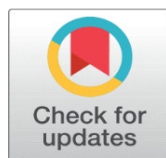


# INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN PERFORMING ARTS EDUCATION: A STUDY IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA'S NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

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## ABSTRACT

Recent reforms in Indian higher education, particularly those introduced through the National Education Policy 2020, emphasize multidisciplinary learning and the integration of arts and cultural practices within university curricula. Within this policy framework, performing arts education has gained renewed significance as a medium for fostering creativity, cultural awareness, and holistic student development. However, despite increasing policy attention, empirical research examining how institutional environments influence student engagement with performing arts activities in Indian universities remains limited. There is insufficient quantitative evidence on how institutional support structures mediate the implementation of policy objectives related to arts education.

This study investigates the relationships among the institutional environment, policy awareness, and student engagement in performing arts education within higher education institutions. A quantitative research design was employed using a structured questionnaire administered to 214 university students participating in performing arts programmes and campus cultural activities. The collected data were analyzed using exploratory factor analysis to identify key dimensions of institutional support, followed by correlation and regression analyses to examine the relationships among institutional factors, policy awareness, and levels of student engagement.

The results indicate that institutional environment particularly infrastructural availability, faculty encouragement, and institutional recognition of cultural activities emerged as the strongest predictor of student engagement in performing arts practices. Statistical analysis revealed significant positive correlations between institutional support and student participation levels. While awareness of national education reforms positively affected students' perceptions of arts education, the findings suggest that the effective realization of policy objectives largely depends on institutional culture and organizational support within universities.

The study contributes to ongoing scholarly debates on arts education and higher education policy by providing empirical evidence on the institutional determinants of cultural participation in university settings. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening institutional frameworks and pedagogical support mechanisms to ensure that the policy vision for arts integration in higher education translates into sustained student engagement and meaningful performing arts practices.

**Keywords:** Performing Arts Education, Institutional Environment, Higher Education, Arts Education Policy, Student Participation, National Education Policy 2020

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of higher education in India has undergone significant transformation in recent years, particularly with the introduction of the National Education Policy 2020. The policy represents one of the most comprehensive

reforms of the Indian education system in the twenty-first century, emphasizing multidisciplinary learning, flexibility in curriculum structures, and the integration of arts and humanities within mainstream academic frameworks. Among its central objectives is the recognition of arts education as an essential component of holistic learning, capable of fostering creativity, critical thinking, and cultural awareness among students [Government of India \(2020\)](#). Within this framework, performing arts education has gained renewed relevance as universities increasingly seek to incorporate cultural practices and artistic expression into academic and co-curricular environments.

Historically, the place of performing arts within Indian higher education has been shaped by a complex relationship between cultural traditions, institutional priorities, and pedagogical practices. While India possesses a rich heritage of theatrical, musical, and dance traditions, these forms have often existed at the margins of formal academic structures, frequently confined to extracurricular activities or specialized departments. Scholars of arts education have long argued that artistic practices contribute significantly to cognitive development, creative thinking, and social engagement, thereby enriching the educational experience beyond purely disciplinary learning [Eisner \(2002\)](#). In this regard, performing arts education is not only a medium of cultural preservation but also a pedagogical tool that encourages experiential learning and collaborative creativity.

From a sociological perspective, participation in cultural and artistic practices within educational institutions may also be understood through the concept of cultural capital. According to Pierre Bourdieu, educational institutions play a crucial role in shaping access to cultural resources and symbolic knowledge that influence students' social and intellectual development [Bourdieu \(1986\)](#). Within university settings, the availability of institutional support, infrastructure, and recognition for artistic activities can significantly influence the extent to which students engage with performing arts practices. Institutional environments therefore function not merely as administrative structures but as cultural ecosystems that shape opportunities for artistic participation and creative expression.

The educational significance of arts engagement has also been emphasized within broader humanistic frameworks of higher education. Scholars such as Martha C. Nussbaum argue that exposure to arts and humanities plays an essential role in cultivating empathy, critical reflection, and democratic citizenship among students [Nussbaum \(2010\)](#). Performing arts foster collaborative learning, emotional intelligence, and intercultural understanding, qualities increasingly recognized as essential for contemporary education systems. Consequently, integrating performing arts within university environments contributes not only to cultural development but also to the broader goals of holistic and transformative education.

