English Studies Rewired from Canon to Career: Toward Interdisciplinary and Employable Learning

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Abstract

In the context of India's rapidly evolving higher education landscape, English literary studies must undergo fundamental transformation to remain socially relevant and professionally viable. This study explores the urgent need for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in reimagining English curricula to enhance the employability and future-readiness of graduates. Drawing on thematic content analysis of national policy documents like NEP 2020, curricular frameworks, and faculty interviews across five Indian universities, the research reveals a persistent gap between policy vision and institutional practice. While some innovative efforts exist, most English departments continue to operate within traditional, text-centric frameworks that inadequately prepare students for contemporary challenges. The discussion incorporates theoretical insights from interdisciplinary education, constructivist pedagogy, and critical humanism to argue for a curriculum model that integrates literary study with digital skills, media literacy, social enquiry, and ethical reflection. The study concludes with concrete suggestions for curricular innovation, industry-academia collaboration, and institutional reform. It ultimately positions English literary studies as a dynamic, critical, and integrative field essential for producing culturally literate, professionally agile, and socially responsible graduates.

Keywords: curriculum innovation, digital pedagogy, humanities education reform, critical pedagogy, liberal arts transformation, experiential learning, cross-disciplinary engagement, cultural literacy, professional pathways in humanities

Introduction

English literary studies in India are at a critical crossroads. Traditionally rooted in the canon of British literature and formalist criticism, the discipline has struggled to adapt to the shifting expectations of students, educators, and employers in an increasingly globalized and digitized world. With the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, knowledge production and professional roles have become fluid, cross-disciplinary, and technologically mediated. As such, English graduates—while often equipped with strong reading and writing skills— frequently lack the interdisciplinary, digital, and professional competencies that contemporary workplaces demand. The disconnect between traditional curricula and real-world requirements has led to growing concerns about the employability and future-readiness of humanities students.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognizes this gap and calls for a more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary approach to higher education. Its vision of a liberal education rooted in *critical thinking, creativity, and communication* directly aligns with the core strengths of English Studies. However, to realize this potential, English departments must expand their pedagogical and

curricular boundaries. This entails moving beyond the narrow study of canonical texts toward integrated engagements with fields such as media and communication studies, digital humanities, environmental humanities, translation studies, philosophy, and social sciences. An interdisciplinary curriculum not only enriches literary understanding but also provides students with diverse perspectives and practical tools for a wide range of careers.

Transdisciplinarity goes a step further, enabling students to transcend academic boundaries altogether and engage with complex real-world problems using a blend of humanistic and technological methods. In the Indian context, this could involve connecting literary narratives with contemporary social justice movements, ecological crises, or digital cultures—thus positioning literary studies as both a reflective and an action-oriented discipline.

This research investigates how English literary studies in India can be reimagined through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary curriculum design to produce graduates who are not only academically strong but also *professionally versatile and socially engaged*. Through a critical review of policies, programmes, institutional practices, and academic literature, this study identifies the key challenges and transformative possibilities for English departments across the country. Ultimately, the paper aims to contribute to the ongoing dialogue on reforming humanities education in India for a more inclusive, adaptive, and future-ready academic landscape.

Review of Related Literature

The transformation of English literary studies in India requires a conscious departure from rigid disciplinary silos toward more interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches that align with contemporary global trends and national educational imperatives. Scholars and educators increasingly emphasize that English studies must incorporate not only literary traditions and critical theory, but also skills and competencies that make students more adaptable, employment-ready, and future-focused. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates for a holistic and multidisciplinary approach to undergraduate education, explicitly stating that there should be "no hard separation between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, and between vocational and academic streams" (Ministry of Education, 2020). This marks a significant shift toward curriculum models that bridge knowledge systems and practical applications.

Varghese and Musthafa (2021) assert that digital literacy and technological intelligence are essential components of future-ready education. Their study highlights the need to integrate media literacy, content creation, and digital tools into humanities curricula. In the context of English studies, this means embedding modules in digital humanities, online publishing, content strategy, and visual communication to equip students with the competencies demanded in contemporary knowledge economies. Their findings suggest that when literary studies intersect with digital platforms, students acquire not only analytical skills but also practical know-how for diverse career paths.

