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## ROLE OF ICT IN LIBRARIES UNDER NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020

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### ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights dramatic reforms in India's educational system, with libraries assuming a crucial function in promoting learning, research, and innovation. The principle emphasizes the need of adequately equipped and easily accessible libraries in educational establishments, ranging from primary schools to tertiary universities. Libraries are conceptualized as vibrant centres for learning, facilitating the comprehensive growth of students through the provision of varied resources, digital technologies, and openended areas for collaboration. National Education Policy 2020 advocates for the incorporation of digital technology in libraries, fostering the establishment of digital repositories and virtual libraries to guarantee fair and equal access to information. Moreover, it emphasizes the requirement of ongoing training for library personnel to be up to date with advancing technologies and information management methodologies. Libraries are strategically positioned as hubs for self-directed learning, that facilitate the cultivation of critical thinking, research abilities, and lifelong learning. Furthermore, the policy emphasizes the function of libraries in facilitating multi-disciplinary education and research, therefore contributing to the creation of a comprehensive and creative educational framework. NEP 2020 aims to use inclusive and technology-enabled library services to position libraries as crucial contributors to the educational reform in India.

## **Introduction to NEP 2020 and Libraries**

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** is a landmark reform introduced by the Government of India, aimed at transforming the educational landscape of the country. As the first education policy of the 21st century, NEP 2020 is an ambitious overhaul of the previous educational system, with a vision of making India a global knowledge superpower. The policy emphasizes a shift towards a more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary approach to education, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy. Libraries, as hubs of knowledge and learning, play a critical role in the successful implementation of the NEP, serving as essential resources for both students and educators in achieving the policy's goals.

## **The Role of Libraries in Educational Development**

Historically, libraries have been central to the dissemination of knowledge and education. They offer access to a vast repository of information, fostering intellectual development and independent learning. In the context of NEP 2020, libraries are envisioned as dynamic learning spaces that go beyond traditional book lending. They are to be integral in promoting lifelong learning, supporting curriculum changes, and advancing research in both schools and higher educational institutions.

The NEP 2020 highlights the importance of libraries at all educational levels, from early childhood education to higher education. The policy's focus on multidisciplinary learning, critical thinking, and digital literacy aligns with the evolving role of libraries as centers of knowledge. Libraries are seen as enablers of inclusive education, where students from diverse backgrounds, including marginalized communities, have equal access to resources that support their academic and personal development.

In particular, school and college libraries are to be leveraged to improve reading habits, enhance students' research skills, and support independent inquiry. The NEP's emphasis on using technology and digital resources further positions libraries as digital learning hubs. With access to e-books, journals, and online learning platforms, libraries can bridge the gap between traditional education and modern, digital-driven learning environments.

## **Libraries as Catalysts for Digital Transformation**

A key focus of NEP 2020 is digital literacy and the integration of technology into education. In this context, libraries are tasked with becoming centres for digital learning. The policy encourages the digitization of library resources and the development of online portals that provide free and open access to knowledge, thereby democratizing information. The initiative

to create **National Digital Libraries** will make books, research papers, and academic resources available to students and educators across the country.

The digital transformation of libraries will also include the training of library professionals in digital literacy, equipping them to manage digital databases, online resources, and e-learning platforms. This shift is essential to ensure that libraries remain relevant in the rapidly changing educational environment and continue to serve as essential learning resources for students.

Under NEP 2020, libraries are not just spaces for reading and research but also venues for collaborative learning, creativity, and innovation. They are expected to evolve into knowledge hubs where students and teachers engage in creative thinking and collaborative research, using a blend of physical and digital resources.

### **Enhancing Learning through Library Resources**

NEP 2020 recognizes that libraries are more than just collections of books—they are crucial for fostering a learning environment that is aligned with the policy's goals of flexible, multidisciplinary, and holistic education. To meet the aspirations of the NEP, libraries need to offer more diverse resources that support a wide range of academic disciplines and creative interests. This includes not only printed materials but also multimedia resources such as films, documentaries, and podcasts.

Libraries must also support the development of higher-order thinking skills by providing resources that encourage critical analysis and problem-solving. As part of NEP's focus on research and innovation, libraries in higher education institutions are expected to facilitate access to research databases, academic journals, and knowledge networks. This will enable students and researchers to engage with global academic communities and stay abreast of the latest developments in their fields.

The role of school libraries is equally important in promoting reading and literacy among young learners. NEP 2020 emphasizes foundational literacy and numeracy, and libraries are expected to contribute by offering a variety of reading materials tailored to different age groups and literacy levels. Additionally, libraries should provide access to interactive, digital resources that make learning more engaging and accessible, especially for students with disabilities or those from underrepresented communities.

