



INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS REPORT

Mapping Common Themes Across Social Science Disciplines
in Indian Higher Education

Sociology • Political Science • History • Public Administration • Psychology

Based on M.A. Syllabi of
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents a comprehensive interdisciplinary analysis of five postgraduate (M.A./M.Sc.) syllabi offered by **Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University** under the Faculty of Social Sciences: **Sociology, Political Science, History, Public Administration, and Psychology**.

The analysis reveals **ten major thematic areas** where substantial content overlap exists across these disciplines. These overlaps represent untapped opportunities for **interdisciplinary curriculum design** in Indian higher education — reducing redundancy while producing graduates who can analyze complex social reality with historical depth, sociological breadth, political awareness, administrative understanding, and psychological insight.

KEY FINDINGS

- **10** common thematic areas identified across five disciplines
- **Social Movements in India** is the strongest overlap — dedicated courses in 3 subjects
- **Research Methods** appears as a full course in all 5 programmes
- Key thinkers like **Karl Marx, Gandhi, Weber, Maslow, Ambedkar** span multiple syllabi
- **5 interdisciplinary modules** proposed for curriculum integration

2. SYLLABI OVERVIEW

All five programmes are offered by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, under the Faculty of Social Sciences. Each programme spans two years with 5 courses per year (10 courses total). Below is a summary:

Programme	Courses (Year 1)	Courses (Year 2)
M.A. Sociology	Principles, Theory & Perspectives, Research Methods, Rural & Urban Sociology, Population Studies	Applied Sociology, Social Movements, Social Anthropology, Industrial Sociology, Sociology of Health
M.A. Political Science	Western Political Thought, Indian Political System, Public Policy, Indian Political Thought, International Relations	Comparative Politics, Political Sociology, State Politics, Social Movements, Governance
M.A. History	Ancient Civilizations, Historical Method, Modern Revolutions, Indian National Movement, History of Andhras	Socio-Economic History (Ancient), Socio-Economic History (Medieval), Social History of Modern India, Modern Andhra, Contemporary India
M.A. Public Administration	State Society & PA, Administrative Theory, Public Policy, Public System Mgmt., HRM	Indian Administration, Rural Governance, Urban Governance, E-Governance, Research Methodology
M.Sc. Psychology	Principles, Social Psychology, Psychopathology, Life Span Development, Statistics & Experimental	Personality, Counseling, Organizational Behavior, Research Methodology, Psychometry

3. VISUAL THEMATIC MAPPING

The diagram below visualizes how the five disciplines overlap thematically. The central core represents shared concerns — research methodology, social stratification, governance, social movements, and group dynamics — that cut across all five programmes.

