

SWOT ANALYSIS OF MUSIC EDUCATION

**Dr. Arati Mishra¹, Sangeeta Pandit², Dr. Kumar Sargam³, Dr. Ruchi Upadhyay⁴
and Dr. Sabiha Alam Choudhary⁵**

¹Assistant Professor, Department Of Education, Mizoram University Aizawl

²Professor, Head of Department Vocal Music, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

³Assistant Professor, Department of Performing Arts, Lovey Professional University, Punjab

⁴Assistant Professor, Arya Mahila P.G. College, Varanasi

⁵Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Mizoram University, Aizawl

Abstract

Music education is an instrument that is very operational in transforming the style and impact of education in higher education it has the aim of empowering the cultural values as well as cognitive development in student who opt for music curriculum in higher studies. The SWOT analysis of Music Education is to study the strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Music Education at the university level. It is evident that the universities have rushed to implement this program, resulting in syllabuses that do not fulfil the goals of the NEP-2020 for making recommendations for such programs thus the focus of the analysis is from the perspective of the Education department or Education faculties that include music education as an essential component of the curriculum.

Keywords: Music, Music Education, National Education Policy, NEP 2020, Education Department, Bachelor of Education, B.Ed., Multidisciplinary Experience, Education Curriculum, Specially-abled

Music as an Enabler in Education

Music can be an important tool to influence the education pedagogy by employing musical skills musical and tools as a communication enabler¹. This can help in a variety of ways some of which are listed below.

i. Helps in Simplifying Concepts

This is especially useful in primary education where we see many instances of musical and rhythmic communication between the students and teachers to educate on concepts that are very new and complex for the young mind (such as alphabets). Singing activities can communicate pattern, order, or system and can be used for concept breakdown.

ii. Can Help in Memorizing

Substituting a concept or formula with rhythmic acronyms or a musical tune can help in memorizing. A very common example of this is substituting the words of a song that can stay on the top of your mind with the elements of the concept of the formula that you need to memorize. This methodology not just works at the primary

education level but is equally popular when memorizing complex chemical reactions and formulae at the higher and senior secondary levels.ⁱⁱ

iii. Sparks Creative Problem Solving

Application of music to understanding and applying fundamentals can in more than one way spark creative thinking and problem among school students.

iv. Helps in Group Identification

Singing while learning can impart a sense of group identification and can be useful in driving group activities.

v. Encourages Higher Order Thinking

Music as a tool can engage the student to search for pathways for connections resulting in deeper understanding. Even a song set to the poetry of a particular historic period can easily paint the picture of the times and essentially provide a background on which the events in the history books take place. Even then, there are so many historical legends moulded into poetry and melodies that are still popular. Employing the familiarization and practicing of these songs can very easily make the students remember historical events, sequences of events, and the consequences of those events.

vi. Can Help Students Develop Social and Emotional Skills.

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) emphasis the need to use innovative and experimental approaches to teaching. It suggests employing gamification of activities and inculcating cultural aspects such as storytelling and music.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Current Landscape - Education Department and Music Education

Given such defining influence, it is only obvious that the education department across various Indian universities includes music as an integral part of the course curriculum. The NEP 2020 also emphasizes and outlines the same.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to use the SWOT model (strength, weakness, opportunities, threats)^{iv} for analyzing the current situation of music education as a part of the integrated Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programs across Indian universities. The analysis will be from the perspective of the education departments themselves, the faculties that teach these courses, and the students (or participants) of the B.Ed. program.

SWOT Analysis methodology and application to Music Education

The SWOT analysis can provide useful inputs to all the stakeholders such as B.Ed. students who would become school teachers, management of schools and universities as well as policymakers. The SWOT analysis can help in ascertaining the impact of the current landscape on future planning and financial planning. It helps to understand the placement of the subject on hand as per one's strengths and weaknesses. The objective is to convert the strength into opportunities and not allow the weaknesses to become a victim of the threats.

Strengths are factors that have a positive effect on achieving the objectives.

Weaknesses are factors that have a negative effect on achieving the objectives.

Opportunities are external factors that have a positive impact on achieving the objectives.

Threats are external factors that have a negative impact on achieving the objectives.

For each stakeholder, the study tries to look at the positions of strength, visible weaknesses, opportunities for improvement and impact, and the threats to achieving the objectives of the inclusion of music education in the B.Ed. program.

For the SWOT model, the study looks at the experience of the faculties and participants of such integrated B.Ed. programs. The review of NEP 2020 also provides a lot of perspective on the objectives of such programs. Placing these objectives against the experience of the faculties and participants gives a clear picture of the SWOT assessment.