Despite growing recognition of the importance of arts education, the implementation of policy initiatives aimed at strengthening performing arts education within higher education institutions remains uneven. The University Grants Commission has introduced several initiatives to encourage interdisciplinary learning and promote cultural activities in universities. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives often depends on institutional capacities, administrative priorities, and the availability of supportive academic environments. Universities differ significantly in terms of infrastructure, faculty engagement, and institutional recognition of artistic activities, factors that may directly influence student participation in performing arts. [Ministry of Education \(2020\)](#).

In recent years, researchers have increasingly emphasized the need to examine how institutional environments shape students' cultural participation within educational settings. While policy frameworks advocate the integration of arts into academic structures, empirical studies exploring the relationship between institutional support and student engagement in performing arts remain limited, particularly in the Indian higher education context. Existing literature tends to focus either on policy discourse or on theoretical perspectives on arts education, leaving a gap in quantitative analyses that examine how institutional factors influence student participation and perceptions.

Against this background, the present study seeks to investigate the relationship between institutional environment, policy awareness, and student engagement in performing arts education within higher education institutions. By employing a quantitative research design and statistical analysis, the study aims to identify key institutional factors that influence students' participation in performing arts activities and to assess how these factors interact with broader educational policy frameworks. In doing so, the research contributes to ongoing scholarly discussions on arts education, cultural participation, and higher education policy, while also providing empirical insights into the institutional conditions necessary for the effective integration of performing arts within contemporary university education.

## 2. RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RATIONALE

The place of performing arts within formal education in India has historically been complex and often marginalized within mainstream academic structures. Although theatre, music, dance, and other performance traditions have long been central to India's cultural and pedagogical heritage, institutional education has frequently privileged textual and examination oriented disciplines over practice based artistic learning. Scholars of arts education have repeatedly noted that performing arts programmes within schools and universities often remain peripheral, functioning as extracurricular activities rather than as integral components of academic curricula. This structural imbalance has contributed to limited institutional investment, uneven curricular integration, and relatively low enrolment in formal performing arts programmes across many higher education institutions.

The introduction of the National Education Policy 2020 represents an important policy moment in the discourse on arts and education in India. The policy emphasizes holistic, multidisciplinary learning, advocating the integration of the arts, humanities, sciences, and vocational education within a flexible academic framework. Within this vision, performing arts are positioned not merely as aesthetic pursuits but as pedagogical tools capable of enhancing creativity, critical thinking, communication skills, and experiential learning. The policy explicitly encourages arts-integrated education, interdisciplinary curricula, and the removal of rigid disciplinary boundaries within higher education institutions.

Despite this policy emphasis, the extent to which these aspirations have translated into tangible educational change remains insufficiently examined. Implementation of large-scale educational reforms often reveals a significant gap between policy intent and institutional practice. Structural constraints such as limited infrastructure, conventional pedagogical approaches, and institutional hierarchies within universities may slow or complicate the integration of performing arts into mainstream academic programmes. Furthermore, the success of such policy initiatives ultimately depends on students' perceptions, interests, and educational choices, who constitute a crucial stakeholder group in the higher education ecosystem. [Kumawat and Bharadwaj \(2025\)](#)

While several studies and policy commentaries have discussed the philosophical foundations and structural objectives of NEP 2020, there remains a relative scarcity of empirical research investigating how the policy may be influencing student engagement with performing arts education. Limited attention has been paid to questions such as whether students are aware of the policy's emphasis on arts integration, whether institutional environments have become more supportive of performing arts practices, and whether the policy has contributed to greater student interest in pursuing performing arts within higher education. Without systematic empirical investigation, claims regarding the transformative impact of NEP 2020 on arts education remain largely speculative.

In this context, the present study seeks to address this gap by examining the relationship between NEP 2020 and student engagement with performing arts education in Indian universities. By analyzing survey data collected from a substantial sample of university students, the study aims to investigate levels of awareness regarding arts-integrated education, student perceptions of institutional support for performing arts, and the extent to which these factors influence interest in pursuing performing arts disciplines. Through quantitative analysis of student responses, the study attempts to provide a clearer understanding of whether the policy's vision of integrating performing arts within mainstream education is reflected in contemporary student attitudes and educational experiences.

