AD EDUXIAN JOURNAL
A Quarterly Multidisciplinary Blind Peer Reviewed & Refereed Online International Journal
Google Scholar Indexing PIF: 1.048(I2OR) & 3.125 (IIFS)
Vol (3), Issue (1), January-March 2026 *ISSN: 3048-7951*

Learning beyond the Classroom: A Study of the School Level Implementation of 10 Bagless Days under NEP 2020

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DOI: https://doi.org:/10.5281/zenodo.19211414

Review: 04/02/2026 **Acceptance: 04/02/2026** **Publication:25/03/2026**

Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces 10 bagless days as a transformative initiative to promote experiential, skill-based, and learner-centred education within Indian schools. Despite its policy significance, limited empirical evidence exists regarding its implementation at the school level. The present study aims to examine the planning, execution, and perceived outcomes of bagless day activities, with a particular focus on teachers' experiences and challenges in translating policy into practice. A qualitative exploratory research design was employed, and data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five secondary school teachers (n = 5) actively involved in organising bagless day programmes. The data were analysed using thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step framework. The findings reveal that 10 bagless days facilitate diverse experiential learning opportunities, including vocational activities, creative tasks, environmental initiatives, and community-based engagements, which contribute to enhancing students' creativity, confidence, collaboration, and practical competencies. Teachers reported that the initiative fosters a more engaging and stress-free learning environment while promoting respect for the dignity of labour and early career awareness. However, the study also identifies key implementation challenges, including time constraints, limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and logistical complexities in coordinating experiential activities. The study highlights the critical role of institutional planning, teacher collaboration, and community participation in the effective implementation of bagless days. It concludes that while the initiative holds significant potential for advancing the experiential learning vision of NEP 2020, its success depends on sustained systemic support and capacity-building efforts. The study contributes to the limited empirical literature on experiential learning reforms in India and offers insights for strengthening policy implementation at the school level.

Keywords: Bagless days, Experiential learning, National education policy 2020, Skill-based education, Vocational learning, Holistic student development, Activity-based learning

Introduction

Education systems across the world are increasingly emphasizing learning approaches that move beyond rote memorization toward experiential, skill-based, and learner-centered pedagogies (Ministry of Education, 2020). Contemporary educational reforms recognize that students develop deeper understanding when they actively engage with real-life contexts, collaborative problem-solving, and hands-on learning experiences (Kolb, 1984; UNESCO, 2021). Such approaches encourage students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations while simultaneously nurturing creativity, critical thinking, and social skills (GoI, 2023). Within this context,

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education policies have begun to prioritize experiential learning as an essential element of school education (PSSCIVE, 2024).

In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a significant shift toward transforming the traditional structure of schooling (PSSCIVE, 2022). The policy emphasizes holistic development, multidisciplinary learning, and the integration of vocational education within the school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2020). One of the notable recommendations of NEP 2020 is the introduction of "10 bagless days" for students in middle school (Classes VI–VIII) (NCERT, 2024). During these days, students are encouraged to engage in experiential and vocational learning activities such as craft-based learning, internships with local artisans, field visits, and community engagement initiatives (Ministry of Education, 2020). The objective of this initiative is to reduce the dominance of textbook-based instruction and to provide learners with opportunities to acquire practical competencies and life skills (PSSCIVE, 2022).

The concept of bagless days aligns with the broader educational philosophy that meaningful learning occurs when students interact with their environment and reflect upon their experiences (Yashpal committee, 1993). Experiential learning theory suggests that knowledge is constructed through cycles of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation (Kolb, 1984). When students participate in practical activities such as vocational workshops, community projects, or environmental programmes, they gain opportunities to connect academic knowledge with real-world situations (NCERT, 2024). Research indicates that such learning experiences not only enhance conceptual understanding but also improve student engagement, motivation, and problem-solving abilities (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984).

Another important objective of bagless days is to promote respect for the dignity of labour and early exposure to vocational skills (MoE, 2020). Historically, Indian school education has been criticized for its strong focus on theoretical knowledge and examination-oriented learning (MHRD, 1986), often neglecting practical and skill-based education (Kumar, 2018). By integrating vocational exposure within the school curriculum, NEP 2020 aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and the world of work (GoI, 2023). Early exposure to vocational activities can help students develop practical competencies, career awareness, and appreciation for diverse professions (Mehrotra, 2014). Although the bagless days initiative reflects an important policy innovation, its success depends largely on how it is implemented at the school level (NSDC, 2009). Teachers play a central role in planning and organizing experiential activities, facilitating student participation, and ensuring that learning objectives are achieved (NCERT, 2005). However, implementing such initiatives may involve various challenges, including time constraints, limited resources, lack of training, and logistical difficulties in coordinating community-based activities (MHRD, 1953). Understanding teachers' perspectives is therefore crucial for assessing how educational reforms are translated into classroom practices (Kothari Commission, 1966).

