit transfers, and credit redemption to enhance teaching-learning. Further, the UGC has developed a course on 'Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Engagement.' Based on these trends, the challenge before the HEIs is to:

- Work out specific objectives and methodologies for integrating Community Engagement programmes within the curriculum of HEIs.
- Design an incentive system for faculty members and students to actively participate in community outreach.
- Find out the ways and means to integrate community outreach with Sustainable Development Goals

Generally, the academic work pattern of each semester consists of 90 days of actual teaching days with a split-up of 78 factual workings days, six internal examination days, and six exam preparation days. Each working day is distributed into six periods of the one-hour timeline. Under the Choice Based Credit System, the weightage of courses is calculated in terms of credits. One credit equals one hour per week of lecture while two/ three hours of practical. Practical classes exceeding three hours will be of 2 credits. One credit weightage will be allotted for three hours weekly for fieldwork.

In this academic arrangement, the involvement of students in community engagement research projects and learning should gain credit. Community engagement should be integrated with graduation necessities with necessary evaluation criteria. Hence, UGC introduced two-credit courses on Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement. It is a 2-credit course of 30 hours duration, out of which at least 50 percent must be in the field and compulsory for all students. The model course curriculum (Table 2) is divided into four Modules, and field immersion is part of each Unit (1 Credit for Classroom and Tutorials and 1 Credit for Field Engagement)

### 3.0 FORMS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As per the suggested model, the HEIs can pick out any combo of the following forms of outreach.

- 1) Associating learning with community service
- 2) Merging research with community knowledge
- 3) Knowledge sharing and mobilization
- 4) Devising new curriculum and courses
- 5) Including professionals as teachers
- 6) Community-based innovations by students

The multi-entry and exit model of curriculum suggested by NEP 2020 must be integrated with an academic pattern of Level 5 to Level 10 with a maximum credit requirement of 40 credits per Level. Here, the challenge is how to incorporate the model curriculum of the UGC with the multiple entry and exit model without affecting the purpose of the community engagement course. The following options are presented for discussion.

- 1) Adopting the four components as such for a year Degree programme
- 2) PG students can take up a field project for an extra 2 credits on any one topic suitable to their geographical environment.
- 3) Introducing mini-Projects at each Level

### 4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENT (OPTIONS FOR DISCUSSION)

The assessment of students' performance in this Course for two credits may be done internally (with a continuous assessment system) for Level 5 to Level 10. For evaluating the students' performance during the field visit, the staff may determine the performance based on the following criteria for the maximum marks for each standard as presented in Table 3.

### 5.0 THE EXPECTED ROLE OF HEIs

In the era of NEP 2020, all HEIs should offer the Course on Community Engagement. This trend demands Institution-specific policy-level changes incorporating the following.

- Introduction of standardized Course Curriculum structure for all UG, PG, and Ph.D. programmes with uniform credit distribution for the Course on Community Engagement.
- Enabling provisions for offering the Course on Community Engagement with multiple entry and exit model.
- Enabling provisions for linking core courses with Community Engagement
- Open electives on Community Engagement courses to widen the skills of the learners.
- Enhanced engagement of the community in developing innovations and addressing societal problems
- Teaming up proficiency to guarantee the skill development of the student.
- Integrated mechanism for regular up gradation of syllabus/module
- Focus on the enhancement of advanced knowledge and distinct potential needed for Community Engagement
- Ensure competency development of learner.

## 6.0 EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOME

The expected knowledge impact of the Course on Community Engagement is itemized.

- General understanding of basic issues, and obstacles of the communities
- Integral knowledge, skill, and proficiency to work for the livelihood development of the community.
- Improved knowledge of societal construction/development
- Refined monitoring and problem-solving skills
- Upgraded collaboration skills.
- Enriched reportage skill
- Empathy towards community development
- Heightened morals and societal commitment

## 7.0 CONCLUSION

The general understanding is that community Engagement of HEIs has both immediate and long-run lexis. Both sides of this phenomenon are the HEIs potential and the community's needs. The interplay between these two faces posed new challenges and opportunities before HEIs. Community Engagement programmes could rebuild the management and functions of HEIs and the students' learning process. Course-based experience gives a pathway for interaction in which students, academicians, and the public work parallel to locate and work on precise issues and enjoy definite takeaways. Hence, in the era of NEP 2020, every HEI must overcome challenges related to defining, planning, and assessing Community Engagement programmes with options for multiple entry and exit for the learners.