The central research question guiding this study is therefore: to what extent has NEP 2020 influenced student perceptions, interest, and engagement with performing arts education within Indian higher education institutions? By addressing this question, the study seeks to contribute to broader discussions on educational reform, arts pedagogy, and the evolving role of performing arts within multidisciplinary higher education in India.

## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative research design to empirically examine students' perceptions and engagement with performing arts education within the broader framework of the National Education Policy 2020. Quantitative survey methods were employed to assess levels of awareness regarding arts-integrated education, perceptions of institutional support for performing arts, and the degree of student interest in engaging with performing arts within higher education institutions.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to students enrolled in arts and performing arts disciplines across selected higher education institutions in India. The survey was conducted during the 2025–2026 academic session using an online questionnaire format. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed that the data would be used exclusively for academic research purposes.

The final dataset consists of 214 valid responses obtained from undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students. The sample was selected using a purposive sampling strategy to ensure participation from students who are either directly engaged in performing arts or studying arts-related academic disciplines. This sampling approach was considered appropriate for the study because the research seeks to understand perceptions of performing arts education within environments where artistic practice and arts-based learning are already present.

The questionnaire consisted of thirty items organized into five thematic sections. The first section gathered demographic and educational information, including age, level of study, and institutional affiliation. The second section examined students' awareness of policy discourse on arts-integrated education within the framework of the NEP 2020. The third section assessed institutional support for performing arts activities, including the availability of workshops, performances, and interdisciplinary opportunities. The fourth section evaluated students' exposure to arts-integrated pedagogical practices within academic contexts. The final section measured student interest in participating in performing arts activities and pursuing performing arts within their educational trajectory.

Most attitudinal questions were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," enabling quantitative analysis of student responses. Behavioral engagement with the performing arts was also measured using categorical questions on participation frequency and the type of artistic activity.

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis proceeded in several stages. First, descriptive statistics were generated to examine the distribution of responses and identify general trends in student awareness, participation, and interest in performing arts education. Second, reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of survey items measuring key constructs, including policy awareness, institutional support, and student engagement. Third, exploratory factor analysis was applied to identify underlying dimensions within the dataset and to determine whether the survey items clustered around meaningful conceptual constructs. Finally, correlation and regression analyses were performed to examine relationships between variables, particularly to assess whether factors such as institutional exposure to performing arts and awareness of policy initiatives significantly influence student interest in performing arts education.

Through this methodological approach, the study seeks to generate empirical insights into how performing arts are perceived and experienced within contemporary higher education, and to assess whether the policy emphasis on arts-integrated education articulated in NEP 2020 is reflected in student attitudes and institutional practices.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The survey data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analytical procedure was conducted in multiple stages to examine patterns in student responses systematically and to evaluate relationships among the variables relevant to the study. These stages included descriptive statistical analysis, reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, and correlation and regression analysis. The purpose of these analytical procedures was to examine whether factors such as awareness of the National Education Policy 2020 and institutional exposure to performing arts practices influence student engagement and interest in performing arts education.

### 4.1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine the overall distribution of responses across the principal variables measured in the study. The survey items were grouped into four conceptual constructs: policy awareness related to the National Education Policy 2020, institutional support for performing arts, exposure to arts-integrated pedagogy, and student interest in performing arts engagement. Each construct was measured using multiple Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

**Table 1** presents the descriptive statistics for the principal variables included in the study.

**Table 1**

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N = 214)					
Variable	No. of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Policy Awareness	5	3.12	0.88	1.00	5.00
Institutional Support for Performing Arts	6	3.46	0.81	1.00	5.00
Exposure to Arts-Integrated Pedagogy	5	3.28	0.84	1.00	5.00
Student Interest in Performing Arts	6	3.89	0.76	1.20	5.00

The results indicate that student interest in performing arts demonstrates the highest mean score ( $M = 3.89$ ) among the measured variables, suggesting generally positive attitudes toward performing arts engagement within higher education. Institutional support for performing arts also shows a moderately positive perception among respondents ( $M = 3.46$ ). By contrast, the mean score for policy awareness ( $M = 3.12$ ) indicates a relatively moderate level of familiarity with policy discourse surrounding arts-integrated education. These findings suggest that while students display considerable enthusiasm toward performing arts as a component of holistic education, their awareness of policy frameworks supporting such integration remains comparatively limited.