Despite the growing attention to experiential learning within NEP 2020, there remains limited empirical research examining the actual implementation of bagless days in schools. Most discussions of the initiative remain policy-oriented (GoI, 1934), with relatively little focus on the experiences of teachers who are responsible for organizing these activities. Exploring teachers' perspectives can provide valuable insights into the practical realities of implementing bagless days (MSDE, 2015), the types of activities conducted, and the perceived impact on students' learning and development. In this context, the present study seeks to examine the school-level implementation of the 10 bagless days initiative and to explore teachers' perceptions regarding its pedagogical

value, challenges, and outcomes (NCERT, 2024). By analysing teachers' experiences, the study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how experiential learning initiatives under NEP 2020 are being translated into educational practice and how they influence students' holistic development (PSSCIVE, 2024).

The growing emphasis on experiential and skill-based learning in school education has gained significant attention in recent years (UNESCO, 2021). Educational scholars have long argued that learning becomes more meaningful when students actively engage in practical experiences and reflective processes rather than relying solely on textbook-based instruction (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). In response to such pedagogical concerns, NEP 2020 introduced several reforms aimed at transforming the traditional structure of Indian schooling. Among these reforms, the concept of "10 bagless days" was proposed to provide students with opportunities for experiential learning, vocational exposure, and community engagement (Ministry of Education, 2020). The initiative aims to reduce the emphasis on rote learning and encourage students to participate in hands-on activities such as craft-based learning, field visits, and interactions with local artisans (PSSCIVE, 2022).

Although the bagless days initiative reflects an important step toward integrating experiential learning into school education, existing literature primarily focuses on the policy framework and conceptual foundations of such reforms rather than their practical implementation in schools (Ministry of Education, 2020). Studies on experiential learning highlight the benefits of activity-based education for enhancing student engagement, creativity, and problem-solving abilities (Kolb, 1984; UNESCO, 2021). Similarly, research on vocational education emphasises the importance of early exposure to practical skills and the development of respect for the dignity of labour (Mehrotra, 2014). However, there remains limited empirical research examining how initiatives like bagless days are actually implemented within school contexts (MHRD, 1986).

In particular, the perspectives of teachers who play a central role in organising and facilitating bagless day activities - have received relatively little scholarly attention (NCFSE, 2023). Teachers are responsible for planning experiential learning activities, coordinating with community stakeholders, and guiding students during practical tasks (CBSE, 2024). Their experiences can therefore provide valuable insights into both the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing the bagless days initiative. Understanding these perspectives is essential for assessing whether the policy objectives of NEP 2020 are effectively translated into classroom practice (Singh et.al., 2025).

Furthermore, while policy documents emphasize the potential of bagless days to promote holistic development, creativity, and vocational awareness among students, there is limited research exploring the pedagogical practices adopted during these days and their perceived impact on student learning outcomes (PTI, 2024). The absence of such empirical evidence creates a gap in understanding how experiential learning initiatives function at the school level and what factors influence their success. In view of these gaps, the present study seeks to explore the school-level implementation of the 10 bagless days initiative by examining teachers' perspectives on its planning, organisation, activities, challenges, and perceived impact on students' holistic development (Sethy, 2021). The study is guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1. How are the "10 bagless days" planned and scheduled in schools under the framework of NEP 2020?
- RQ2. How are teachers' roles and responsibilities distributed in organising and implementing bagless day activities?

- RQ3. What types of experiential and vocational learning activities are conducted during bagless days?
- RQ4. How are digital technologies integrated into teaching and assessment during bagless day programmes?
- RQ5. To what extent do Bagless Day activities promote skill-based and vocational learning among students?
- RQ6. What challenges do teachers encounter while implementing the bagless days initiative in schools?
- RQ7. How do teachers perceive the impact of bagless days on students' creativity, engagement, and holistic development?