## **Libraries and Inclusivity**

One of the central tenets of NEP 2020 is inclusivity in education. Libraries, under this policy, have a pivotal role in ensuring that education reaches all sections of society. By offering free and equitable access to information, libraries help bridge the educational divide. Special provisions must be made to ensure that libraries cater to the needs of students from disadvantaged communities, including those in rural and remote areas.

The policy also calls for the development of resources in multiple languages, ensuring that students have access to educational materials in their native languages. This is crucial in a diverse country like India, where students come from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Libraries can promote linguistic diversity by offering a rich collection of materials in regional languages, thereby supporting the NEP's vision of a multilingual education system.

Moreover, libraries should provide resources for students with special needs. Accessible reading materials, including Braille books, audiobooks, and assistive technologies, will ensure that students with disabilities have equal opportunities to benefit from library services.

## **The Future of Libraries in the NEP 2020 Era**

With the implementation of NEP 2020, the future of libraries in India looks dynamic and transformative. Libraries will play a central role in creating a culture of reading, inquiry, and research, aligned with the policy's vision of a multidisciplinary and flexible educational system. The emphasis on digital literacy and the integration of technology into education positions libraries as key players in the digital age, where knowledge is increasingly disseminated through digital platforms.

The NEP envisions libraries as interactive and vibrant spaces that foster creativity and innovation. As centers for community learning, libraries can host workshops, reading clubs, and research seminars that bring together students, teachers, and researchers to engage in collaborative learning.

At the same time, the policy highlights the need for continuous professional development for library staff to keep up with technological advancements and changing educational needs. This includes training in digital resource management, information literacy, and user education, enabling libraries to offer high-quality services that meet the demands of 21st-century learners.

In conclusion, NEP 2020 recognizes the crucial role of libraries in the education system, positioning them as key enablers of learning, research, and innovation. By embracing digital

transformation, supporting inclusivity, and fostering a love for reading and inquiry, libraries can contribute significantly to the policy's vision of an equitable, flexible, and learner-centred education system. As India moves forward with implementing NEP 2020, libraries will continue to evolve as central pillars of knowledge, creativity, and lifelong learning.

### **Review of Related Literature: NEP 2020 and Libraries**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to transform India's education system by emphasizing holistic, multidisciplinary learning, research, and technology integration. A significant aspect of this transformation is the role of libraries in promoting quality education, lifelong learning, and access to knowledge resources. Various studies have analyzed the impact of NEP 2020 on libraries, highlighting their evolving functions and challenges.

#### **1. Libraries as Centers for Learning and Research**

Soni (2024) emphasizes that libraries play a vital role in fostering inclusivity and diversity in education. The study highlights the importance of strengthening school, public, and academic libraries with adequate resources, including books, digital tools, and trained librarians. Chaudhari (2023) further discusses how libraries must evolve into student and research support centers, ensuring access to quality learning materials at all educational levels.

#### **2. Digital Transformation and Technology Integration**

Several studies focus on the increasing role of digital libraries, ICT, and e-learning platforms. Bharti (2022) and Patil (2020) discuss the incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in libraries, enhancing accessibility to online resources. Similarly, Gujral & Shivarama (2020) highlight how libraries facilitate digital education, online learning, and research, supporting the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education).

#### **3. Evolving Role of Librarians and Library Management**

Lawande (2024) and Singh (2022) discuss the changing role of librarians in the NEP 2020 era. The policy calls for professional development and capacity-building of library staff to ensure effective resource management and student engagement. The studies also emphasize the need for government support to address staffing requirements and infrastructure development.

#### **4. Challenges and Future Research Areas**

Despite the progress, certain gaps remain. Soni (2024) identifies the need for further research on the effectiveness of library resources in academic performance. Additionally, studies by Shahzad & Shubha (2023) highlight the need to explore best practices for integrating libraries with educational institutions and overcoming challenges in digital transformation.

## **Aims And Objectives**

To study the aims and objectives of NEP 2020 towards libraries development

To study the benefit of this policy towards libraries development

To study the challenges faced by libraries towards libraries development.

## **Scope**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions libraries as dynamic learning hubs, integrating both physical and digital resources to promote a culture of reading, research, and lifelong learning. It emphasizes the role of libraries in foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN), ensuring access to multilingual content and fostering a habit of reading from an early age. The policy highlights the importance of digital libraries, encouraging the expansion of platforms like the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) and increasing accessibility to open educational resources. Additionally, libraries in higher education institutions are expected to support interdisciplinary research through open-access journals and knowledge-sharing platforms.