Strengths

1. Music as a Subject in the Outlined Curriculum for Education

The landscape of music as a part of the B.Ed. curriculum finds ample support in thought and policymaking as can be concluded from the NEP 2020. Innovative and experimental means such as music to impart the education of other subjects such as language, mathematics, social sciences or sciences finds endorsement from the NEP 2020. This puts these B.Ed. courses at a decisive pedestal where they have a huge opportunity to impact and improve the education scenario at the school level.

2. Availability of Graduates to Fill the Academic Posts in Universities

For such integrated courses, there is a huge availability of talented, educated graduates from the field of performing arts and fine arts. These graduates can be employed by the education faculty to fulfil the objectives of the NEP 2020 and to bring in a fresh perspective to their approach to planning and practicing education.

3. Multidisciplinary Experience

Multidisciplinary learning consists of studying a single topic from the viewpoint of more than one discipline. Such an approach to learning and teaching can invoke holistic learning. It also goes a long way in promoting collaborative skills. School teachers who have undergone a multidisciplinary graduation degree bring in multiple perspectives to their professional responsibilities. Such people work together and create a harmonious, productive, and positive work environment.^v

A multidisciplinary approach to education is also very effective for specially-abled people. Such an approach can greatly benefit those students who take a lot of time and effort to grab and make use of concepts. A multidisciplinary approach can greatly empower such teachers and schools that are for the specially-abled.^{vi} This will also be a boon to those university students who are specially-abled, as the inclusion of this curriculum can greatly simplify things for their needs and unlock their best potential.

All candidates for the integrated B.Ed. program undergo a multidisciplinary experience. Since their major could be in a subject completely different from music, such as languages, science, or geography, music education can bring in a fresh perspective to the methodologies of communicating that they intend to practice when on the job as teachers in schools. A multidisciplinary experience also strengthens their prospects for teaching jobs and enhances their on-job performance.

Weaknesses

1. Absence of a Common and Standardized Curriculum

The curriculum for music education as a part of the B.Ed. program is highly unorganized. Most of the universities that have these integrated programs have their unique curriculum. This could have been developed by some of their faculties or could have been adopted from another institution. This makes it very difficult to establish standard operating principles for training the B.Ed. participants. This brings inequality in the level of preparedness among the participants that are graduating from different universities as the course curriculum in one university can be superior and more effective in fulfilling its objectives when compared to the other.

2. Distraction from the Objectives of Music Education in B.Ed. Curriculum

In the absence of a common standardized syllabus, and due to the demands of universities to introduce music education as soon as possible for B.Ed. participants, the syllabus suffers and sometimes significantly divulges from its objective. A common practice is a quick and easy tabulation of standard music theories and a few exercises so that the syllabus can be compiled and completed on time as expected by the universities. Thus, the focus gets shifted from using music as a skill

to enhance communication and other practices in the realm of education to a mere revision of standard music theories and practical exercises that expect the participant to put up a decent musical performance. This takes away the reason for including music education in B.Ed. where the expectation is to employ music as a tool to unlock better and effective teaching whatever the subject may be – the goal is to produce better maths teachers, better English teachers, better science teachers, and not better music teachers or a subject teacher who can perform music.

Opportunities

1. An Enhanced and Impactful Career for B.Ed. Participants

An integrated B.Ed. course provides up skilling that unlocks many career opportunities in primary and middle school. As discussed earlier, following the integrated B.Ed. approach gives a multidisciplinary experience to the B.Ed. participant and thus promises a better career. Due to the focus of schools towards holistic and innovative education techniques, candidates with such an academic experience definitely fare better chances at the selection. They also perform better in their subject as well as get the opportunity to contribute in the management and coordination of various extracurricular activities which are very popular in schools nowadays.

2. Professional Opportunities for B.Ed. Participants

Participants graduating with a B.Ed. degree with integrated courses on music have better prospects of teaching jobs in schools. This is partly due to the changing orientation of schools, where the focus on extracurricular activities expects the teachers for subjects that are necessarily not related to arts, to be able to manage, coordinate and conduct such extracurricular activities and functions. In such a scenario the inclusion of music in the curriculum not just improves the job prospects, but also enables the participants to put up a good performance when doing their job as teachers due to their knowledge of the subject matter.

3. Opportunities Unlocked by NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 aims that by 2030, the multidisciplinary integrated B.Ed. will be the minimum educational qualification for school teachers. ^{vii}

This opens an opportunity in the below domains

- Standardization of the syllabus with the help of teachers and faculty.
- NRF to fund quality research in this area.
- Proposal to develop dual degree B.Ed. programs in these subjects including music.