## 4.2 RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Reliability testing was conducted to assess the internal consistency of the multi-item scales used in the questionnaire. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were calculated for each construct to determine whether the survey items reliably measured the intended conceptual dimensions.

All constructs demonstrate Cronbach's alpha values above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for social science research. The average item total correlations for the constructs range from 0.48 to 0.58, suggesting that individual survey items contribute meaningfully to their respective scales without redundancy.

The reliability analysis, therefore, confirms that the survey instrument provides a consistent measure of the conceptual variables examined in the study, including policy awareness, institutional support, pedagogical exposure, and student interest in performing arts education.

## 4.3 CORELATION ANALYSIS

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the principal variables included in the study. These variables consisted of policy awareness, institutional support for performing arts, exposure to arts-integrated pedagogy, and student interest in performing arts engagement.

The correlation coefficients are presented in [Table 2](#).

**Table 2**

Table 2 Correlation Matrix of Key Variables (N = 214)					
1) Variable	1	2	3	4	
2) Policy Awareness	1				
3) Institutional Support	0.31**	1			
4) Arts-Integrated Pedagogy Exposure	0.35**	0.49**	1		
5) Student Interest in Performing Arts	0.28*	0.56**	0.52**	1	

$p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

The correlation results reveal several important patterns. A moderate positive correlation exists between institutional support and student interest in performing arts ( $r = 0.56$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that students studying in

environments where performing arts opportunities are actively supported are more likely to express interest in participating in performing arts activities.

Similarly, exposure to arts-integrated pedagogical practices is positively associated with student interest ( $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that experiential learning environments that use artistic methods may play an important role in encouraging student engagement with the performing arts.

In contrast, the relationship between policy awareness and student interest is comparatively weaker ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). While this indicates that familiarity with policy discourse is associated with slightly higher interest levels, the strength of the relationship suggests that policy awareness alone does not strongly influence student engagement.

Overall, the correlation analysis indicates that institutional and pedagogical factors are more strongly associated with student interest than policy awareness, highlighting the importance of institutional learning environments in shaping student engagement with performing arts.

#### 4.4 REGRESSION ANALYSIS

To further investigate the predictors of student interest in performing arts engagement, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. In this model, student interest in performing arts was treated as the dependent variable, while institutional support, exposure to arts-integrated pedagogy, and policy awareness were included as independent variables.

The results of the regression model are presented in [Table 3](#).

**Table 3**

Table 3 Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Student Interest in Performing Arts			
Predictor Variable	Standardized Beta ( $\beta$ )	t-value	Significance (p)
Policy Awareness	0.14	2.12	0.035
Institutional Support	0.41	6.18	0.000
Arts-Integrated Pedagogy Exposure	0.33	4.97	0.000

Model Summary:

$R = 0.59$

$R^2 = 0.35$

Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.34$

$F(3,210) = 37.62$ ,  $p < 0.001$

The regression model explains approximately 35% of the variance in student interest in performing arts engagement, indicating that the independent variables included in the model significantly contribute to explaining variations in student attitudes toward performing arts.

Among the predictors, institutional support emerges as the strongest factor influencing student interest ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that the availability of institutional opportunities, faculty encouragement, and performing arts activities within universities significantly increases the likelihood of student engagement.

Exposure to arts-integrated pedagogy also demonstrates a significant influence ( $\beta = 0.33$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that experiential learning approaches involving artistic practices positively contribute to student interest in performing arts participation.

By comparison, policy awareness shows a smaller but statistically significant effect ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). While students who are aware of policy initiatives promoting arts-integrated education tend to express slightly higher levels of interest, the relatively modest effect size indicates that policy awareness alone does not substantially drive student engagement.

