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## Research Article

## Kaushal Bodh: A New Paradigm for Skill Education in Indian Schools

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### Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has redefined the purpose of school education by emphasizing holistic development, competency-based learning, and the integration of vocational education from the middle stage onwards. In alignment with this vision, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 introduces Kaushal Bodh as a foundational curricular area that enables students to understand the world of work through meaningful, experiential, and interdisciplinary learning. Unlike traditional vocational education, which often focuses on specific trades, Kaushal Bodh promotes the development of life skills, problem-solving abilities, creativity, collaboration, dignity of labour, and entrepreneurial thinking. It integrates hands-on activities with academic learning, encouraging students to explore occupations, technologies, local crafts, and community services. This article examines the conceptual framework of Kaushal Bodh, its alignment with NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023, its pedagogical implications, and its potential to transform school education into a more relevant, inclusive, and future-ready system. The article also highlights the role of teachers in implementing Kaushal Bodh through experiential and competency-based pedagogies.

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**KEYWORDS:** Kaushal Bodh, Skill Education, NEP 2020, NCF-SE 2023, Experiential Learning, Competency-Based Education, Vocational Education

## INTRODUCTION

Education in the twenty-first century extends beyond academic achievement to include the development of practical competencies, ethical values, and employability skills. Recognising this need, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates the integration of vocational education into mainstream schooling and recommends that every learner should have exposure to the world of work from an early stage (Ministry of Education, 2020). Supporting this vision, the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 introduces Kaushal Bodh as a structured curricular component for the middle stage of schooling.

Kaushal Bodh represents a paradigm shift from learning *about* work to learning *through* work. It seeks to cultivate curiosity, creativity, responsibility, and appreciation for different forms of labour while enabling learners to connect classroom concepts with real-life experiences.

### Understanding Kaushal Bodh

The term Kaushal Bodh literally means "understanding of skills." It is not confined to vocational training but aims to develop an informed understanding of work, occupations, production processes, technology, and community engagement. The framework encourages learners to appreciate the dignity of labour while acquiring practical competencies essential for lifelong learning.

NCF-SE 2023 organises Kaushal Bodh around three broad domains:

- Life Forms – agriculture, biodiversity, food systems, health, and environmental sustainability.
- Machines and Materials – tools, engineering concepts, manufacturing, repair, digital technologies, and design.
- Human Services – healthcare, education, tourism, hospitality, financial services, and community welfare.

These domains provide students with opportunities to explore diverse occupations through observation, projects, field visits, and hands-on activities.

### Alignment with NEP 2020

NEP 2020 envisions an education system that equips learners with both academic knowledge and practical competencies. It recommends that vocational exposure should begin from Grade 6 through internships, local crafts, and experiential learning opportunities (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Kaushal Bodh operationalises these recommendations by integrating skill education into the regular curriculum rather than treating it as a separate subject. This integration enables students to:

- develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- understand the relevance of academic concepts in everyday life;
- appreciate local occupations and indigenous knowledge systems;
- build entrepreneurial and innovation capabilities; and
- become responsible and productive citizens.

Thus, Kaushal Bodh supports the transition from rote memorisation to competency-based education.

### Pedagogical Approaches

The successful implementation of Kaushal Bodh requires learner-centred pedagogies that actively engage students in authentic experiences. NCF-SE 2023 recommends several approaches, including experiential learning, project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, collaborative learning, and community participation.

Students may investigate local occupations, interview artisans, prepare simple prototypes, conduct surveys, or solve real-life problems. Reflection, discussion, documentation, and presentation are equally important components of the learning process.

Teachers function as facilitators who design meaningful learning experiences rather than merely transmitting information. Such pedagogies foster creativity, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and decision-making skills, which are increasingly valued in the twenty-first-century workplace.

### Assessment in Kaushal Bodh

Assessment in Kaushal Bodh is competency-based and continuous. Rather than focusing solely on written examinations, it evaluates students' ability to apply knowledge in authentic contexts.

Assessment methods include:

- observation of practical activities;
- project portfolios;
- reflective journals;
- presentations;
- peer assessment;
- self-assessment; and
- teacher feedback.

These approaches provide a comprehensive picture of learners' cognitive, psychomotor, and socio-emotional development while encouraging continuous improvement.

### Interdisciplinary Learning

One of the distinguishing features of Kaushal Bodh is its interdisciplinary nature. Skill-based activities naturally integrate concepts from mathematics, science, social science, languages, and arts.

For example, while designing a rainwater harvesting model, students apply mathematical measurement, scientific principles of water conservation, communication skills for reporting, and artistic skills for presentation. Similarly, local market surveys involve data collection, percentage calculations, graphical representation, and financial literacy.

Such integration enhances conceptual understanding while making learning meaningful and contextually relevant.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

Despite its transformative potential, implementing Kaushal Bodh presents several challenges. Many schools require better infrastructure, teaching-learning materials, community

partnerships, and teacher capacity-building. Assessment practices also need to evolve from examination-oriented approaches to competency-based evaluation.

To address these challenges, schools should establish collaborations with local industries, artisans, entrepreneurs, agricultural institutions, and service providers. Regular professional development programmes should equip teachers with the pedagogical skills necessary for experiential and interdisciplinary learning. Digital resources, flexible curricula, and contextualised learning materials can further strengthen implementation.

## CONCLUSION

Kaushal Bodh represents a significant milestone in India's educational reforms by placing skills, work, and experiential learning at the heart of school education. Rooted in the vision of NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023, it seeks to develop learners who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible, innovative, and future-ready.

By integrating practical experiences with classroom learning, Kaushal Bodh nurtures respect for work, strengthens employability skills, and promotes holistic development. Its successful implementation depends on empowered teachers, supportive school leadership, community participation, and competency-based assessment practices. As India moves towards a knowledge-driven and skill-oriented economy, Kaushal Bodh has the potential to transform schools into vibrant spaces where learning becomes meaningful, relevant, and connected to life.

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