



# Perception Of Postgraduate Students Towards Industry Exposure Through On-The-Job Training And Field Projects Under NEP 2020

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## Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has emphasized the integration of practical learning experiences with academic curricula to enhance the employability and holistic development of students. The aim of this study is to examine the postgraduate student's perception of industry exposure through on the job training and field projects as mandated under NEP guidelines. The study also focuses on the perceived relevance and usefulness of such exposure, identify key skills and competencies developed and examine challenges faced by the students. A structured questionnaire was used as a tool for data collection, and it was distributed randomly to postgraduate students across various disciplines to gather quantitative and qualitative data. The critical result of research indicates that OJT and field projects are vital for their study. Communication and technical skills are the most commonly gained competencies & students find challenging balancing academic workload and OJT.

**Key Words** - National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Postgraduate Students, Industry Exposure, On-the-Job Training (OJT), Field Projects, Skill Development, Student Perception

## 1. Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a landmark reform in India's educational landscape, emphasizes on holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary learning that bridges the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills. One of its key goals is to enhance employability and real-world readiness among students through structured industrial exposure, including training and field projects. For postgraduate students, such exposure is particularly crucial, as it not only reinforces theoretical learning but also cultivates industry-relevant competencies and professional networks.

With the implementation of NEP-driven initiatives in higher education institutions across the country, postgraduate programs are increasingly incorporating internships, live projects, and collaborative research with industrial partners. These efforts aim to provide students with a first-hand understanding of organizational environments, practical problem-solving and innovation in real-world contexts.

## 1.1 Salient Features of NEP 2020

- Credits for all student activities: Curricular, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities.
- Expansion of CBGS AND ABC: Wide choice to students to earn credits from multiple institutions and helps his/her navigation across institutions through adoption of Academic Bank of Credits.
- Vocational and Skill Courses (VSES) into main stream: Skill enhancement through VSEC related to Major subject.
- Opening of IKS Universe: Indian Knowledge System Courses- a defining feature of NEP 2020.
- Inclusion of Value based dimension: Sound and Universal human values for global citizenship.
- Promotion of Indian Languages: Communication skills in English for personal growth, learning cultural moorings of our country, study materials in local languages.

## 1.2 Importance of OJT & field projects

- **Bridges the Gap between Theory and Practice:** NEP 2020 aims to move away from rote learning and towards experiential learning. OJT & field projects allow students to apply their classroom knowledge in practical work environments, making their education more relevant and engaging.
- **Enhancing Employability:** OJT & field projects provide valuable hands-on experience and industry exposure, making students more competitive in the job market. It helps students develop skills that are in high demand by employers, such as analytical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. OJT can also lead to job offers or research opportunities after graduation.
- **Fostering Holistic Development:** NEP 2020 emphasizes the development of not just cognitive skills but also soft skills like teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution. OJT provides a platform for students to learn and practice these skills in a collaborative setting, contributing to their overall professional development. It also helps students understand work ethics and develop a sense of responsibility.
- **Strengthening Industry-Academia Linkages:** It facilitates partnerships between educational institutions and industries, creating opportunities for students to learn from experienced professionals. This collaboration can lead to improved curriculum design, research opportunities, and increased industry relevance.
- **Promoting Experiential Learning:** NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of experiential learning, and OJT provides a structured and supervised environment for students to engage in hands-on activities. This approach to learning is more effective than traditional methods, as students learn by doing and receive feedback on their performance.