4. Curriculum Standardization

In light of the existing landscape on no common syllabus, and in line with the expectation of the NEP 2020 to have multidisciplinary integrated B.Ed. as a minimum

qualification for school teachers by 2030, there is a huge scope for working on the syllabus. The best practices from various universities and aspects of the different syllabuses across universities need to be consolidated into one common program. This activity will provide an opportunity to check the alignment with the objectives of music education in the B.Ed. curriculum. This will also provide a chance to look at developing an individual syllabus for each subject and hire individual faculties for each course, in addition to providing the B.Ed. participants the choice to opt from these courses. This will improve the performance of both the participants and faculty and will relieve them of unnecessary pressures and expectations.

5. Elevating the Standard of Education in Schools for specially-abled

The multidisciplinary approach to education can be very useful for specially-abled students as discussed above. This is one major strength of this course that empowers teachers and schools that cater to such students. There is a huge opportunity for a large scale improvement in the overall quality of education for the specially-abled. Currently, the students and teachers struggle with the conventional methods and can greatly benefit from the application of music to teach and learn. Music can greatly benefit an inclusive classroom and give the specially-abled a chance to deliver their best.^{viii}

Threats

1. Pressure on University Faculties Due to Clubbing of Various Subjects into One Syllabus

Due to the absence of a standardized syllabus, some university systems have gone ahead with clubbing the subjects under the NEP 2020 recommendations into a single course. While this practice has a toll on the B.Ed. participants since they can neither concentrate on the part of the subject that interests or supports their techniques, but instead they have to go through the course contents of that part of the syllabus they are not interested in or not comfortable in. A similar situation is faced by the faculty who is hired to teach such courses. This can be understood through a common and relatable example. If a university decides to merge music, dance, and theatre into a single course as a part of integrated B.Ed., it would be difficult for the hired faculty to do justice to the course since his/her specialization would be in only one of the performing or fine arts subjects. Similarly, for the B.Ed. participant who is good at music but has to get through the course content for dance as well as theatre, it seems like a waste of opportunity and time.

2. Not Offering Other Options to the B.Ed. Participants in Addition to Music

It is true that training in being able to employ musical techniques while teaching might not be everybody's cup of tea. While some university systems give participants the option to choose from music, dance, theatre, or fine arts, others either have just one choice, or all of the choices are club B.Ed. together into a single syllabus. Either

way, participants who do not wish to take up music education as an optional subject suffer. A participant could be more comfortable taking up dance or theatre education but is forced to take up music education as no other choice is available. This not just puts unnecessary pressure on the participant, but also impacts the energy morale of the rest of the class.

3. Unrealistic Expectations from B.Ed. Participants under a Club B.Ed. Syllabus

Not all the participants might be comfortable with music techniques and they might have their preferred tools such as dance, poetry, or theatre. Such participants go through the unnecessary toll of attending lectures for music education. Many a time they lack the minimum skills and competency for such a course. To sum up, the approach does to leverage the best out of the participants, instead tries to implement a one size fits all approach. This method fails to explore the potential of the participants who might show a very appreciable performance if given a chance to opt for dance education or theatre education, as their preference might be. Such participants can also significantly impact the morale of the other students in the class and overall impact the energy of the classes and the progress of the curriculum.

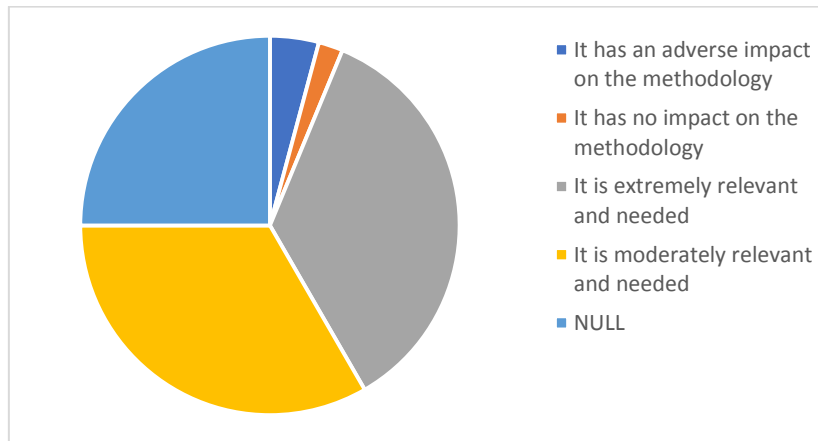
4. Faculty Teaching Experience Is Dampened Due to No Standard Curriculum

Since the curriculum in most universities is different from the other, a faculty with teaching experience in one university might not find themselves suitable for a similar post in another university since the course could be very different and their prior experience might end up being significantly irrelevant. This is dangerous and can impact the teaching career of the university faculties who might want to migrate due to the availability of better opportunities or due to other reasons. It would be very difficult to deal with a position where you are applying for a teaching job at a university for the same course that you taught before yet your teaching is not relevant as the curriculum here is different. This dilutes all your past efforts, research, projects and can also hamper your chances of negotiating better pay amongst many other things. The unpredictability of the career with regards to this may also prevent talented candidates from applying for teaching jobs in universities to teach such courses. To attract fresh talent and candidates who has a comprehensive knowledge of their subject, the clouds on the relevance of experience from one place to another must be cleared.