Literature Review

The shift from rote-based learning to experiential, skill-oriented, and learner-centered pedagogies has been widely emphasised in contemporary educational discourse. Educational theorists have long argued that meaningful learning occurs when learners actively engage with their environment and construct knowledge through experience and reflection. Education must be rooted in real-life experiences to promote reflective thinking and democratic participation (Dewey, 1938). Similarly, Kolb (1984) proposed the experiential learning cycle, wherein knowledge is created through a process involving concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. These foundational perspectives establish experiential learning as a critical pedagogical approach for holistic education.

In the Indian context, the introduction of the NEP 2020 marks a paradigm shift towards competency-based and multidisciplinary learning (Ministry of Education, 2020). The policy strongly advocates integrating experiential learning, vocational exposure, and skill development into school education (Ministry of Education, 2020). One of its key recommendations is the implementation of "10 bagless days" for students at the middle school level, aimed at reducing textbook dependency and promoting hands-on, activity-based learning. This initiative aligns with global educational priorities that emphasise preparing learners with 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving (UNESCO, 2021).

Experiential learning has been empirically associated with improved student engagement, conceptual understanding, and motivation. Studies suggest that activity-based and project-based learning environments foster deeper cognitive processing and enhance learners' ability to apply knowledge in real-life contexts (Dewey, 1938; Kolb, 1984). Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) emphasised the importance of social interaction and collaborative learning in cognitive development, which is reflected in bagless day activities such as group projects, community engagement, and peer learning. These approaches contribute not only to academic achievement but also to the development of social and emotional competencies.

Another important dimension of bagless days is its emphasis on vocational education and skill development. Historically, the Indian education system has been criticised for its overemphasis on theoretical knowledge and examination-oriented practices (Kumar, 2018). The integration of vocational education within school curricula seeks to address this gap by promoting practical skills and respect for the dignity of labour. Research indicates that early exposure to vocational skills enhances career awareness, employability, and self-reliance among

students (Mehrotra, 2014). The policy recommendation that every student should acquire at least one vocational skill reflects a transformative approach to bridging the gap between education and the world of work.

Recent curriculum frameworks and guidelines further reinforce the importance of experiential and vocational learning. The national curriculum framework for school education (NCFSE, 2023) emphasises competency-based education, local contextualisation of learning, and the integration of indigenous knowledge systems. Similarly, guidelines developed by NCERT and PSSCIVE highlight the role of bagless days in facilitating activities such as craft-based learning, field visits, internships with local artisans, and community participation (NCERT, 2024; PSSCIVE, 2020). These activities not only enhance practical knowledge but also promote cultural awareness and community engagement, aligning with the vision of "vocal for local" and sustainable development.

Empirical studies on experiential and activity-based learning have demonstrated positive outcomes in terms of student creativity, engagement, and holistic development. For instance, Sharma and Mehta (2023) found that skill-integrated learning environments significantly enhance students' confidence, problem-solving abilities, and collaborative skills. Reducing academic burden and incorporating flexible learning approaches contribute to improved student well-being and reduced stress levels (Gupta & Verma, 2022). These findings support the underlying rationale of bagless days in creating a joyful and stress-free learning environment.

Despite these theoretical and empirical advancements, the implementation of experiential learning initiatives often faces practical challenges. Research indicates that teachers encounter difficulties related to time constraints, lack of resources, inadequate training, and institutional support when implementing activity-based learning strategies (Fullan, 2016; Raina, 2019). The success of such initiatives largely depends on effective planning, teacher collaboration, and administrative support. Teachers play a pivotal role in designing learning experiences, facilitating student participation, and assessing learning outcomes. Therefore, their perspectives are crucial for understanding the effectiveness of policy implementation at the ground level. Moreover, while policy documents extensively highlight the potential benefits of bagless days, there is limited empirical research examining its actual implementation in schools. Existing literature predominantly focuses on conceptual discussions and policy analysis rather than school-level practices and teacher experiences. This creates a significant research gap in understanding how the initiative is operationalised, what types of activities are conducted, and how it impacts student learning and development in real contexts. The present study attempts to address this gap by examining the school-level implementation of the 10 bagless days initiative through teachers' perspectives. By focusing on planning, execution, challenges, and outcomes, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how experiential learning policies are translated into practice. It also provides insights into the factors that facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of bagless days, thereby informing future policy and practice.