Barad (2023) further emphasizes that the scope of English studies has expanded beyond canonical literature to include fields such as film studies, visual culture, media discourse, translation, and environmental humanities. He advocates for a curriculum that encourages students to read literature in dialogue with historical, political, technological, and ecological concerns. This multidisciplinary expansion, he argues, fosters creativity, critical enquiry, and cultural literacy—all essential for navigating the complexities of contemporary life. Barad underscores that such curriculum transformation also prepares students for professions in media, communication, research, and education that demand interdisciplinary thinking.

Concrete examples of this pedagogical shift can be seen in curricular reforms across Indian universities. Rajasthan University, for example, recently launched a postgraduate programme in Comparative Literature under the NEP framework, combining classical Indian texts with Western literary traditions. This initiative is grounded in the

principles of cross-cultural literacy and interdisciplinarity, and aims to make English studies more contextually grounded and globally relevant (*Times of India*, 2025). Similarly, Christ University and Brainware University have redesigned their English programmes to include media studies, gender studies, translation studies, and internship-based learning. These reforms reflect an understanding that disciplinary rigidity limits graduate employability and that the humanities must remain responsive to social, cultural, and technological change.

A more philosophical and global approach is offered by Ghosh (2016, 2017, 2020), who argues for a transcultural and transdisciplinary reorientation of English studies. Drawing on his work in comparative literature and philosophy, Ghosh proposes the idea of "trans(in)fusion"—an epistemological framework that merges critical theory, environmental thinking, Indian knowledge systems, and Western literary traditions. He envisions English literary studies as a space where disciplinary boundaries dissolve to accommodate a more inclusive and dialogic mode of thinking. Ghosh's work challenges both colonial legacies and global capitalist imperatives by advocating for pedagogy rooted in ethical awareness, intercultural dialogue, and civic imagination.

Collectively, these studies reinforce the need to reimagine English literary studies in India through a model that balances disciplinary depth with interdisciplinary breadth. Literature cannot be studied in isolation from the worlds it represents, critiques, or transforms. An interdisciplinary curriculum allows English graduates to acquire not only cultural capital but also the critical, communicative, digital, and ethical skills needed for a range of emerging professions. As English departments across the country seek to align with the NEP and global academic trends, this body of literature provides both the rationale and the direction for implementing meaningful curricular transformation.
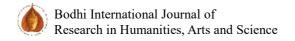
Knowledge Gap Identified

The review of literature reveals a growing recognition of the need to reform English literary studies in India through interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches. Scholars such as Ghosh (2016, 2017, 2020), Barad (2023), and Varghese & Musthafa (2021) have emphasized the importance of integrating digital tools, cultural studies, and social relevance into the humanities curriculum. However, despite these theoretical propositions and policy-level directives, there remains a significant gap between academic discourse and actual implementation at the institutional level. Most studies focus on the potential benefits of curriculum reform, yet few provide empirical data on how such reforms are being adopted, resisted, or experienced by faculty and students in real-time. Moreover, there is limited investigation into how curriculum changes intersect with employability outcomes and student aspirations across diverse institutional types like public vs. private universities. The absence of localized, grounded research that captures stakeholder voices—particularly those of teachers and students—creates a disconnect between policy vision and pedagogical practice. This study addresses this gap by offering a context-specific, evidence-based analysis of how English departments in India are responding (or not) to the demands of interdisciplinarity and employability within the framework of NEP 2020.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design rooted in thematic content analysis, drawing data from policy documents, university curriculum frameworks, academic journals, and interviews with faculty members from selected Indian universities. The rationale behind this methodology lies in its ability to generate rich, interpretive insights into evolving academic practices and curricular paradigms, particularly within the context of English literary studies.

Primary sources include the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Draft Curriculum Framework for the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme

(FYUGP), syllabi from BA and MA English programmes at public and private universities, and institutional reports from leading Indian academic bodies. In addition, semi-structured interviews with 12 English faculty members across five universities (two public, two private, one deemed) were conducted to gather perspectives on curriculum reforms, student readiness, interdisciplinary collaboration, and employability outcomes. It is attached in the appendix section.

Section A: Background

1. F1–F5: Senior professors (10–20 years of experience), mostly teach British literature, literary theory, and Indian writing.
2. F6–F9: Mid-career faculty (5–10 years), involved in curriculum revision and electives like Literature and Film, or Media Studies.
3. F10–F12: Early-career faculty (1–4 years), teach foundational courses and are trained in digital or comparative humanities.