Survey:

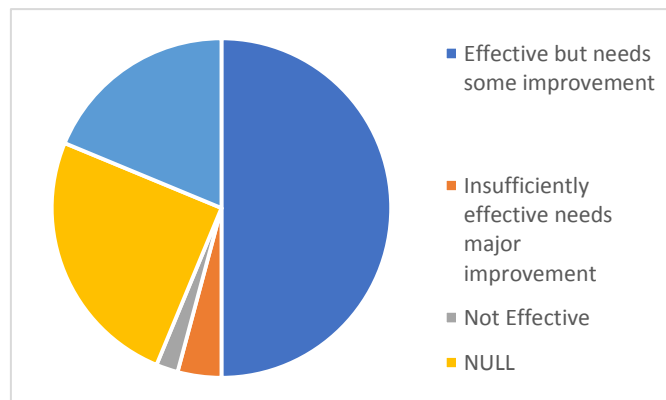
In order to validate the theoretical implications and to provide an empirical angle to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for Music Education at the university level, a survey was conducted on the students at the university level, the findings of which are explained below:

Effectiveness of the inclusion of the course on Music Education as a part of the B.Ed. curriculum



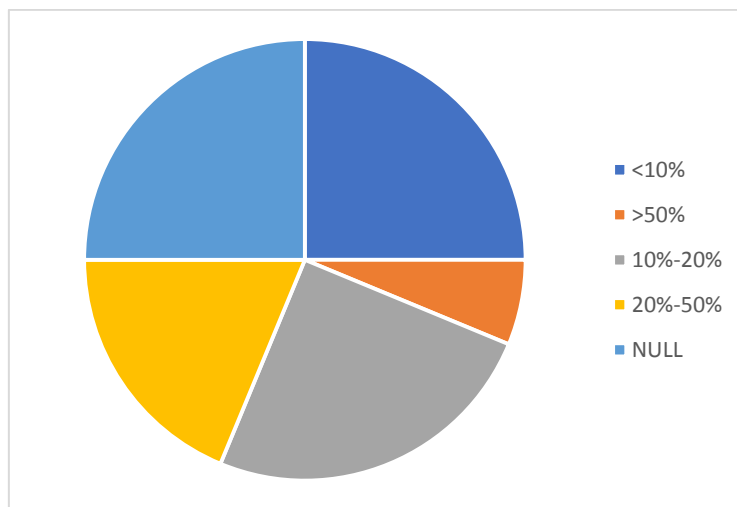
It was found that out of the 48 participants who has responded to the survey, majority of them responded that Music Education is indeed an integral part of the education system and needs to be included in the B.Ed. curriculum and it was found that only 2% of the total participants responded that music education does not play any important role in the B.Ed. curriculum

1. Current curriculum of Music Education in the course in fulfilling NEP objectives of a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to pursuing the B.Ed. degree

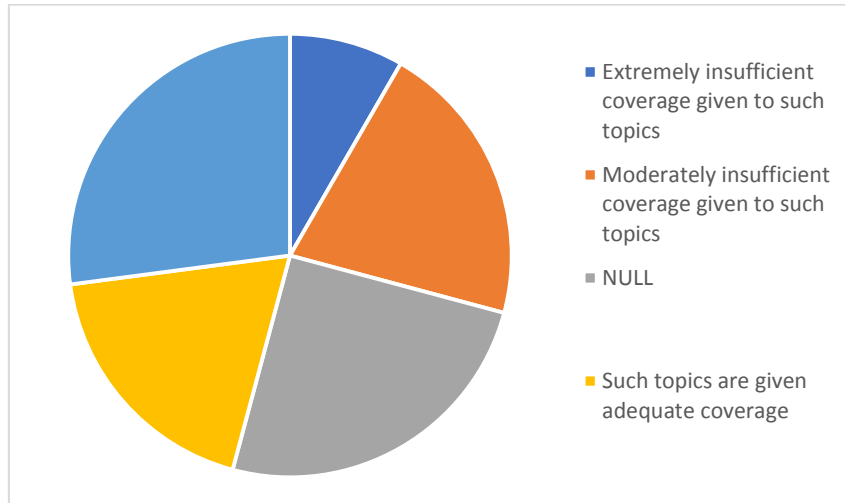


To this question it was found that half of the participants who responded were of the opinion that the present curriculum is effective but it indeed needs significant improvement in order to reflect the ideologies and goals of the current NEP.