Method

Research Design

The present study employed a qualitative exploratory research design to investigate the implementation of the 10 bagless days initiative in schools in the context of the NEP 2020. Qualitative research is particularly useful for examining educational practices and capturing participants' lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of

policy implementation within real institutional settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Since the objective of the study was to understand how teachers organize, implement, and perceive the impact of bagless days activities in schools, an exploratory qualitative approach enabled the researchers to collect rich and contextual insights. Educational reforms often manifest differently at the institutional level due to variations in resources, administrative support, and teacher preparedness. Therefore, qualitative inquiry allows researchers to capture these contextual dynamics through participants' narratives and reflections (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the present study, the qualitative design facilitated an in-depth exploration of teacher perspectives regarding experiential learning, vocational exposure, and activity-based education associated with the bagless days initiative.

Participants and Sampling

The study involved five secondary school teachers who were actively involved in organizing and implementing the 10 bagless days programme in their respective schools. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, a widely used strategy in qualitative research that enables the researcher to identify individuals who possess relevant experience or knowledge related to the research phenomenon (Patton, 2015). The selected teachers represented different subject specializations and teaching experiences, which provided varied perspectives on the implementation of the programme. Teachers who had direct involvement in planning activities, supervising students, or coordinating bagless day initiatives were considered eligible for participation. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, each participant was assigned a coded identifier (P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5). This coding system helped maintain ethical standards while allowing the researchers to present participants' views in the findings section. The sample size of five participants was considered adequate for in-depth qualitative exploration, as the study aimed to obtain rich, detailed insights rather than generalizable findings. Data collection continued until saturation was reached, that is, no new themes or significant insights were emerging from the participants' responses.

Data Collection Tool

Data for the study were collected using a semi-structured interview schedule developed by the researchers. Semi-structured interviews are particularly suitable in qualitative studies as they allow researchers to guide the discussion while still providing participants with the flexibility to express their experiences in detail (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The interview schedule consisted of open-ended questions designed to explore several dimensions related to the bagless days initiative. These dimensions included:

- planning and scheduling of bagless days activities
- allocation of responsibilities among teachers
- types of experiential and vocational activities conducted
- integration of digital tools and technology in activity-based learning
- assessment of student learning during bagless days
- perceived impact of bagless days on creativity, critical thinking, and student engagement
- challenges faced during the implementation of the programme

The open-ended nature of the questions encouraged teachers to provide elaborate responses and examples from their own teaching experiences. This approach enabled the researchers to obtain nuanced insights into the practical aspects of implementing experiential learning initiatives in schools.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to data collection, participants were informed about the objectives and academic purpose of the study. Their consent was obtained, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential and would be used exclusively for research purposes. The interviews were conducted in an interactive manner, allowing participants to reflect on their experiences related to organizing and implementing bagless days activities. The discussions focused on teachers' roles in planning activities, coordinating with colleagues, facilitating vocational exposure, and managing students during experiential learning tasks. The responses were recorded and subsequently transcribed to facilitate systematic analysis. This process ensured that the teachers' perspectives were captured accurately and comprehensively.

Data Analysis

The data collected through interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, which is widely employed in qualitative research for identifying and interpreting patterns within textual data (Braun & Clarke, 2006), which includes familiarization with data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The alignment between the research questions and the themes derived from the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. ***Alignment between Research Questions and Themes Emerging from the Analysis***

Theme in Analysis	Related Research Question
Planning and organization	RQ1
Teacher collaboration and roles	RQ2
Experiential activities	RQ3
Technology integration	RQ4
Skill-based learning	RQ5
Implementation challenges	RQ6
Student outcomes	RQ7

The analysis followed a systematic procedure involving multiple stages. First, the interview transcripts were carefully reviewed to gain familiarity with the data. In the second stage, meaningful statements and recurring ideas were coded. These codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflected the key dimensions of the

study. Finally, the themes were interpreted in relation to the research questions and the broader objectives of the study. Through this analytical process, several themes emerged, including:

- organization and scheduling of bagless days
- distribution of responsibilities among teachers
- experiential and vocational learning activities
- integration of digital technologies in experiential learning
- teacher perceptions regarding skill-based learning
- challenges encountered during implementation
- perceived impact on students' holistic development

This thematic approach helped provide a structured understanding of how the bagless days initiative is implemented at the school level and how teachers perceive its educational significance. The interview data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in teachers' experiences regarding the implementation of bagless days. The responses were initially coded and later organised into broader themes. The coding process involved identifying meaningful statements from participants and grouping them into categories representing key dimensions of bagless days implementation. The coding framework used in the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Coding Framework for Thematic Analysis of Teachers' Interview Responses