Section B: Perceptions of Current Curriculum

1. F1: "The curriculum is too rigid—still stuck in the canon. Students do not connect with the texts anymore."
2. F2: "Our curriculum does not speak to the world students live in. There is no room for creativity or professional relevance."
3. F3: "There is minimal engagement with other departments. Literature is still taught in isolation."
4. F8: "We added a few optional courses, but they are marginalized. Core papers remain untouched."
5. F12: "Students frequently ask about content creation, film, or even AI—none of which we're addressing."

Section C: Experience with Interdisciplinary/ Transdisciplinary Teaching

1. F4: "I co-taught a course with the sociology department. It was energizing, but coordinating across departments is hard."
2. F6: "We started a Literature and Media Studies course. Students were enthusiastic, but admin support was lukewarm."
3. F10: "No interdisciplinary experience yet, though I am interested. As a junior faculty, I do not have the freedom to propose such changes."
4. F11: "We need training. Many colleagues fear digital tools or think interdisciplinarity is 'watering down' the discipline."

Section D: Attitudes toward Change

1. F1, F2, F3: *Cautious but supportive*. "Change is needed, but implementation must be thoughtful."
2. F5: *Sceptical*. "Why fix what has worked for decades? Not all change is progress."
3. F7, F9, F12: *Strongly enthusiastic*. "This is the way forward—students need relevant and contextual learning."
4. F6, F8: *Mixed*. "We see the value, but the system is not ready. Time, funding, and leadership are lacking."
5. F10: "The department pays lip service to reform. We say 'NEP 2020' in meetings but nothing changes on the ground."

Section E: Suggestions and Vision

1. F1: "Replace Chaucer and Wordsworth with regional literatures, graphic novels, and new media texts."
2. F3: "Make internships mandatory. Let students work with NGOs, publishers, or digital platforms."
3. F5: "Keep a balance. Do not turn literature into job training. We need a humanities core."
4. F6: "Create interdisciplinary centres or project spaces. Let students collaborate across departments."
5. F8: "We need academic-industry linkages—content writing, editing, translation, even UX design."
6. F11: "Encourage student-led podcasts, blogs, or collaborative projects as part of coursework."

Emerging Themes from Faculty Responses

1. High recognition of disconnect between curriculum and student aspirations.
2. Moderate to high support for interdisciplinary approaches.
3. Barriers include faculty resistance, institutional rigidity, lack of collaboration, and absence of training.
4. Younger faculty and those with exposure to global methods are more open and enthusiastic.
5. Demand for structural support, incentives, and curricular freedom to innovate.

Thematic content analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model: familiarization with data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. This allowed for a systematic exploration of recurring patterns across policy language, curricular content, and stakeholder reflections. Themes such as "disciplinary rigidity," "employability gaps," "pedagogical innovation," "integration of digital tools," and "resistance to change" emerged prominently in the analysis. Findings were triangulated to ensure reliability by comparing data across institutions, policy sources, and interview responses.

Research Questions

To investigate the potential of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary curricula in reimagining English literary studies in India, the study is guided by the following research questions. These questions aim to bridge the academic-practical divide by examining the interface between pedagogical design, institutional practice, and employment realities.

1. What is the current status of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in English literary curricula across Indian universities?
2. How do faculty members perceive the relevance and feasibility of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary curriculum reform?
3. What are the institutional and pedagogical barriers to implementing interdisciplinary reforms in English literary studies?
4. What pedagogical and structural changes are needed to English graduates more employment-ready and future-ready?

Delimitations of the Study

This study is intentionally delimited in several ways to maintain focus and manage research feasibility:

1. The research is limited to English literary studies at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels in India, and does not consider high school or doctoral curricula.
2. The study focuses on curricular design, pedagogical approaches, and skill development, not on the assessment or examination systems in detail.
3. It includes data from five representative universities across India, selected for their curricular diversity and responsiveness to policy change. These institutions were not selected to represent the entire spectrum of Indian higher education.
4. While the study considers industry needs, it does not involve large-scale employer surveys or statistical labour market analysis. Rather, it reflects on skill expectations as reported in literature and through academic-industry dialogues.
5. The scope is limited to English literary studies, and does not extend to other humanities or social science disciplines although comparisons are occasionally referenced to highlight interdisciplinary possibilities.