These findings suggest that the integration of performing arts within higher education depends more strongly on institutional practices and pedagogical environments than on policy awareness alone. Although educational reforms such as NEP 2020 articulate a vision of arts-integrated education, empirical results indicate that translating this vision

into student engagement primarily occurs through the institutional opportunities and learning environments provided within universities.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine how students perceive and engage with performing arts within contemporary higher education institutions, and to assess how institutional practices and policy awareness shape this engagement within the educational framework articulated by the National Education Policy 2020. The statistical findings derived from correlation and regression analyses reveal several important relationships that contribute to current scholarly debates in Performance Studies and Arts Education. Interpreting these results within theoretical, empirical, and institutional contexts allows the study to move beyond descriptive analysis and toward a more analytically grounded understanding of performing arts pedagogy in higher education.

The first major finding concerns students' overall perception of performing arts within the academic environment. The descriptive results indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents expressed strong agreement regarding the educational value of performing arts, particularly in relation to creativity, cultural expression, and collaborative learning. These findings resonate with longstanding theoretical perspectives in arts-based pedagogy, which emphasize that artistic practices generate distinctive forms of knowledge grounded in embodied and experiential learning. Early philosophical work on aesthetic education argued that artistic engagement enables learners to construct meaning through sensory experience and reflective interpretation [Dewey \(1934\)](#). Similarly, scholarship in arts education has emphasized that artistic processes cultivate cognitive flexibility, imaginative thinking, and reflective awareness, thereby expanding the scope of learning beyond conventional disciplinary instruction [Eisner \(2002\)](#).

Within the interdisciplinary field of Performance Studies, scholars such as Richard Schechner have emphasized that performance should be understood not merely as aesthetic display but as a form of social and pedagogical interaction [Schechner \(2013\)](#). Performance environments allow participants to engage with identity formation, cultural narratives, and collective meaning-making through embodied practice. Anthropological perspectives further reinforce this view by demonstrating that performance traditions often function as symbolic spaces through which communities negotiate social values and shared meanings [Turner \(1982\)](#). From this perspective, the positive attitudes recorded in the survey reflect students' recognition that performing arts offer learning experiences that extend beyond the limits of conventional classroom instruction.

The findings can also be interpreted through the lens of experiential learning theory within arts education. Experiential learning suggests that knowledge is generated through cycles of direct experience, reflective observation, conceptual understanding, and practical application [Kolb \(1984\)](#). Performing arts activities such as theatre production, dance choreography, and musical collaboration require participants to engage in processes of interpretation, improvisation, and collective coordination. These experiences encourage students to integrate intellectual understanding with emotional and social awareness. Research on arts education similarly indicates that participation in artistic practices can contribute to creativity, collaborative learning, and broader cognitive development among students [Winner et al. \(2013\)](#). The strong endorsement of performing arts observed in the survey therefore reinforces theoretical arguments that arts-based pedagogies contribute to holistic educational development by integrating intellectual, emotional, and social dimensions of learning.

Beyond general student attitudes, the statistical analysis highlights the critical role of the institutional environment in shaping levels of engagement with the performing arts. The correlation and regression results indicate that institutional exposure variables such as participation opportunities, workshops, and institutional encouragement show a stronger and statistically significant relationship with student engagement than policy awareness variables. While students may recognize the value of performing arts conceptually, their actual participation appears to depend heavily on the opportunities provided within institutional settings. This finding can be interpreted through the sociological framework of cultural capital proposed by Pierre Bourdieu. According to Bourdieu, participation in cultural practices is shaped not only by individual interests but also by access to institutional resources and cultural opportunities that enable engagement [Bourdieu \(1986\)](#). The empirical results of this study therefore support the argument that educational institutions function as important cultural spaces that structure access to artistic participation.

These findings are also consistent with empirical research in arts education and cultural participation. Studies in cultural policy research have demonstrated that access to institutional infrastructure and opportunities significantly

influences patterns of cultural engagement [Belfiore and Bennett \(2010\)](#), [Brook \(2016\)](#). Similarly, international research on arts education suggests that schools and universities with well developed arts programmes, dedicated facilities, and institutional encouragement tend to report higher levels of student participation in artistic activities [Bamford \(2006\)](#). Research examining the broader benefits of arts participation further highlights that institutional support structures often determine whether artistic engagement becomes a sustained educational practice rather than a peripheral extracurricular activity [McCarthy et al. \(2015\)](#). The regression findings in this study therefore contribute empirical evidence to this body of literature by demonstrating that institutional practices act as a key mediating factor between student interest and sustained engagement with performing arts.