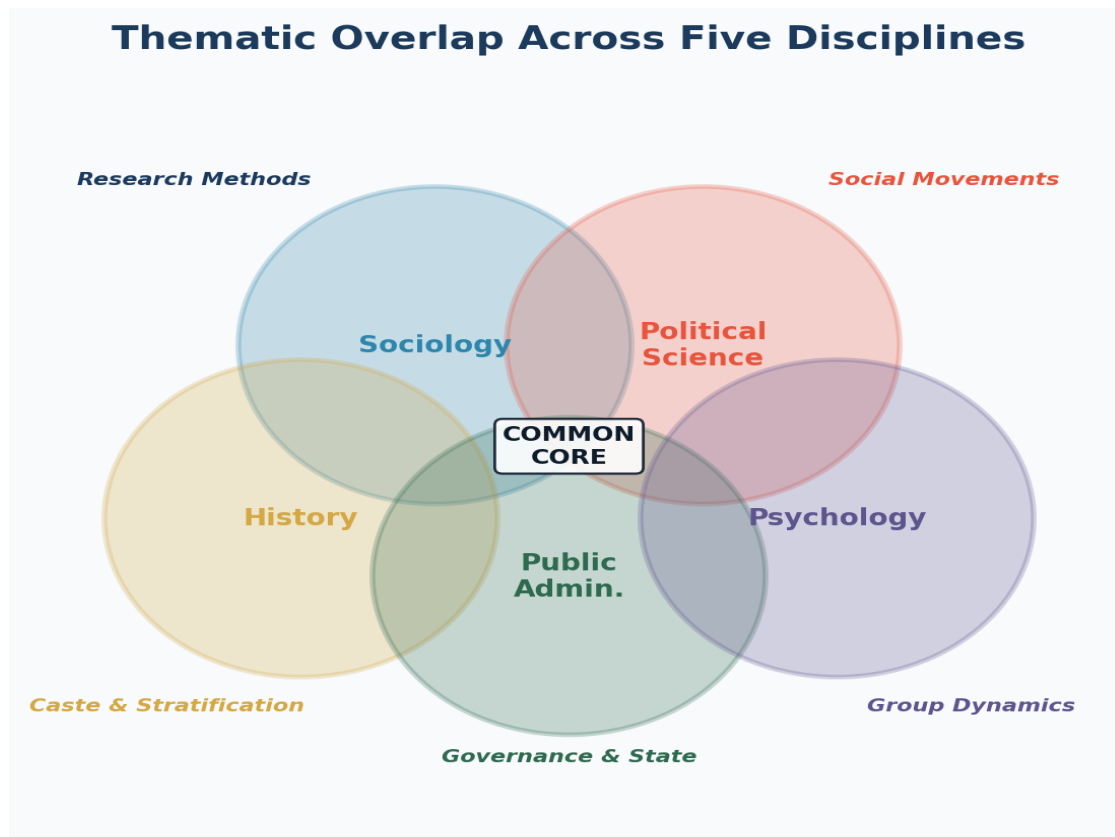


Figure 1: Thematic overlap across five Social Science disciplines at Dr. BRAOU

The strongest bilateral overlaps are between **Sociology and Political Science** (social movements, stratification, political sociology), **Public Administration and Political Science** (governance, public policy, state), and **Psychology and Sociology** (socialization, group dynamics, culture and personality).

4. THEMATIC COVERAGE INTENSITY MATRIX

The matrix below maps ten identified common themes against each discipline, rated by depth of coverage: **High** (dedicated full course), **Medium** (significant blocks/units), **Low** (mentioned in context), or **None**.