## 2. Literature Review

- Research by Knight & Yorke (2003) Researcher highlighted that industry exposure significantly contributes to the development of employability skills such as teamwork, communication, problem-solving and leadership.
- Rao (2019) found that engineering students who participated in industry visits and live projects were better equipped for corporate roles.
- Gupta & Singh (2020) highlighted that, MBA students who undertook internships demonstrated higher employability skills.
- Gault, Redington and Schlager (2000) observed that students who undergo structured industry exposure demonstrate higher levels of confidence, employability, and adaptability.
- Jain & Prasad (2021) found that postgraduate management students in India perceived internships as crucial for bridging the gap between academic theories and industry practices.
- Sharma (2021) argue that NEP's focus on multidisciplinary and experiential learning will necessitate pedagogical shifts and curriculum redesign across universities.
- John & Mathew (2021) reported that field-based learning enhances critical thinking and adaptability, particularly in social sciences. Despite the benefits, challenges such as lack of quality training opportunities, inadequate mentorship, and alignment between academic goals and industry expectations persist.

- Singh & Sharma (2022) concluded that structured field projects help postgraduate students enhance domain-specific competencies, especially when supported by active mentorship and clear learning outcomes.

### 3. Gaps Identified

As per NEP 2020 guideline in the PG programme for the first time OJT and field projects are introduced. So, need arises to study student's perception and their practical experience with the new changes. Furthermore need arised to find challenges faced by the students during field project.

### 4. Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research paper is -

- To assess postgraduate student's perceptions of the effectiveness of OJT and field projects
- To identify the key skills students believe they gained from OJT and field projects.
- To examine the challenges faced during OJT and field projects.
- To suggest improvements in the design and implementation of such experiential learning programs.

### 5. Research Methodology

**Research Design:** The study is descriptive in nature

**Population:** Postgraduate students from various disciplines i.e Management, Engineering and Social Sciences pursuing from university of Mumbai

**Sample Size:** 100 students

**Sampling Method:** Random sampling

**Data Collection Tool:** Structured questionnaire with Likert-scale and open-ended questions.

### 6. Data Analysis & Results

**Perception of Relevance:**

- 92% respondents agreed that OJT/ field project was relevant to my academic course.
- 83% respondents said OJT and Field project experience helped them in understand real-world applications of their studies.
- 89% respondents agreed that they were assigned with meaningful tasks during the OJT/ field project.
- 91% agreed that OJT/ field project enhanced their interest in the field.

**Skill Development:**

- 75% respondents reported that due to OJT and field project their communication skill improved.
- 60% respondents mentioned enhanced technical, subject-specific knowledge & technical knowledge.
- 64% respondents agreed that it has improved their time management skill.
- 50% respondents said OJT and field project improved their teamwork and leadership abilities.
- 39% respondents agreed that OJT has helped in developing professional etiquettes.

**Challenges Faced:**

- 17% respondents said duration was short balancing academic workload and OJT is difficult.
- 14% respondents cited inadequate mentorship during the project & felt the tasks assigned were too basic or unrelated to their field.
- 2 % respondents mentioned there was poor coordination between college & industry
- 11% respondents cited travel & Logistics issues.

## 7. Findings

- A majority of PG students value OJT and field projects as essential parts of their learning journey.
- Communication and subject-specific technical skills were the most commonly gained competencies.
- Challenges such as balancing academic workload and OJT is were common.
- Students from management backgrounds perceived higher utility.

## 8. Conclusion

On-the-job training and field projects are pivotal in preparing postgraduate students for professional roles. While the perceived benefits are substantial, there is room for improvement in the structure, mentorship, and relevance of such programs. Institutions and industry partners must collaborate more closely to ensure that these experiential opportunities are meaningful, challenging, and aligned with students' academic and career trajectories.

## 9. Recommendations

- Institutions should establish strong industry linkages to offer high-quality training projects.
- More time should be given to complete the project so that students can understand well which will helpful to them in future as well
- For future training or field project programs, there is need to incorporating more practical, hands-on sessions to complement the theoretical knowledge. Including case studies and real-life problem-solving activities could enhance understanding and engagement.
- Additionally, regular feedback sessions and opportunities for participants to reflect on their learning would help identify gaps and reinforce key concepts.
- Expanding the use of digital tools and resources could also make the programs more accessible and efficient."
- Mentorship systems must be enhanced to provide adequate guidance.
- Field projects should be made interdisciplinary and outcome-oriented.

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