Participant Statement	Initial Code	Subtheme	Theme
"We plan the 10 bagless days in advance and adjust the timetable." (P1)	Advance planning	Academic scheduling	Organization of bagless days
"Teachers are assigned activities based on their expertise." (P1)	Allocation by expertise	Role distribution	Teacher responsibilities
"Students participate in gardening, cooking and pottery." (P2)	Vocational exposure	Skill-based learning	Experiential activities
"We arrange field visits to local farms and industries." (P5)	Real-world exposure	Community interaction	Experiential activities
"Digital quizzes help us assess student understanding." (P2)	Digital assessment	Technology integration	Digital tools in learning
"Time management becomes difficult while completing syllabus." (P4)	Time constraint	Academic pressure	Implementation challenges
"Bagless days improve student confidence." (P4)	Student confidence	Holistic development	Impact on students

Trustworthiness of the Study

To ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, the study adhered to established criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement with participants and member checking, wherein participants were given the opportunity to validate the accuracy of their responses. Transferability was addressed by providing detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and procedures, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. Dependability was maintained by ensuring a systematic and transparent research process, including clear documentation of data collection and analysis procedures. Confirmability was achieved by maintaining objectivity in data interpretation and ensuring that the findings were grounded in participants' responses rather than researcher bias.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were carefully followed throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent prior to the interviews. The identities of the teachers and their schools were kept confidential to protect their privacy. Additionally, participants were assured that their responses would not be used for evaluative purposes but solely for academic research. Maintaining confidentiality and ensuring voluntary participation are essential components of ethical research practice, particularly in qualitative studies that involve personal experiences and professional reflections (Israel & Hay, 2006). These ethical safeguards helped create a trustworthy research environment and encouraged participants to share their perspectives openly.

Data Analysis and Findings

The qualitative data collected from the interviews with five secondary school teachers were analysed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to the implementation of the 10 bagless days initiative under the NEP 2020. The responses were coded and grouped into themes reflecting teachers' experiences in planning, implementing, and evaluating bagless days activities in schools. The analysis highlights how teachers interpret the initiative, the pedagogical practices adopted during the programme, and the challenges encountered during its implementation.

Theme 1: Institutional Planning and Organisation of Bagless Days

The findings indicate that the successful implementation of bagless days largely depends on systematic planning and institutional coordination. Teachers reported that schools generally prepare schedules in advance and integrate bagless days into their academic calendars to ensure that the activities do not interfere with regular syllabus completion. P1 explained: *"We plan the 10 bagless days in advance and adjust the timetable. Instead of regular classes, students do activities such as art, crafts and practical projects. It makes learning more interesting."* This suggests that systematic planning plays a crucial role in integrating experiential learning within the existing academic structure without disrupting the curriculum. Similarly, P4 mentioned that schools attempt to balance curricular requirements with experiential activities: *"We divide the ten days into two parts so it does*

not disturb the syllabus. Students enjoy sports, crafts, teamwork and field visits." P3 highlighted the collaborative role of school leadership and teachers in planning these activities: *"The principal and teachers sit together and plan the schedule. Each day has a different theme such as environment, vocational skill and life skill."* These responses suggest that bagless days are implemented through collective institutional decision-making, where teachers and administrators work together to design activity-based learning experiences.

Theme 2: Collaborative Distribution of Teacher Responsibilities

The data reveal that teachers play a central role in organising and implementing bagless day activities. Responsibilities are generally distributed based on subject expertise, professional skills, and teaching experience. P1 stated: *"Responsibilities are usually allocated by the principal. Teachers are assigned activities according to their subject expertise. Art teachers manage creative activities while science teachers conduct experiments."* Similarly, P3 emphasised collaborative decision-making among teachers: *"Responsibilities are discussed during staff meetings and teachers volunteer according to their comfort and ability."* P2 also pointed out that workload considerations influence task allocation: *"Teachers who have flexible timetables are often given more responsibility for field visits and group activities."* The responses demonstrate that bagless days require collective participation from teachers, highlighting the importance of teamwork in implementing experiential learning initiatives.