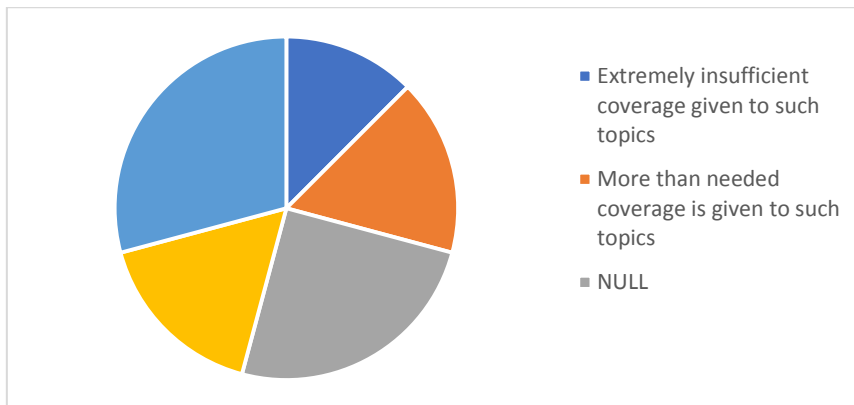
1. Duration of academic time in the Music Education course is spent on practical projects and case studies



2. Sufficiency of the application-based topic in the Music Education curriculum as a part of the B.Ed. Degree course

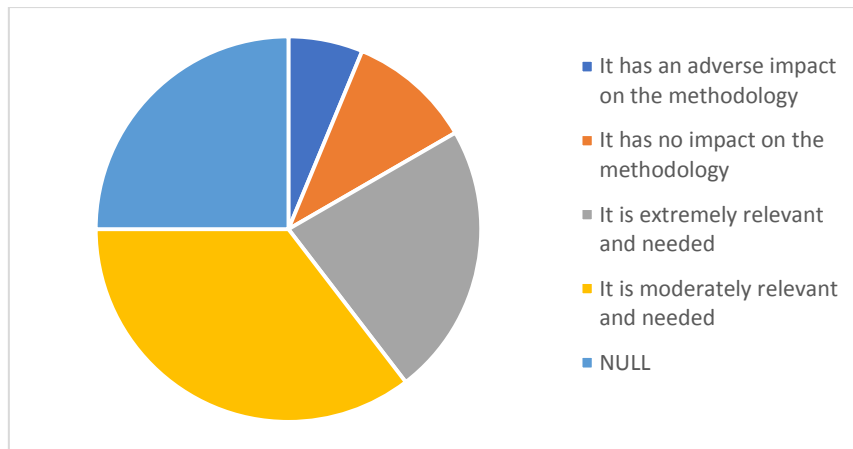


3. Sufficiency of topics such as music theory and music performance in the Music Education curriculum as a part of the B.Ed. Degree course



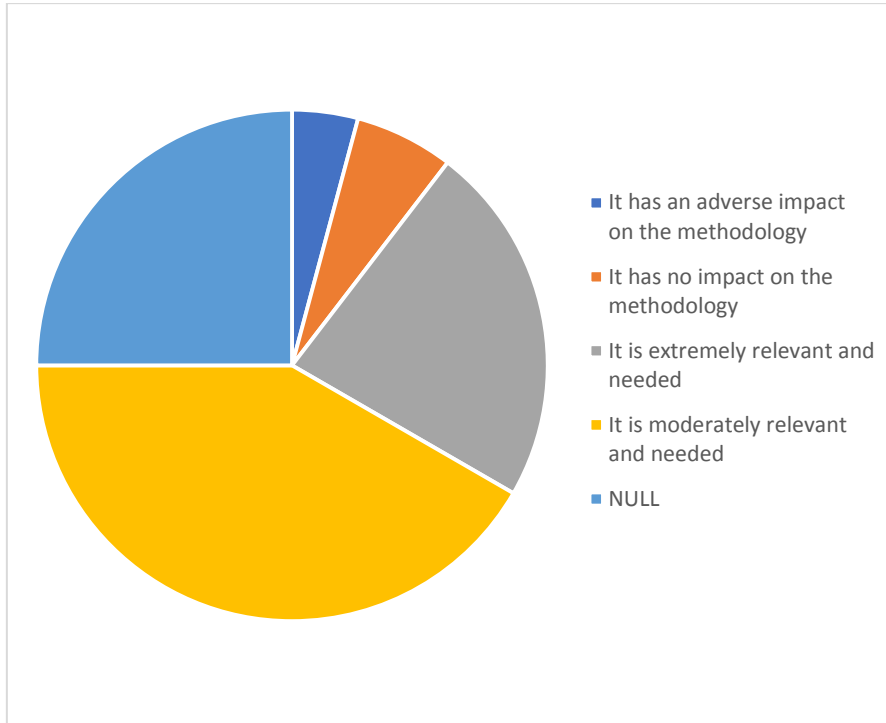
To the above question majority of the participants responded that there more and more demand and requirement of including topics pertaining to the field of Music Education in the B.Ed. curriculum? But there was a good percentage of students who preferred not to respond to the same and felt that there wouldn't be much of difference.