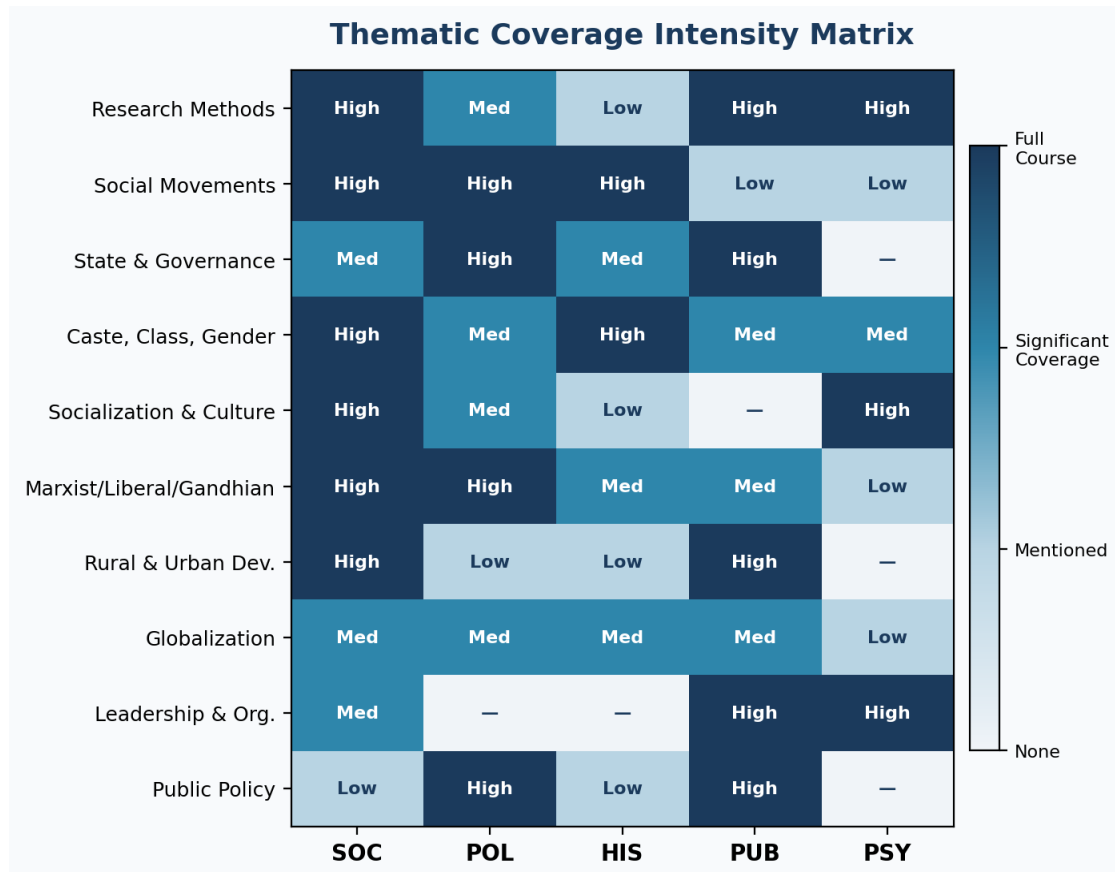


Figure 2: Thematic coverage intensity across disciplines (SOC=Sociology, POL=Political Science, HIS=History, PUB=Public Administration, PSY=Psychology)

Key Observations: Research Methods and Caste/Class/Gender achieve the broadest coverage across all five disciplines. Social Movements shows the deepest overlap between Sociology, Political Science, and History. Leadership and Organization is concentrated in Psychology, Public Administration, and Sociology.

5. DETAILED COMMON AREAS ANALYSIS

5.1 Research Methodology & Statistics

All five programmes include a dedicated course or substantial block on research methods. This is the most universal overlap.

■ **Sociology:** Course 03: Research Methods and Social Statistics — scientific method, hypothesis, survey, case study, sampling, statistics (central tendency, dispersion, correlation, chi-square)

■ **Public Administration:** Paper 10(a): Research Methodology — objectivity, scientific method, case study, survey, observation, questionnaire, sampling, data processing

■ **Psychology:** Course 5 (Statistics & Experimental) and Course 9 (Research Methodology) — adds ANOVA, regression, experimental design, psychometry

■ **Political Science:** Course III, Blocks IV–V: Social Sciences Research — traditional vs. scientific approach, research design, hypothesis, observation, interview, sampling

■ **History:** Paper II: Historical Method — nature of history, source criticism, archaeological and literary sources, historiography

Interdisciplinary Potential: A unified 'Interdisciplinary Research Methods' foundation course could serve all five programmes, with discipline-specific method modules (experimental for Psychology, historiographical for History).

5.2 Social Movements in India

This is the strongest content overlap — three subjects have full dedicated courses with nearly identical typologies.

■ **Sociology:** Course 07: Social Movements and Change (Religious, Reformatory, Regional, Peasant, Tribal, Dalit, Women movements; Naxalite movement)

■ **Political Science:** Course IX: Social Movements in India (Liberal/Marxist/Subaltern/Feminist approaches; Dalit, Peasant, Tribal, Women, Naxalbari, Environment movements)

■ **History:** Papers IV, VIII, IX, X: National Movement, Anti-caste movements, Peasant/Labour/Women movements, Telangana Armed Struggle, Quit India

■ **Public Administration:** Course I, Block IV: Democratic people's struggles, gender/weaker sections participation

■ **Psychology:** Social Psychology: Conformity, obedience, group processes, prosocial behaviour — psychological drivers of collective action

Interdisciplinary Potential: A joint seminar on 'Social Movements in India: Historical Roots, Political Mobilisation, Sociological Analysis, and Psychological Dynamics' would combine chronological depth with multi-lens analysis.

5.3 State, Society & Governance

The intersection of state, governance structures, and civil society engagement spans four disciplines deeply.

■ **Political Science:** Course II (Indian Political System), Course X (Governance), Course VI (Comparative Politics) — Constitution, federalism, political institutions, governance reforms, e-governance

■ **Public Administration:** Course I (State, Society & PA), Course IV (Public System Management), Paper 06 (Indian Administration) — bureaucracy, NPM, good governance, accountability, RTI

■ **Sociology:** Course 04 (Panchayat Raj, Political Organizations), Course 06 (Social Legislations, Public Opinion)

■ **History:** Papers IV, X (Constitutional development, Indian Constitution, Planning, Political issues post-independence)

Interdisciplinary Potential: An integrated module on '**Governance, State & Civil Society in India**' could combine constitutional history, political structures, administrative mechanisms, and sociological perspectives on citizen engagement.