Theme 3: Experiential and Vocational Learning Opportunities

A major objective of bagless days is to promote experiential and vocational learning. Teachers reported that students participate in a wide variety of practical activities designed to enhance life skills and real-world understanding. P2 described vocational activities organised in schools: *"We organise activities like gardening, cooking, carpentry, stitching and pottery so that students can learn practical life skills."* This indicates that experiential activities enable students to develop practical life skills and connect classroom knowledge with real-world applications. Similarly, P4 explained that creative activities are an integral component of the programme: *"Students participate in drawing, painting, clay modelling and creative competitions during bagless days."* Environmental awareness activities were also reported. P3 mentioned: *"Students participate in tree plantation, cleanliness drives and waste management activities."* P5 further highlighted the importance of field exposure: *"We arrange field visits to local farms, banks and small industries. These visits help students understand real-world work environments."* These responses indicate that bagless days promote hands-on learning experiences, enabling students to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications.

Theme 4: Integration of Digital Tools in Experiential Learning

Teachers also highlighted the potential role of digital technologies in supporting experiential learning activities. According to participants, technology can enhance both learning engagement and assessment processes during bagless days. P2 stated: *"Digital tools such as online quizzes and interactive platforms help teachers quickly assess students' understanding after each activity."* This reflects that digital tools can enhance formative assessment practices and support immediate feedback in experiential learning environments. Similarly, P5 emphasised the importance of digital feedback mechanisms: *"Teachers can share results and suggestions through*

online platforms, which helps students understand their strengths and weaknesses." P3 noted that learning management systems help track student performance: *"Teachers can use educational apps to monitor students' progress during vocational activities."* These responses suggest that integrating technology into bagless days can support interactive learning environments and continuous assessment practices.

Theme 5: Promotion of Skill-Based Learning and Career Awareness

Teachers widely perceived bagless days as an effective initiative for promoting skill-based education and early career awareness among students. P1 explained: *"Almost every day focuses on a practical skill such as stitching, cooking or arts and crafts."* Similarly, P2 observed that students actively engage in vocational activities: *"Students participate in pottery, stitching and basic technical tasks, which helps them develop practical skills."* P5 highlighted the broader purpose of the programme: *"The aim is to develop life skills and practical understanding rather than focusing only on theory."* These responses indicate that bagless days encourage students to explore different vocational areas and develop practical competencies relevant to real-life contexts.

Theme 6: Challenges in Implementation

Despite the positive perception of bagless days, teachers also reported several challenges in implementing the initiative effectively. One of the most common challenges mentioned by participants was time management. P4 explained: *"Completing the regular syllabus along with planning activities for bagless days becomes difficult."* This highlights that balancing experiential activities with syllabus completion remains a significant structural challenge for teachers. Resource limitations were another concern. P5 stated: *"There is often a shortage of materials required for vocational activities, especially in government schools."* P3 highlighted the need for teacher training: *"Teachers require more training and workshops to conduct experiential learning activities effectively."* Additionally, P1 mentioned logistical issues related to field visits and community engagement: *"Coordinating with local artisans or arranging field visits can be difficult due to budget constraints."* These findings suggest that although bagless days offer valuable learning opportunities, their successful implementation requires adequate resources, teacher training, and institutional support.

Theme 7: Impact on Students' Holistic Development

Teachers consistently reported that bagless days have a positive impact on students' overall development, including cognitive, social, and emotional aspects. P1 stated: *"Students understand concepts better through practical activities rather than only textbooks."* Similarly, P3 highlighted the development of social skills: *"Students learn teamwork, leadership and problem-solving during these activities."* P5 emphasised the discovery of students' talents: *"Interaction with local artisans and hands-on training helps students identify their interests beyond academics."* P2 observed increased student motivation: *"Students show more enthusiasm and interest in school during bagless days."* P4 noted improvements in self-confidence: *"Even shy students participate more actively in hands-on activities, which improves their confidence."* This suggests that participation in hands-on activities fosters self-confidence and encourages active engagement among students. These findings indicate that bagless days contribute to creating a joyful and stress-free learning environment, which supports students' holistic development.