4. Effectiveness is the introduction of the course on Dance Education as a part of the B.Ed. curriculum

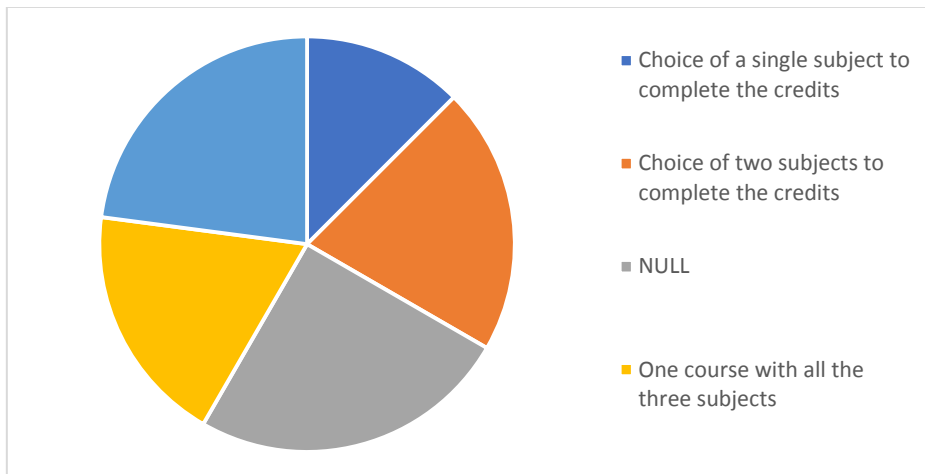


To this a good percentage of students responded that Dance education is moderately relevant in the education curriculum, but did feel that it has relevance and makes a difference.

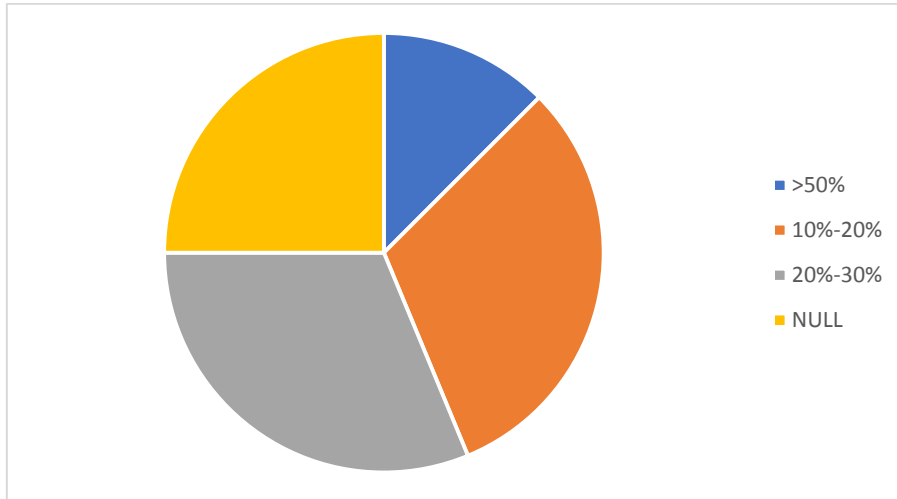
5. Effectiveness is the introduction of the course on Theatre Education as a part of the B.Ed. curriculum



6. Inclusion of Music Education, Dance Education, and Theatre Education as a part of the curriculum be during B.Ed. Degree