5.4 Caste, Class, Gender & Social Stratification

This is arguably the most interdisciplinary topic in the Indian social sciences, appearing meaningfully in all five programmes.

■ **Sociology:** Course 01 (Social Stratification, Dimensions), Course 07 (Dalit & Women movements), Course 08 (Tribal Studies, Caste concepts)

■ **Political Science:** Course VII (Political Sociology — Social Stratification), Course IX (Caste, Gender, Tribe-based movements, Reservation Policy)

■ **History:** Papers VI, VII, VIII (Caste system evolution from Vedic to modern, Women's status, Anti-caste movements, Dalit uplift, Phule, Ambedkar)

■ **Public Administration:** Course I (Gender, weaker sections, equity), Paper 07 (Reservations, empowerment, SERP)

■ **Psychology:** Social Psychology: Prejudice, Discrimination, Stereotypes, Gender Role Identity, Individual Differences

Interdisciplinary Potential: An interdisciplinary course on '**Inequality in India: Intersections of Caste, Class, and Gender**' would provide historical evolution, structural analysis, political mobilization, policy responses, and psychological dimensions of prejudice and identity formation.

5.5 Socialization, Culture & Personality

The processes by which individuals acquire social identities, cultural norms, and personality traits are explored across multiple programmes.

■ **Sociology:** Course 01: Socialization agencies and theories, Culture, Culture & Personality, Heredity & Environment

■ **Psychology:** Course II (Social Psychology — Socialization, Self-concept), Course IV (Life Span Development — psychosocial stages), Course VI (Personality theories — Freud, Erikson)

■ **Political Science:** Course VII: Political Socialisation, Political Culture, Political Communication

■ **History:** Papers VI–VIII: Social conditions, education systems, cultural/religious conditions across historical periods

Interdisciplinary Potential: A cross-disciplinary module on '**Socialization, Identity & Culture in Indian Society**' could integrate psychological developmental processes with sociological structural analysis and historical cultural evolution.

5.6 Marxist/Liberal/Gandhian Theoretical Frameworks

All five disciplines engage with overlapping theoretical traditions, though from discipline-specific angles.

■ **Sociology:** Course 02: Karl Marx (Conflict Theory), Durkheim, Weber — foundational theorists

■ **Political Science:** Course I (Scientific Socialism, Marx, Lenin, Gramsci, Mao), Course IV (Gandhi, Nehru, Ambedkar, Lohia), Rawls, Nozick

■ **Public Administration:** Course I: Liberal, Marxist, Gandhian, Neo-Liberal Perspectives on the State

■ **History:** Paper II (Marxist Historiography, Positivist), Paper VIII (Rationalism, Humanism, Liberalism)

■ **Psychology:** Indirectly through Maslow, Freud, social class/inequality concepts

Interdisciplinary Potential: A shared theory module covering '**Major Intellectual Traditions in Social Sciences**' could provide a unified foundation in Marxist, Liberal, Gandhian, and Post-modern thought.

5.7 Rural & Urban Development

Rural-urban dynamics are covered from sociological, administrative, and historical perspectives.

■ **Sociology:** Course 04: Full course on Rural & Urban Sociology (village studies, urbanization, ecology, slums, planning)

■ **Public Administration:** Paper 07: Rural Governance; Paper 08: Urban Governance (programmes, policies, ULBs, Panchayati Raj)

■ **Political Science:** Course VIII: State Politics — District, Urban, Rural local bodies

■ **History:** Socio-Economic History papers: Urbanization patterns across periods

Interdisciplinary Potential: A joint module on '**Rural-Urban India: Sociological, Administrative & Historical Perspectives**' could integrate sociological understanding of communities with governance mechanisms and historical evolution.

5.8 Globalization & Modernization

All five syllabi address globalization's impact on Indian society, though from discipline-specific angles.