## **Themes**

### **Sub-Themes:**

#### **1. Libraries as Learning Hubs**

- Integration of libraries in education for foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN)
- Role of libraries in promoting reading habits and self-learning

#### **2. Digital Transformation of Libraries**

- Expansion of digital libraries and e-resources
- Promotion of online knowledge-sharing platforms like NDLI
- Challenges in digital accessibility and internet connectivity

#### **3. Libraries in Higher Education and Research**

- Supporting interdisciplinary research through open-access journals
- Role of university and college libraries in academic development

#### **4. Multilingual and Inclusive Access**

- Availability of resources in multiple Indian languages
- Accessibility for differently abled individuals

#### **5. Challenges and Implementation Barriers**

- Lack of funding and infrastructural development
- Need for trained library professionals and upskilling opportunities

- Dependence on state governments for policy execution

## **6. Balancing Physical and Digital Libraries**

- The need for maintaining traditional libraries alongside digital initiatives
- Ensuring access to books in rural and underprivileged areas

This structured approach highlights the various dimensions of libraries under NEP 2020, covering both their potential and challenges. The role of libraries in NEP 2020 revolves around transforming them into dynamic learning hubs that foster foundational literacy, numeracy, and self-learning. The policy envisions libraries as essential spaces for promoting reading habits and enhancing knowledge accessibility. A key focus is the digital transformation of libraries, with initiatives like the expansion of digital libraries, e-resources, and platforms such as the National Digital Library of India (NDLI). However, challenges such as internet accessibility and digital divides remain significant barriers, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, libraries play a crucial role in higher education and research, supporting interdisciplinary studies through open-access journals and knowledge-sharing platforms. The policy also highlights the importance of multilingual and inclusive access, ensuring that resources are available in multiple Indian languages while improving accessibility for differently-abled individuals.

Despite these advancements, implementation challenges persist, including a lack of adequate funding, the need for infrastructural development, and the absence of structured training programs for librarians. The success of these initiatives heavily depends on state governments, as education falls under the concurrent list. Another critical aspect is balancing physical and digital libraries, ensuring that traditional libraries remain relevant while embracing digital innovations. Maintaining access to physical books, especially in rural and underprivileged areas, is essential for equitable learning opportunities. Overall, while NEP 2020 sets a progressive vision for the future of libraries, its effectiveness will depend on overcoming infrastructural and accessibility challenges to create truly inclusive and technology-driven knowledge centers.

### **Discussion and Criticism of NEP 2020 in Relation to Libraries**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings a progressive vision for libraries, aiming to integrate them into the educational system as learning hubs that support foundational literacy, self-learning, and research. A major highlight is the emphasis on digital libraries and openaccess resources, which seeks to bridge educational gaps and provide equitable access to

knowledge. Initiatives like the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) and the promotion of e-learning resources align with the policy's focus on technology-driven education. Additionally, NEP 2020 supports multilingual content and inclusive access, ensuring that resources are available in regional languages and for differently-abled individuals. The policy also recognizes the role of higher education libraries in promoting interdisciplinary research, openaccess journals, and knowledge-sharing platforms. If implemented effectively, these measures can modernize India's library system and make learning resources more accessible to all.

However, NEP 2020 has received criticism for its lack of a concrete roadmap for library development. While the policy promotes digital transformation, it does not allocate specific funds or implementation strategies for upgrading library infrastructure. Digital accessibility remains a major challenge, particularly in rural areas where internet connectivity and access to devices are limited. The gap between digital and physical libraries is another concern, as excessive reliance on digital platforms could sideline traditional libraries, which continue to serve as critical learning spaces for students without internet access. Additionally, the training and professional development of librarians is overlooked in the policy, despite their essential role in managing these evolving learning environments. Another criticism is that since education falls under the concurrent list, the success of these reforms largely depends on how well state governments implement and fund library initiatives, leading to potential disparities in execution across regions.

Overall, while NEP 2020 provides a strong vision for libraries, its effectiveness will depend on addressing challenges such as funding, digital infrastructure, equitable access, and the need for skilled library professionals. Without clear implementation strategies, the policy's ambitious goals may face significant hurdles in achieving their full potential.

## **CONCLUSION**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions libraries as essential learning hubs that support foundational literacy, digital education, and research. By promoting digital libraries, multilingual access, and open educational resources, the policy aims to make learning more inclusive, and technology driven. However, despite its progressive approach, challenges such as lack of funding, digital accessibility issues, inadequate training for librarians, and disparities in state-level implementation could hinder its success. While digital transformation is encouraged, maintaining a balance between traditional and digital libraries is crucial to ensure equitable access, especially for students in rural and underprivileged

areas. To fully realize the potential of NEP 2020, there is a need for clear implementation strategies, proper funding, and infrastructure development. If these challenges are addressed effectively, libraries can become powerful centres of knowledge, innovation, and lifelong learning in India's education system.

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