

Libraries and Education Reform: A Study from the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 Perspective

Shraddha Kalla¹, Nandan Singh², Seema Kumari³

¹Librarian, IIHMR University, Jaipur, India

^{2,3}Assistant Librarian, IIHMR University, Jaipur, India

Summary

India's National Education Policy (NEP), published in 2020, is a major step toward improving its current education system by utilising various methods such as Holistic Multidisciplinary Learning (HML), Inclusivee, Technology-Driven Learning (ITL) and Holistic Learning (HL). As such, libraries serve as a central source for teachers, parents and students during all phases of their education. Libraries will have a very important role to play within the NEP 2020, and this paper looks at how libraries support educational reform as directed by NEP 2020, focusing on how academic libraries, school libraries and public libraries assist in changing learning methods, enhancing digital learning, research and lifelong learning; and creating equality of access to information. Furthermore, the paper explores what barriers exist which hinder libraries from fully implementing the recommendations set forth in NEP 2020 and provides recommendations for how libraries may advance their positioning and reputation as essential partners in the educational reform process.

Keywords: Libraries, Education Reform, NEP 2020, Digital Libraries, Lifelong Learning, Knowledge Society

Introduction

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) was introduced by the Ministry of Education in India on 29 July 2020. The newly introduced policy is swapping the earlier introduced education policy in the country. The newly introduced policy "NEP-2020" is providing adequate guidelines for elementary education to higher education & vocational training in the Indian subcontinent. The newly introduced education policy focuses on the "Transformation of the education system of India". The nature of this newly introduced "NEP 2020" policy is more like an 'advisory' in nature, over which the state, institutions & schools have to take action on their own. The newly introduced "NEP-2020" describes the "Vision for the New Education System of India" as under: "The 'National Education Policy 2020' seeks to build an 'Indiacentric' education system: one that...inherently will help transform our nation sustainably into an 'equitable & vibrant knowledge society'. This will be through imparting 'high-quality education to all.'" 1-3 This paper focuses on the 'Importance of Libraries in Teaching & Learning'. The paper also describes the role of 'libraries for all forms of education'. The "Libraries Nowadays" provide "24x7 hours access to Library Resources for development of 'knowledge & skills of users'."

Overview of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- NEP 2020 focuses on transforming the education system across all levels. Some key features relevant to libraries include:
- Holistic and multidisciplinary education
- Promotion of critical thinking and creativity

- Emphasis on digital learning and technology integration
- Open and distance learning (ODL)
- Research and innovation focus
- Lifelong learning and adult education
- Equity, access, and inclusion
- These reforms require strong information infrastructure, where libraries play a foundational role.

Role of Libraries in Education Reform under NEP 2020

Libraries as Learning Resource Centres

NEP 2020 encourages learner-centred education. Libraries support this by providing diverse print and digital resources, enabling self-paced and inquiry-based learning.

Support for Multidisciplinary Education

- The policy promotes flexible curricula and multidisciplinary studies. Libraries facilitate this by:
- Developing diverse and cross-disciplinary collections
- Providing access to e-books, journals, and databases
- Supporting project-based and experiential learning

Digital Libraries and E-Resources

- NEP 2020 strongly advocates the use of technology. Libraries contribute through:
- Digital libraries and institutional repositories
- Access to open educational resources (OER)
- National platforms such as e-ShodhSindhu, SWAYAM, and the National Digital Library of India (NDLI)

Libraries and Research & Innovation

- Research is a core pillar of NEP 2020. Libraries support research by:
- Providing scholarly databases and research tools
- Assisting in literature review and citation management
- Promoting research ethics and plagiarism awareness

Libraries for Lifelong Learning

- NEP 2020 recognises learning beyond formal education. Public and academic libraries support lifelong learning by offering:
- Skill development resources
- Online courses and learning platforms
- Community learning programmes

Libraries and Inclusive Education

- NEP 2020 emphasises equity and inclusion. Libraries help achieve this by:
- Providing free or low-cost access to information
- Supporting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Offering resources in regional languages
- Providing assistive technologies for persons with disabilities
- Libraries act as equalisers in the education system by reducing information inequality.

Challenges in Implementing NEP 2020 through Libraries

- Despite their importance, libraries face several challenges:
- Inadequate funding and infrastructure
- Digital divide and poor internet connectivity
- Shortage of trained library professionals
- Resistance to technological change
- Lack of clear library-specific policy implementation guidelines
- Addressing these challenges is critical for effective education reform.

Strategies to Strengthen Libraries under NEP 2020

- To enhance the role of libraries in education reform, the following measures are suggested:
- Increased budget allocation for libraries
- Modernisation of library infrastructure
- Capacity building and continuous professional development of librarians
- Integration of libraries into institutional academic planning
- Promotion of digital literacy and information literacy programmes
- Strong collaboration between educators, librarians, and policymakers

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 is a significant departure from those previously established by the Government of India through its previous national policies regarding educational systems, as well as establishing a framework and direction for educational improvement across India for “Atmanirbhar Bharat” - a self-sufficient India. This is the first such plan for the 21st century to replace the previous plan for the National Policy on Education (NPE) implemented over 34 years ago (1986). The NEP 2020 builds on the foundation of 5 interrelated pillars of access, equity, quality, affordability, and transformational reform. The NEP 2020 encourages the establishment of libraries as centres of excellence and centres of educational resources and combines library innovation with the educational system so that stakeholders (students, teachers, governments, and community) understand both the need for and how to use the NEP 2020 policy to fulfil their own educational needs and goals.

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