■ **Public Administration:** Impact of Globalisation on Administration, New Public Management, E-governance

■ **Political Science:** International Political Economy, Globalization, Neo-liberalism

■ **Sociology:** Liberalization impact on Indian industry/society, Modernization trends

■ **History:** Contemporary India — Globalization, Economic reforms, Foreign Commerce

■ **Psychology:** Environmental influences on behaviour, Organizational Behaviour in modern contexts

Interdisciplinary Potential: An interdisciplinary perspective on globalization could examine economic policy changes (History/PA), political consequences (Pol. Sci.), social impact (Sociology), and psychological effects (Psychology).

5.9 Leadership, Organization & Group Dynamics

The study of how individuals function in organizations and groups spans three disciplines significantly.

■ **Psychology:** Course VIII: Organizational Behavior (motivation, leadership, job satisfaction, conflict); Social Psychology (Groups, Leadership theories, Group Processes)

■ **Public Administration:** Course II: Administrative Theory — Scientific Management (Taylor), Human Relations (Mayo), Maslow, McGregor, Simon; Course V: HRM

■ **Sociology:** Course 09: Industrial Sociology — Taylor, Mayo, Motivational Theories, Management, Trade Unions

Interdisciplinary Potential: A shared module on '**Organizations, Leadership & Human Behaviour**' would integrate psychological theories of motivation and leadership with administrative and sociological analyses of organizations.

5.10 Public Policy

Public policy analysis appears as a dedicated course in both Political Science and Public Administration.

■ **Political Science:** Course III: Public Policy — Rational, Incremental, System, Elite approaches; Reservation Policy, Education Policy case studies

■ **Public Administration:** Course III: Public Policy — Laswell, Dror; System, Incrementalist, Political Economy approaches; Agrarian, Education, Reservation, Health Policy

■ **Sociology:** Course 10: Sociology of Health (health policy), Course 05: Population Studies (population policy)

■ **History:** Contemporary India: Planning, Economic development, Industrial/Agricultural policies

Interdisciplinary Potential: A unified '**Public Policy in India**' module could combine political process analysis with administrative implementation perspectives and sociological/historical impact assessment.

6. SHARED THINKERS ACROSS DISCIPLINES

Several key thinkers appear across multiple syllabi, forming natural bridges for interdisciplinary teaching. The chart below shows thinkers who appear in two or more programmes:

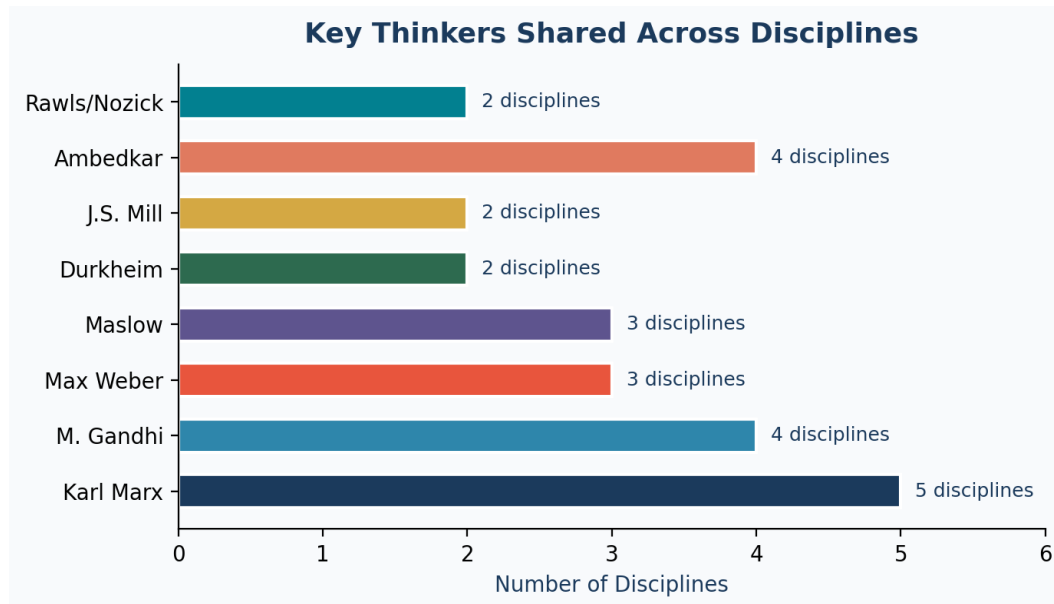


Figure 3: Key thinkers appearing across multiple discipline syllabi

Thinker	Disciplines	Topics
Karl Marx	SOC, POL, PUB, HIS, PSY	Conflict theory, Scientific Socialism, Marxist historiography, class analysis
M.K. Gandhi	POL, PUB, SOC, HIS	Gandhian perspective, Sarvodaya, Non-cooperation, National Movement
B.R. Ambedkar	POL, SOC, HIS, PUB	Dalit movements, Constitutional framing, Social justice, Reservation
Max Weber	SOC, PUB, POL	Bureaucracy theory, Religion & social transformation, Authority types
A. Maslow	PSY, PUB, SOC	Hierarchy of needs, Motivation theory, Human relations approach

7. PROPOSED INTERDISCIPLINARY MODULES

Based on the thematic overlap analysis, five interdisciplinary modules are proposed that could be offered as shared foundation courses or elective seminars across these programmes:

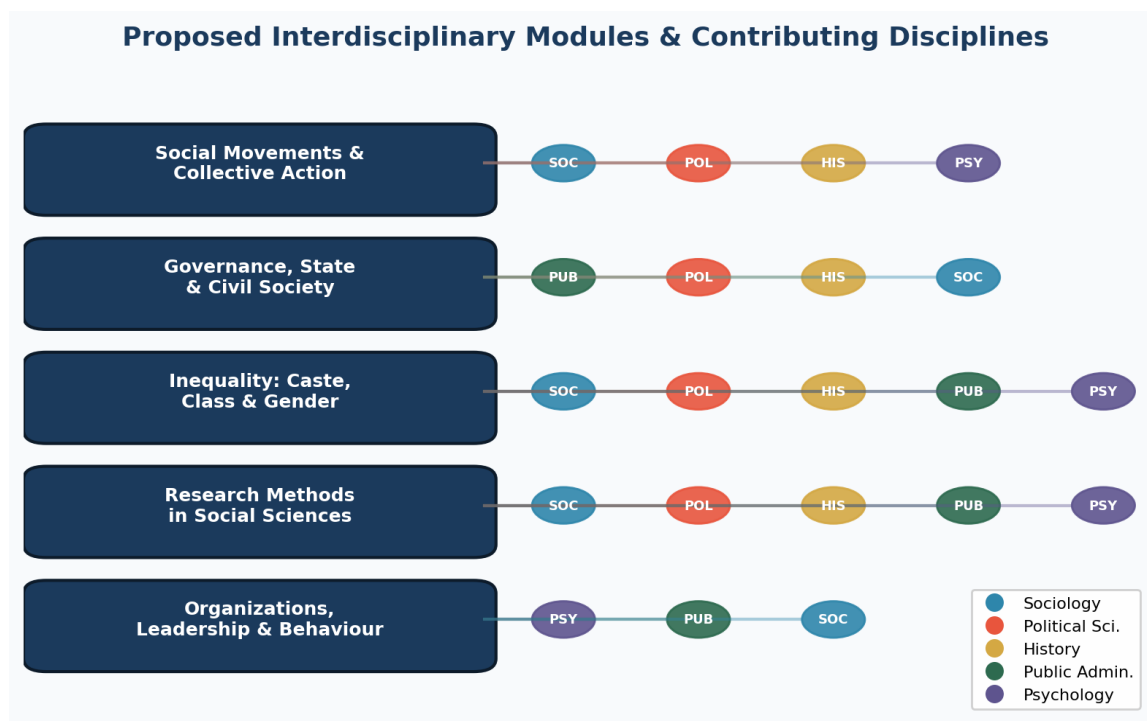


Figure 4: Proposed interdisciplinary modules with contributing disciplines

Module 1: Social Movements & Collective Action in India

Contributing Disciplines: Sociology + Political Science + History + Psychology

Core Question: *How do movements emerge, mobilize, sustain, and what are their psychological, structural, and historical drivers?*

Integration Strategy: Historical chronology of movements (History), sociological theories of change (Sociology), political mobilization and power analysis (Political Science), social-psychological understanding of conformity, obedience, and group behaviour (Psychology)