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## APPENDIX

Table 1  
*Levels, Qualifications Type, and Credit Requirements*

Levels	Qualification title	Credit requirements
Level 5	Undergraduate Certificate (in the field of learning/discipline) for those who exit after the first year (two semesters) of the undergraduate programme. (Programme duration: first year or two semesters of the undergraduate programme)	36–40
Level 6	Undergraduate Diploma (in the field of learning/discipline) for those who exit after two years (four semesters) of the undergraduate programme (Programme duration: First two years or four semesters of the undergraduate programme)	72–80
Level 7	Bachelor' Degree (Programme duration: Three years or six semesters)	108–120
Level 8	Bachelor' Degree (Honours/Research) (Programme duration: Four years or eight semesters)	144–160
Level 8	Post-graduate Diploma for those who exit after the successful completion of the first year or two semesters of the two-year Master's degree programme). (Programme duration: One year or two semesters)	36–40
Level 9	Master's Degree (Programme duration: Two years or four semesters after obtaining a Bachelor's degree)	72–80
Level 9	Master's Degree (Programme duration: One year or two semesters after obtaining a four-year Bachelor's Degree (Honours/Research)	36–40
Level 10	Doctoral Degree	Minimum prescribed credits for course work and a thesis with published work

Source: [University Grants Commission \(2021\)](#)

Table 2

*Module Contents for the Course Community Engagement*

Sl. No	Module Title	Module Content	Assignment	Teaching / Learning Methodology	No. of Classes
1	Appreciation of Rural Society	Rural lifestyle, rural society, caste and gender relations, rural values with respect to community, nature and resources, elaboration of "soul of India lies in villages" (Gandhi), rural infrastructure	Prepare a map (physical, visual or digital) of the village you visited and write an essay about inter-family relations in that village.	✓ Classroom discussions	2
				✓ Field visit**	4
				✓ Assignment Map	2
2	Understanding rural and local economy & livelihood	Agriculture, farming, landownership, water management, animal husbandry, non-farm livelihoods and artisans, rural entrepreneurs, rural markets, migrant labour	Describe your analysis of rural household economy, its challenges and possible pathways to address them	✓ Field visit**	3
			Circular economy and migration patterns focus	✓ Group discussions in class	4
				✓ Assignment	1
3	Rural and local Institutions	Traditional Rural & Community Organizations, Self-help Groups, Panchayati Raj Institutions (Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Standing Committees), Nagarpalikas & Municipalities, Local Civil Society, Local Administration	How effectively are Panchayati Raj & Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) institutions functioning in the village? What would you suggest to improve their effectiveness?	✓ Classroom	2
			Present a case study (written or audio-visual)	✓ Field visit**	4
				✓ Group presentation of assignment	2
4	Rural & National Development Programmes	History of various /development in India, current national programmes: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Ayushman Bharat, Swatchh Bharat, PM Awaas Yojana, Skill India, Gram Panchayat Decentralized Planning, NRLM, MNREGA, SHRAM, Jal Jeevan Mission, SFURTI, Atma Nirbhar Bharat, etc.	Describe the benefits received and challenges faced in the delivery of one of these programmes in the local community; give suggestions about improving implementation of the programme for the poor. Special focus to urban informal sector and migrant households	✓ Classroom	2
				✓ Each student selects one program for field visit**	4
				✓ Written assignment	2

Source: [University Grants Commission \(2022\)](#); [University Grants Commission \(2022\)](#)

Table 3

*Model Criteria for Evaluating Field Visit*

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Marks</b>
1	Involvement in Shramadhan / physical work, Response to task, and amount of effort taken	5
2	Organizing and decision making Putting creative ideas into action	5
3	Participation in interaction and discussion	10
4	Ability to adjust and work in teams	10
5	Knowledge of problem and issues	10
6	Diary maintenance and report writing	10
	Total Marks	50