Scope of the Study

Despite its delimitations, this study opens up a wide area of enquiry for future academic and policy exploration. It contributes to both the theoretical discourse on curriculum transformation and the practical challenge of aligning humanities education with real-world needs. The scope of this study includes:

1. Exploring how interdisciplinary content, such as cultural studies, media literacy, philosophy, environmental humanities, and translation studies can be effectively integrated into English literature curricula.

2. Identifying pedagogical innovations—including experiential learning, project-based learning, collaborative teaching, and digital platforms—that support transdisciplinary learning environments.

3. Assessing how English departments in India can respond to national educational reforms such as NEP 2020 and the FYUGP model, with a focus on flexibility, holistic education, and skill acquisition.

4. Contributing to ongoing policy discussions by highlighting models of best practices in curriculum design, drawn from both Indian and global contexts.

5. Finally, providing a roadmap for academic departments, educators, and policymakers to reconsider the purpose and outcomes of English literary studies in a fast-changing world.

Results

The analysis of policy documents, institutional curricula, and faculty interviews reveals key insights into the current state of English literary studies in India. The findings can be summarized across five major areas:

1. A majority of institutions still follow a literature-centric curriculum dominated by canonical British texts and traditional criticism. There is limited space for interdisciplinary modules, creative writing, media, or practical skill-based courses.

2. Faculty members expressed awareness of the need for curriculum reform and acknowledged the value of interdisciplinary approaches. However, institutional inertia, lack of training, and bureaucratic barriers hinder meaningful implementation.

3. Some institutions, particularly private universities, have started aligning with NEP 2020 by introducing flexible credit structures, elective courses, and interdisciplinary modules. Examples include digital humanities, translation studies, and literature and film.

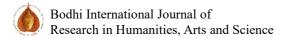4. Graduates often struggle to find relevant employment due to a lack of transferable skills such as communication design, research methods, data literacy, and teamwork. Employers reportedly prefer candidates with broader knowledge and practical exposure.

5. Interviews suggest that students are eager for experiential learning, internships, and career-oriented modules. However, these demands are rarely met by institutional curricula, leading to student dissatisfaction and skill gaps.

Analysis

The results highlight a profound disjuncture between the goals of modern education policy, student aspirations, and the current state of English curricula. While NEP 2020 promotes flexibility, multidisciplinarity, and skill integration, the reality on the ground is that many English departments still adhere to traditional literary frameworks. This limits students' access to contemporary tools, professional networks, and alternative knowledge domains.

The resistance to change appears to stem from structural and cultural factors: faculty training gaps, rigid university regulations, and insufficient collaboration between disciplines. Even when progressive changes are proposed, they often remain cosmetic or optional, failing to reorient the foundational philosophy of English literary studies. Further, the lack of institutional linkages with industries, NGOs, research organizations, and digital platforms restricts students from developing future-ready competencies.

At the same time, there are promising developments. A few universities are experimenting with interdisciplinary electives, research-based learning, community projects, and industry internships. These initiatives provide models that can be scaled and contextualized. They also affirm that a future-oriented English curriculum must blend analytical rigour with applied skillsets and ethical engagement. If the humanities are to remain relevant, they must address both the existential questions of literature and the practical imperatives of livelihood and innovation.

Discussion

The discussion draws together key insights from the analysis and reflects on the broader implications for English literary studies in India. Four main themes emerge:

The disciplinary rigidity that has long defined English literary studies in India needs to be re-evaluated in light of theoretical frameworks that endorse integrative learning. According to Julie Thompson Klein (1990), interdisciplinarity is not simply the inclusion of content from multiple fields but the creation of new frameworks that transcend disciplinary limits. In the context of English studies, this means fostering intellectual spaces where literature interacts meaningfully with fields such as sociology, environmental studies, philosophy, political science, and media theory. Such a reconceptualization not only reflects the complexity of contemporary realities but also prepares students to analyse texts in relation to the world they inhabit. The integration of perspectives allows for a more dynamic engagement with concepts like race, gender, ecology, nationalism, and digital culture—topics that are inadequately addressed within a solely canonical or Eurocentric literary framework. Moving toward integrative thinking aligns with NEP 2020's call for "holistic and multidisciplinary education" and offers English departments an opportunity to renew their social and pedagogical relevance.