Module 2: Governance, State & Civil Society

Contributing Disciplines: Public Administration + Political Science + History + Sociology

Core Question: *How has the Indian state evolved and how do citizens engage with governance institutions?*

Integration Strategy: Constitutional evolution (History), institutional analysis (Political Science), administrative mechanisms and reforms (Public Administration), civil society and citizen engagement (Sociology)

Module 3: Inequality — Caste, Class & Gender

Contributing Disciplines: All Five Disciplines

Core Question: *How is inequality produced, maintained, challenged, and psychologically experienced in India?*

Integration Strategy: Historical roots of caste system (History), structural analysis (Sociology), political mobilization against inequality (Political Science), policy responses like reservation (Public Administration), prejudice and identity formation (Psychology)

Module 4: Research Methods in Social Sciences

Contributing Disciplines: All Five Disciplines

Core Question: *What constitutes valid knowledge and how do disciplines differ in methodological approach?*

Integration Strategy: Common foundation in scientific method, hypothesis, sampling, data collection; discipline-specific add-ons: experimental design (Psychology), historiography and source criticism (History), field surveys (Sociology), content analysis (Public Administration)

Module 5: Organizations, Leadership & Human Behaviour

Contributing Disciplines: Psychology + Public Administration + Sociology

Core Question: *How do individuals behave in organizational settings and what drives effective leadership?*

Integration Strategy: Motivation and personality theories (Psychology), administrative and management theories (Public Administration), industrial sociology and labour relations (Sociology)

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Establish Shared Foundation Courses

Create common first-semester courses in Research Methodology and 'Introduction to Social Sciences' that all five programmes share. This reduces redundancy and builds a common language for interdisciplinary dialogue.

2. Introduce Joint Seminar Courses

Offer interdisciplinary seminars where students from different programmes analyse the same social phenomenon (e.g., Dalit movements) from their discipline's perspective. This mirrors NEP 2020's emphasis on multidisciplinary education.

3. Create an Interdisciplinary Minor/Certificate

Allow students to earn an 'Interdisciplinary Social Sciences' minor by completing 2–3 modules from the proposed list, encouraging cross-disciplinary exposure.

4. Develop Integrated Reading Lists

Compile shared bibliographies for overlapping themes. For example, a single reading list on 'Social Movements in India' that includes historical accounts, sociological analyses, political critiques, and psychological studies.

5. Align with NEP 2020 Multidisciplinary Framework

The National Education Policy 2020 explicitly calls for multidisciplinary institutions and flexible curricula. The proposed modules directly support this vision by demonstrating how existing syllabi already contain interdisciplinary potential.

6. Faculty Cross-Listing and Team Teaching

Encourage faculty from different departments to co-teach overlapping courses. A Social Movements course could feature a historian, a political scientist, and a sociologist in rotation.

7. Reduce Content Duplication

The nearly identical coverage of social movements across Sociology and Political Science represents avoidable duplication. Consolidation would free credit hours for deeper or newer topics.

8. Leverage Open University Advantage

As an open university, Dr. BRAOU can pioneer modular, credit-based interdisciplinary programmes more easily than conventional universities bound by rigid departmental structures.

9. CONCLUSION

This analysis reveals that the five M.A./M.Sc. programmes at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University share **substantial thematic overlap** across ten major areas. The disciplines are already interconnected in content but taught in isolated silos.

The strongest case for interdisciplinary integration lies in the **Sociology–Political Science–History triad**, where topics like Dalit movements, peasant revolts, women's movements, and the national movement are taught with near-identical content but from different analytical lenses. **Psychology and Public Administration** add crucial dimensions: individual behaviour, organizational dynamics, and institutional/policy analysis.

An interdisciplinary approach would not merely reduce redundancy — it would produce graduates equipped to analyse Indian social reality with **historical depth, sociological breadth, political awareness, administrative understanding, and psychological insight**. This is precisely the kind of holistic education that India's National Education Policy 2020 envisions.

"The compartmentalization of knowledge into rigid disciplinary categories is the enemy of understanding complex social reality. Indian higher education must embrace the interconnectedness that already exists within its curricula."

— End of Report —