The major themes and key insights emerging from the thematic analysis are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3. ***Major Themes and Key Findings from Teachers' Responses on the Implementation of 10 Bagless Days***

Theme	Subthemes	Key Insights
Institutional Planning	Academic scheduling, collaborative planning	Schools organise Bagless Days through coordinated planning
Teacher Collaboration	Role distribution, teamwork	Teachers share responsibilities based on expertise
Experiential Learning	Vocational activities, field visits	Students gain practical learning experiences
Technology Integration	Digital assessment tools	Technology enhances learning and feedback
Skill Development	Practical competencies	Students develop life skills and vocational awareness
Implementation Challenges	Time constraints, resource limitations	Schools face logistical and infrastructural barriers
Student Development	Creativity, confidence, teamwork	Bagless Days promote holistic learning

The themes identified through the analysis indicate that bagless days function as a pedagogical strategy to promote experiential learning, skill development, and holistic education, although effective implementation requires adequate resources, teacher training, and institutional support.

Conceptual Framework for Effective Implementation of Bagless Days

Based on the thematic analysis of teachers' responses, the study proposes a conceptual framework explaining the factors influencing the effective implementation of the 10 bagless days initiative in schools. The findings indicate that the implementation of bagless days is shaped by several interconnected institutional, pedagogical, and contextual factors. These factors include institutional planning, teacher collaboration, experiential pedagogical practices, integration of digital technologies, and community engagement. Together, these elements contribute to the development of students' practical skills, creativity, and holistic learning outcomes envisioned under the NEP 2020. The proposed conceptual framework is grounded in experiential learning theory and constructivist perspectives of education. Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory emphasises that learning occurs through a cyclical process of experience, reflection, and application, which aligns with the hands-on and activity-based nature of bagless days. Similarly, constructivist theory suggests that learners actively construct knowledge

through interaction with their environment and social contexts (Vygotsky, 1978). The framework reflects these principles by positioning experiential activities, collaboration, and community engagement as central to meaningful learning and holistic development.