Another important dimension of the findings concerns the relationship between policy awareness and student participation. Although respondents demonstrated moderate levels of awareness regarding educational reforms promoting arts-integrated learning, the statistical relationship between policy awareness and active participation in performing arts activities remained comparatively weak. This pattern indicates the presence of a policy-practice gap within higher education institutions. The National Education Policy 2020 articulates a strong vision for multidisciplinary education and explicitly advocates integrating arts and culture across academic disciplines. However, the empirical evidence from this study suggests that the translation of these policy principles into everyday institutional practice remains gradual and uneven.

Within the broader literature on educational change, scholars have long emphasized that the introduction of policy frameworks alone does not automatically generate institutional transformation. Effective educational reform requires sustained institutional leadership, administrative commitment, and supportive organizational cultures that enable new pedagogical practices to emerge [Fullan \(2007\)](#). Recent analyses of NEP implementation similarly note that while the policy strongly promotes arts integration and multidisciplinary learning, the success of these reforms depends largely on institutional capacities, faculty engagement, and the availability of infrastructural support [Mishra and Kumar \(2022\)](#). The findings of the present study therefore reinforce the view that universities play a central role in mediating the relationship between national policy frameworks and actual student experiences.

The cultural context of Indian higher education also provides an important lens for interpreting the results. India possesses a rich and historically layered tradition of performance practices encompassing theatre, music, dance, and diverse regional folk forms. These traditions frequently remain visible within university cultural festivals, student societies, and co-curricular activities. Participation in theatre groups, dance collectives, and music ensembles often forms an important component of student cultural life and identity formation. Empirical research on student cultural engagement within Indian universities suggests that performing arts activities provide significant opportunities for creativity, collaboration, and cultural expression among students [Sinha and Reddy \(2023\)](#). Studies on creative youth development similarly highlight that arts participation can foster civic engagement, confidence, and social interaction among young people [Heath and Roach \(2019\)](#). The positive attitudes toward performing arts identified in this study may therefore reflect both pedagogical appreciation and the broader cultural significance of performance traditions within student communities.

While the findings provide valuable insights, several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study relies primarily on self-reported survey data, which captures students' perceptions and experiences rather than direct behavioral observation. As a result, reported engagement with performing arts may not always correspond precisely with long-term participation patterns. Second, the study sample represents a specific institutional and regional context, which may limit the generalizability of the results across the diverse landscape of higher education institutions in India. Universities differ significantly in terms of resources, institutional culture, and administrative priorities, factors that may influence patterns of arts engagement. Third, the cross-sectional nature of the data limits the ability to examine long-term changes in engagement patterns as policy implementation evolves. Future research could therefore benefit from longitudinal studies, multi-institutional comparative research, or qualitative investigations examining how performing arts initiatives are implemented within different educational contexts.

Despite these limitations, the findings contribute important empirical insights to contemporary discussions on performing arts education in higher education. The study demonstrates that students generally recognize the educational and cultural value of performing arts participation. However, sustained engagement appears to depend less on abstract policy awareness and more on the institutional conditions that enable artistic participation. Universities

therefore function as critical mediating spaces in which educational policy, pedagogical practice, and cultural activity intersect.

Within the evolving educational framework shaped by the National Education Policy 2020, these findings suggest that the successful integration of performing arts into higher education requires more than policy articulation. It requires sustained institutional investment in cultural infrastructure, interdisciplinary curricula, and supportive pedagogical environments that encourage artistic exploration. By empirically demonstrating how institutional practices interact with broader educational reforms, the study contributes to scholarly discussions within Performance Studies and Arts Education while also offering insights into the practical challenges of implementing arts-integrated educational policies within contemporary university systems.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study investigated students' perceptions, awareness, and engagement with performing arts within higher education institutions, with particular attention to how these patterns are shaped by institutional practices and the broader educational vision articulated in the National Education Policy 2020. The findings provide empirical insight into the relationships among student attitudes toward the performing arts, institutional opportunity structures, and the implementation dynamics of arts-integrated education in contemporary universities.