The rise of outcome-based education (OBE) globally has led to increased emphasis on the acquisition of transferable skills—critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy—often termed the "5Cs." However, most Indian English curricula have yet to operationalize these competencies effectively. Theories of constructivist pedagogy and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) suggest that students learn most effectively when they are actively engaged in solving real-world problems through reflection, collaboration, and critical inquiry. Therefore, it is vital that literary curricula incorporate modules that enable students to acquire *practical and professional skills* alongside traditional literary analysis. These may include academic and digital writing, editing and publishing, translation, content strategy, podcasting, and applied research. Such integration does not diminish the intellectual depth of literary studies; rather, it repositions them as disciplines that cultivate both *humanistic enquiry and professional readiness*. The NEP's emphasis on flexible credit systems and skill-based electives provides a structural framework to facilitate this shift, but institutional will and pedagogical innovation are essential to make it operational.

While national education policies such as NEP 2020 outline progressive visions for interdisciplinary and skill-integrated learning, the success of these reforms hinges on their translation into institutional structures and classroom practices. Paulo Freire's (1970) theory of critical pedagogy reminds us that top-down reforms are often insufficient if they are not accompanied by *critical engagement and participatory design* at the grassroots level. Many universities in India still operate under bureaucratic constraints, outdated examination systems, and limited academic freedom, which stifle innovation. Faculty members often lack the training or institutional support to explore cross-disciplinary teaching, and infrastructure for project-based or experiential learning is rarely prioritized. There is also a gap between the aspirational language of policy and the lived realities of implementation, especially in public universities with limited resources. Therefore, alignment must not only occur in terms of curriculum documents but also in terms of funding, governance, faculty development, and leadership commitment. Institutional autonomy, incentivized collaboration, and decentralized decision-making are essential for realizing the NEP's interdisciplinary vision within English departments.

In the rush to make English studies more "employable," there is a real danger of commodifying education and eroding the critical, ethical, and cultural dimensions of the humanities. Theories of critical humanism and cultural studies (Williams, 1980; Said, 1993) remind us that literature's enduring value lies in its ability to *interrogate structures of power, identity, injustice, and meaning*. The true promise of interdisciplinarity

is not just functional adaptability but the cultivation of ethical reasoning, empathy, and civic consciousness. Thus, curriculum reform must go beyond mere skills integration and reaffirm the role of literary studies in producing thoughtful, engaged, and socially responsible citizens. English departments must continue to address questions of equity, representation, environmental degradation, caste, and gender through syllabi that reflect contemporary concerns. When interdisciplinarity is paired with critical literacy and ethical enquiry, students are empowered to act not just as employees or entrepreneurs but as active participants in shaping a more just and reflective society.

Research Questions Revisited and Responded

This section addresses the four central research questions that guided the study. The responses draw from thematic content analysis of curricula, policy documents like NEP 2020, and semi-structured faculty interviews conducted across five Indian universities. Each answer integrates empirical findings with theoretical reflections to present a nuanced understanding of the current state and future potential of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary reforms in English literary studies.

RQ1: *What is the current status of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in English literary curricula across Indian universities?*

The current status of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches in English departments across Indian universities remains uneven and largely underdeveloped. While the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 calls for a shift toward holistic and multidisciplinary learning, many institutions continue to adhere to a literature-centric curriculum dominated by British and Indian canonical texts. Thematic analysis of syllabi showed minimal integration of interdisciplinary modules, with only a few private or autonomous institutions offering electives such as Literature and Film, Cultural Studies, or Digital Humanities. In most state-funded and affiliating universities, core papers remain traditionally structured, and faculty report little

institutional incentive or infrastructure to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration. This suggests a significant gap between policy vision and actual curricular implementation.

RQ2: *How do faculty members perceive the relevance and feasibility of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary curriculum reform?*

Faculty perceptions on curriculum reform are mixed but increasingly positive. A significant number of interviewees expressed support for interdisciplinary approaches, recognizing their potential to make English studies more socially relevant, intellectually vibrant, and professionally useful. Senior faculty (F1–F5) tended to express cautious optimism, often citing concerns about diluting literary rigor. Mid-career and early-career faculty (F6–F12), especially those with exposure to digital tools or cultural studies, were more enthusiastic and advocated for incorporating digital writing, content creation, translation, and project-based learning into the core curriculum. However, faculty also highlighted systemic barriers: lack of training in interdisciplinary teaching, rigid university regulations, and minimal cross-departmental cooperation. This reveals a tension between enthusiasm for reform and the practical challenges of enacting it within institutional structures.