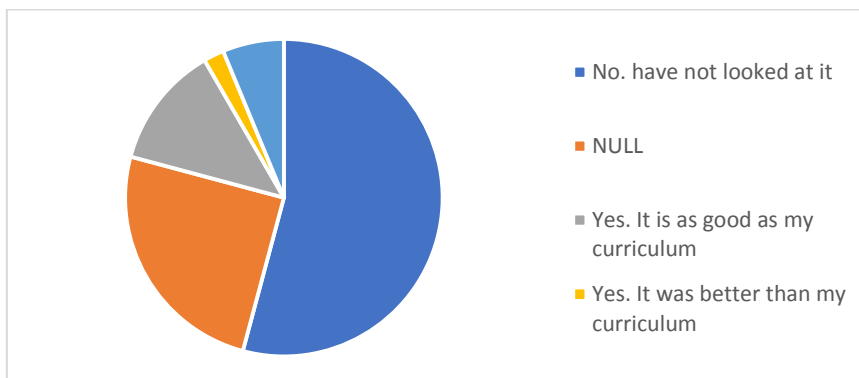


7. Percentage of academic credits should be comprised of multidisciplinary courses



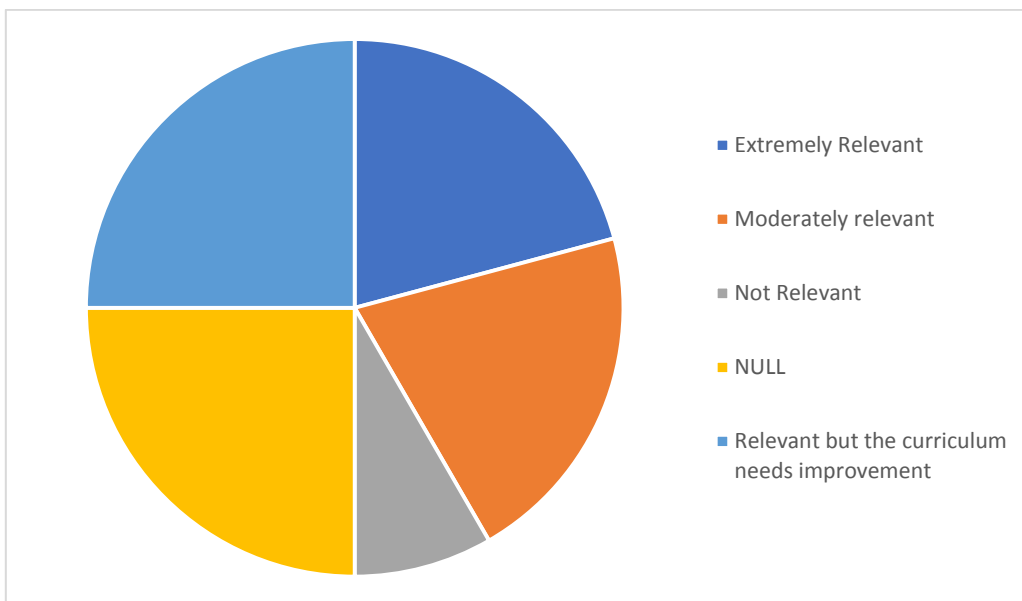
It was found that majority of the respondents felt that around 10 to 20% of the academic credits should be comprised of multidisciplinary courses. Also majority of the students responded that around 20 to 30 % of the credits can be allotted to courses which are multidisciplinary.

8. Music Education curriculum of other universities' B.Ed. programs

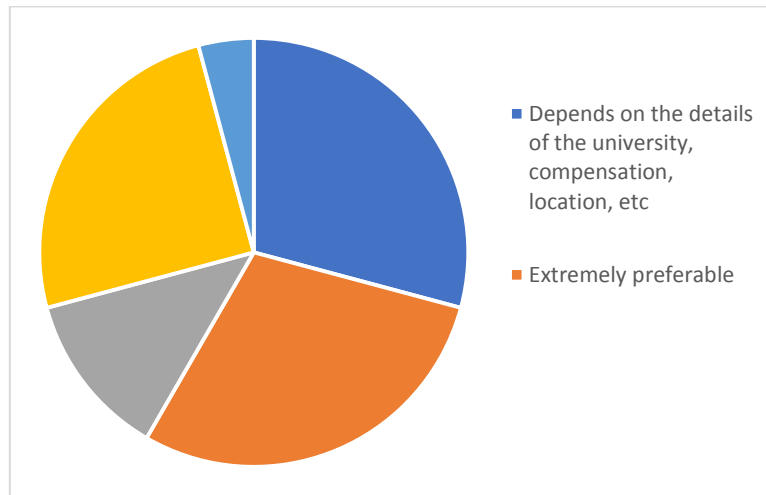


A good percentage of the students responded that they were not familiar and had not looked at the curriculum of Music Education of other universities but the highest percentage reported that they found the curriculum of other universities more appealing and better as compared to theirs.

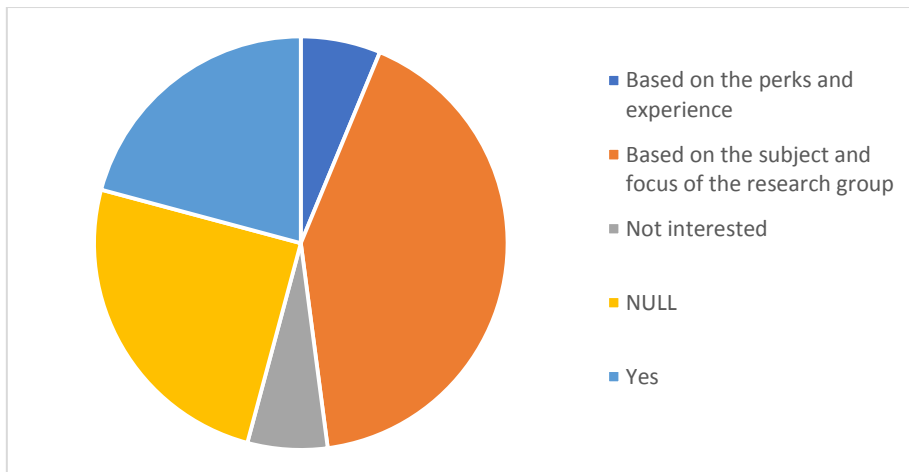
9. Effectiveness of the course on Music Education for industry readiness