The results indicate that students widely acknowledge the educational and cultural value of performing arts within the academic environment. Respondents expressed strong support for the role of performing arts in fostering creativity, collaboration, and cultural expression. These perceptions correspond with theoretical perspectives within Performance Studies, where performance is understood as a site of embodied and experiential learning that enables participants to engage with knowledge through practice, interaction, and reflection. Activities such as theatre production, musical collaboration, and dance performance create environments where cognitive, emotional, and social forms of learning intersect, thereby extending educational experience beyond conventional classroom settings.

At the same time, the empirical findings demonstrate that positive perceptions alone do not automatically translate into active participation. The statistical analysis indicates that institutional opportunity structures such as workshops, performance platforms, and institutional encouragement exert a stronger influence on student engagement than awareness of policy initiatives promoting arts-integrated education. This observation suggests that while students may recognize the value of performing arts in principle, their sustained involvement depends largely on the opportunities and resources provided within the institutional environment. Universities that actively facilitate artistic activities and integrate them into academic and co-curricular structures are therefore more likely to cultivate sustained student engagement.

This insight contributes to theoretical discussions in Arts Education and Performance Studies by demonstrating that the pedagogical potential of embodied and experiential learning is closely linked to institutional infrastructures. Much of the existing literature highlights the transformative potential of arts-based learning; however, this study's findings suggest that these pedagogical possibilities become meaningful only when supported by institutional ecosystems that enable participation. In this sense, the research underscores the importance of understanding arts-based pedagogy not merely as a teaching methodology but as an institutional practice that depends on access to cultural spaces, mentorship, and organized opportunities for performance.

The findings also offer insight into the broader policy context of higher education reform. The National Education Policy 2020 presents a comprehensive vision for multidisciplinary education and explicitly advocates integrating arts and culture into academic curricula. However, the results of this study suggest that awareness of such policy initiatives does not significantly influence student participation in performing arts. Instead, institutional initiatives function as the primary mediating mechanism through which policy aspirations are translated into practical educational experiences. This pattern reflects a well-recognized dynamic in educational reform processes: policy frameworks articulate objectives at the national level, but their realization ultimately depends on institutional capacity, administrative priorities, and pedagogical initiatives at the local level.

The cultural environment of Indian universities also provides an important context for interpreting these findings. Campus theatre groups, music societies, dance collectives, and annual cultural festivals often serve as central platforms for artistic participation and social interaction among students. These spaces allow students to engage with both traditional and contemporary performance practices while developing creative and collaborative skills. The positive

attitudes toward performing arts observed in this study may therefore reflect not only pedagogical appreciation but also the broader cultural significance of performance traditions within student communities. When universities actively support such initiatives through institutional programming and infrastructural resources, performing arts can become integrated components of academic and cultural life rather than remaining marginal extracurricular activities.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of this study. The analysis relies on self-reported survey data, which captures perceptions and attitudes rather than direct observation of participation patterns. Such responses may also be influenced by social desirability bias, where respondents express favorable views toward culturally valued activities. Additionally, the study is based on a specific institutional context, and patterns of engagement may vary across universities with different disciplinary compositions, resource availability, and cultural environments. Student engagement with performing arts may also differ across academic disciplines, with students in humanities or arts-related programs potentially demonstrating higher levels of participation than those in technical or professional fields. Future research could address these limitations through comparative studies across multiple institutions, longitudinal analyses examining changes in participation over time, or qualitative investigations exploring how performing arts initiatives are implemented within specific university settings.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes meaningful empirical insight into the role of performing arts within higher education. The findings demonstrate that students have a strong appreciation for the educational value of the performing arts. However, sustained participation depends primarily on institutional environments that provide opportunities for artistic engagement. This suggests that the successful integration of performing arts into higher education requires not only supportive policy frameworks but also sustained institutional commitment to developing cultural infrastructures, interdisciplinary programs, and participatory artistic platforms.

Within the evolving educational landscape shaped by the National Education Policy 2020, universities occupy a critical position in translating policy aspirations into lived educational practices. By demonstrating how institutional opportunity structures mediate student engagement with performing arts, this study highlights the practical pathways through which arts-integrated education can be realized in contemporary higher education systems. The findings, therefore, underscore that meaningful integration of the performing arts within universities ultimately depends on institutions' capacity to cultivate environments in which artistic practice, cultural participation, and academic learning intersect.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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