RQ3: *What are the institutional and pedagogical barriers to implementing interdisciplinary reforms in English literary studies?*

The study identified several structural and cultural barriers to implementing interdisciplinary reforms. Institutionally, many departments operate under outdated regulations that prioritize text-heavy syllabi and examination-focused pedagogy. There is limited scope for curriculum innovation due to bureaucratic inertia, hierarchical academic governance, and an absence of continuous curriculum audits. Pedagogically, faculty members often lack training in digital pedagogy, collaborative course design, and experiential learning methodologies. In addition, interdepartmental collaboration is rarely incentivized, and institutional leadership may not

prioritize interdisciplinary learning as part of strategic planning. These factors combine to create a climate of inertia, where progressive ideas exist in theory but are rarely operationalized in practice. The lack of academic-industry linkages and limited funding for humanities innovation further compound these challenges.

RQ4: *What pedagogical and structural changes are needed to make English graduates more employment-ready and future-ready?*

To make English graduates more employment-ready and future-ready, both pedagogical and structural transformations are essential. Pedagogically, there is a need to shift from rote literary analysis toward project-based, skill-integrated, and context-sensitive learning. Courses should incorporate digital storytelling, academic writing, editing, translation, podcasting, and interdisciplinary research methods. Faculty development programmes should focus on equipping educators with tools and confidence to teach in interdisciplinary formats. Structurally, institutions must revise rigid curricula, implement elective-based credit systems, and establish formal collaborations with industries, NGOs, and cultural organizations. Centres for Interdisciplinary Humanities can serve as hubs for collaborative teaching, student research, and socially engaged projects. These reforms align with the NEP 2020 vision of flexible and holistic education and can bridge the gap between literary training and real-world applicability.

Suggestions

In light of the findings and the critical discussions presented, the following suggestions are offered to guide meaningful curricular and pedagogical transformation in English literary studies across Indian universities:

1. Designing interdisciplinary core courses such as "Literature and Media," "Narrative and Society," "Gender and Text," and "Digital Cultures," which bridge literary analysis with contemporary issues and other disciplines.

2. Introducing transdisciplinary project-based learning modules in collaboration with departments such as sociology, philosophy, environmental science, history, communication, and computer applications to foster cross-disciplinary problem-solving and innovation.

3. Establishing academic-industry partnerships to include internships, skill-building workshops, and live collaborative projects with publishing houses, media organizations, NGOs, digital content companies, and cultural institutions.

4. Conducting periodic curriculum audits involving consultations with students, alumni, faculty, and employers to assess curricular relevance, learning outcomes, and changing industry demands.

5. Organizing continuous faculty development programmes focused on interdisciplinary teaching methodologies, digital pedagogy, and curriculum innovation in line with NEP 2020's principles.

6. Encouraging student-led initiatives such as research projects, creative writing platforms, podcasts, digital exhibitions, and literary magazines that allow experiential learning and practical engagement with literature.

7. Establishing interdisciplinary humanities centres or research hubs within English departments to coordinate collaborative research, organize conferences, publish interdisciplinary journals, and develop innovative learning resources.

These suggestions aim to institutionalize interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity not merely as pedagogical trends but as structural and philosophical reorientations necessary for a robust, future-ready English studies framework.

Scope for Further Research

While this study offers insights into the current limitations and transformative potential of English literary studies in India, it also opens up multiple avenues for deeper enquiry. As higher education reforms continue under the influence of NEP 2020 and global academic shifts, the dynamic intersection between English studies, interdisciplinarity, and

employability requires ongoing exploration. The findings of this study—drawn from policy analysis, curriculum documents, and faculty interviews—highlight both emerging innovations and institutional inertia. Future research is essential to broaden the evidence base, include more stakeholders, and develop context-sensitive models of curricular reform.

1. Future studies could focus on capturing student voices across diverse institutions to understand how they perceive the relevance of English studies and what changes they seek for academic and professional success.

2. A cross-institutional comparison between conventional public universities and liberal arts models (e.g., Ashoka, FLAME, Azim Premji University) would provide insights into best practices and scalable innovations.