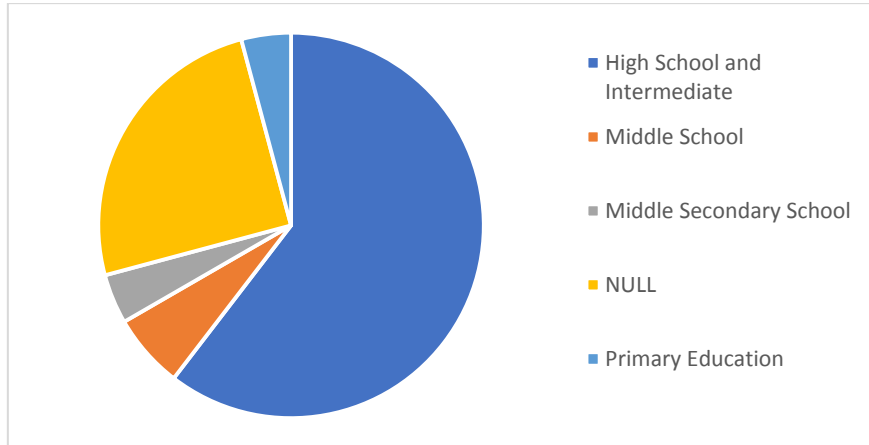
10. How preferable is it for a student graduating in performing arts to pursue an academic teaching career in the Education Department as the faculty of Music Education



11. Would you prefer to be a part of a research group for traveling and applying the NEP Objectives



12. What kind of educational category do you aspire to make your career in



Majority of the participant responded to the last question of the survey that they wished and aspired to make their career in the educational category of High school and intermediate level.

Thus from the survey it can be concluded that Music Education and the inclusion of the components of Music and its relevance is indeed considered by the students as an important part of their holistic educational attainment. But it has been seen that there might be a greater level of awareness required to be initiated at the state and central level wherein the students at different stages of their educational life in their schools become aware of the value of incorporating music as a part of their learning process and not consider it as a side or complementary subject or area, but consider it as a very relevant and integral part of their holistic development.

Conclusion

Music education is a tool that is very effective in transforming the style and impact of education in schools. Teachers with a graduate degree that has a curriculum on music education will find themselves highly empowered when mastering their communication. They will find it easier to work with children and will find a way to keep the class active and energetic. This approach is not just effective for students and teachers of primary education but also useful for secondary school. Even higher secondary complex mathematical and science concepts can be simplified with this approach.

The NEP has prioritized the integrated B.Ed. program. Music education is one of the defining aspects of this curriculum and approach. It is evident that the universities have rushed to implement this program, resulting in syllabuses that do not fulfil the goals of the NEP for making recommendations for such programs. Such an

approach jeopardizes the objectives and adversely impacts the experience of the faculties as well as the participants of the B.Ed. program.

With the policy now in favour of music education in B.Ed., this opens an opportunity for improvement and standardization of curriculum to start with. It also opens an array of teaching positions in universities, positions in research cells that music graduates can apply and compete for. With the renewed policy focus on music education in B.Ed. and with the careful balance of the strength and weaknesses, the objectives of this approach to education can be met if we are alert to the opportunities and mindful of the threats.

REFERENCES:

- Bertelsen, B. (2012). *Everything you need to know about SWOT analysis*. Newmarket, Ontario : BrainMass Inc.
- Blokdyk, G. (2018). *Swot Analysis: A Clear and Concise Reference*. California ,USA: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Minnesota, U. o. (2008). *SWOT analysis: a tool for making better business decisions*. Minneapolis: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Risk Management Agency.
- Nadine Pahl, A. R. (2007). *Swot Analysis - Idea, Methodology and a Practical Approach*. Norderstedt Germany: GRIN Verlag.
- Sarsby, A. (2016, October 19). *SWOT Analysis*. Retrieved from lulu.com: <https://www.lulu.com/en/us/shop/alan-sarsby/swot-analysis/paperback/product-1g8mw6e5.html?page=1&pageSize=4>