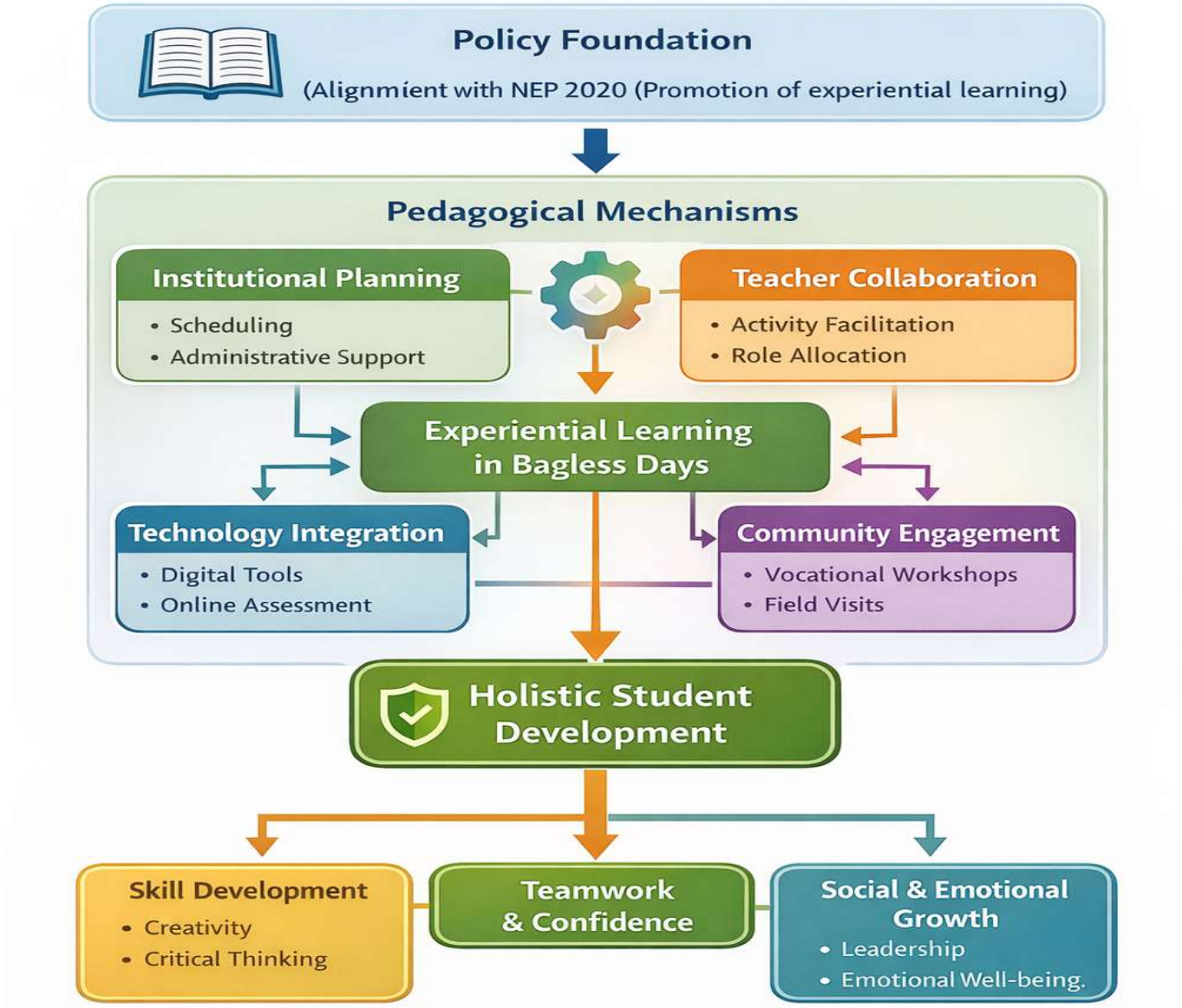

Figure 1. **Conceptual Framework for the Effective Implementation of 10 Bagless Days under NEP 2020 (created by the authors using AI-assisted tools).**

As illustrated in Figure 1, institutional planning and administrative support provide the structural foundation for implementing bagless days. Teacher engagement and collaborative planning facilitate the design and execution of experiential learning activities. These activities, supported by digital tools and community partnerships, enable students to participate in hands-on learning experiences. Such practices enhance students' creativity, problem-solving abilities, and practical competencies, thereby contributing to their holistic development. The directional relationships represented in the framework (see Fig. 1) indicate that institutional planning and administrative

support act as foundational factors that enable effective teacher collaboration and pedagogical practices. These, in turn, facilitate the implementation of experiential learning activities supported by digital tools and community engagement. The arrows illustrate a sequential and interdependent relationship, where each component contributes to the successful execution of bagless days, ultimately leading to enhanced student outcomes such as creativity, skill development, and holistic learning. The framework thus provides a theoretically informed and practice-oriented model for understanding the implementation of experiential learning initiatives in school education.

Conclusion

The present study examined the school-level implementation of the "10 bagless days" initiative introduced under the NEP 2020, with a specific focus on teachers' perspectives regarding its planning, execution, challenges, and impact on students' learning. The findings indicate that the initiative represents a significant pedagogical shift from traditional textbook-driven instruction to experiential, skill-based, and learner-centred approaches. By creating opportunities for hands-on activities, vocational exposure, and community engagement, bagless days contribute meaningfully to the broader vision of holistic education envisioned in NEP 2020.

The study reveals that effective implementation of bagless days is largely dependent on institutional planning and collaborative efforts among teachers and school leadership. Schools that integrate these activities into their academic calendar through systematic scheduling and shared responsibilities are better able to balance curricular demands with experiential learning opportunities. Teachers play a pivotal role not only as facilitators but also as designers of learning experiences, highlighting the importance of professional autonomy and collaboration in translating policy into practice. A key strength of the initiative lies in its ability to promote experiential and vocational learning. Activities such as craft-based tasks, field visits, environmental programmes, and interaction with local artisans enable students to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. These experiences foster essential life skills, including creativity, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability. Furthermore, early exposure to vocational skills contributes to developing respect for the dignity of labour and enhances students' awareness of diverse career pathways.

The integration of digital tools within bagless day activities also emerged as a supportive element in enhancing student engagement and assessment practices. Technology-enabled assessments, feedback mechanisms, and interactive platforms facilitate continuous learning and provide opportunities for reflective practice. However, the extent of technology integration varies across contexts, indicating the need for equitable access and digital readiness among schools. Despite its potential, the study also identifies several challenges that hinder the effective implementation of bagless days. Time constraints associated with syllabus completion, limited availability of resources, insufficient training for teachers in experiential pedagogies, and logistical issues related to organising field-based activities pose significant barriers. These challenges underscore the need for systemic support, including capacity-building programmes, resource allocation, and policy-level flexibility to accommodate innovative pedagogical practices. Importantly, the findings demonstrate that 10 bagless days have a positive impact on students' holistic development. Teachers observed increased student engagement, improved confidence, enhanced social interaction, and reduced academic stress during these activities. The initiative creates

a more inclusive and joyful learning environment, allowing students to explore their interests and talents beyond conventional academic boundaries.

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