3. Tracking career trajectories of English graduates over time would help establish clearer correlations between curricular design and employment pathways in sectors such as publishing, media, education, public policy, and the creative industries.

4. Future research could explore case studies of successful interdisciplinary collaborations between English departments and other disciplines, such as sociology, computer science, and visual arts, focusing on co-teaching, joint projects, or interdisciplinary research hubs.

5. There is a need to investigate how regional universities and vernacular-medium institutions are engaging with curriculum reform and how English studies can support multilingual, multicultural, and local knowledge systems.

6. As digital tools increasingly shape both pedagogy and the job market, studies could explore the integration of digital humanities, artificial intelligence, and content technologies in English curricula.

7. Investigating the specific training needs of English faculty—especially in public universities—would help design capacity-building programs that support interdisciplinary teaching and digital innovation.

8. Research is needed to critically assess how NEP 2020 and FYUGP frameworks are being interpreted, resisted, or implemented within English departments, and what policy adjustments could enhance responsiveness.

9. Further studies can explore the design and impact of sustained partnerships between English departments and industries like journalism, design, corporate communication, and creative writing.

10. Beyond employability, future research may also examine how interdisciplinary English curricula can foster civic responsibility, environmental consciousness, and social justice through texts, contexts, and practices.

Conclusion

This study underscores the urgent need to reimagine English literary studies in India within a framework that integrates interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary thinking. The analysis reveals that while policy frameworks like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 encourage such reforms, implementation remains uneven and slow. English departments across India continue to operate within narrow disciplinary confines, largely disconnected from evolving industry expectations, student aspirations, and contemporary global challenges. The reformation of English Studies must involve not just an expansion of content but also a transformation of educational philosophy—one that embraces collaboration, creativity, contextual understanding, and ethical reflection. By aligning literary education with the competencies required in the 21st century—such as digital fluency, cross-cultural communication, research literacy, and civic engagement—English departments can cultivate graduates who are both intellectually grounded and professionally agile. Ultimately, the challenge before English departments is *not to abandon the literary tradition but to recontextualize it*—to make it speak to the complexities of the present and the uncertainties of the future. Through curricular innovation, institutional support, and faculty commitment, English literary studies in India can

reclaim their relevance and offer powerful, future-ready learning experiences to a new generation of learners.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Introductory Script (to be read by the interviewer)

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this study is to explore the current practices, challenges, and possibilities for integrating interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches into English literary studies in Indian higher education. Your insights as a faculty member are invaluable to understanding how curriculum reform is perceived and implemented. This conversation is confidential and will be used solely for academic purposes. You may decline to answer any question or withdraw at any time.

Section A: Background Information

1. Could you briefly describe your role and teaching experience within the English department?
2. What types of courses (literary, language, interdisciplinary, etc.) have you taught in the past 5 years?

Section B: Perceptions of Current Curriculum

1. How would you describe the current state of the English literary studies curriculum at your institution?
2. To what extent do you feel the curriculum prepares students for employment or future opportunities beyond academia?
3. Are students actively asking for more interdisciplinary or applied courses? If so, in what ways?

Section C: Experience with Interdisciplinary/ Transdisciplinary Teaching

1. Have you been involved in teaching or designing any interdisciplinary courses (e.g., Literature

and Film, English and Philosophy, or Digital Humanities)?
2. If yes, what was your experience like?
3. If no, what are the barriers?
4. What opportunities exist (or could exist) for collaboration with other departments or disciplines?

Section D: Attitudes toward Change
1. How do you personally view the move toward interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary education in English studies?
2. Do you see this as necessary, desirable, or problematic?
3. What has been the general response of your department to curriculum reform efforts aligned with NEP 2020?
4. Enthusiastic? Cautious? Resistant?
5. What are some of the institutional or cultural challenges that hinder curriculum innovation in your experience?

Section E: Suggestions and Vision for the Future
1. If you had the freedom to redesign the curriculum, what kinds of courses or approaches would you introduce?
2. What kinds of support (institutional, training, policy) would be necessary to successfully implement these changes?
3. In your opinion, how can English studies retain their critical and ethical core while becoming more future-ready?

Closing Script
Thank you again for your time and insights. Your responses will contribute meaningfully to a larger understanding of how English studies can evolve to meet contemporary educational and professional demands. If you wish to receive a summary of the findings from this study or have any further thoughts to share, please let me know.