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# Role of Academic Libraries in National Educational Policy 2020 in Higher Education in India

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**Abstract**

In the context of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which aims to transform the education system in India by emphasizing holistic and multi-disciplinary education, promoting critical thinking, and fostering a learner-centric approach, academic libraries hold significant importance. They serve as essential pillars in supporting the objectives of the NEP by providing a conducive environment for holistic learning and research. Academic libraries play a crucial role in facilitating holistic education by offering a wide array of resources beyond textbooks, including academic journals, reference materials, multimedia resources, and digital databases. This diverse collection enables students to explore various disciplines, fostering a multi-disciplinary approach to learning as envisioned by the NEP 2020. This paper "Role of Academic Libraries in National Educational Policy 2020" deals with Essentiality of NEP 2020, role of Academic Libraries to achives the NEP Goals, Challenges and Suggestions for the Success of NEP-2020 in Academic Libraries discussed.

**Keywords:** NEP 2020, Academic Libraries & Higher Education System

## INTRODUCTION

Libraries have long been instrumental in education, serving as repositories of knowledge and resources to facilitate learning. However, with the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) in 2020 in India, their role has become even more pronounced in advancing the policy's objectives within higher education. The NEP seeks to bring about a comprehensive transformation in the Indian education system by advocating for interdisciplinary pedagogy, fostering research and innovation, and ensuring universal access to education.

In this context, libraries emerge as crucial players in realizing the NEP's vision. They boast extensive collections and expert guidance, uniquely positioning them to actively contribute to these goals. Libraries can facilitate interdisciplinary learning by providing access to diverse resources spanning various subjects, thereby supporting the NEP's emphasis on interdisciplinary pedagogy. Moreover, they serve as hubs for research and innovation, offering scholarly literature, research databases, and collaborative spaces conducive to academic inquiry and discovery.

Additionally, libraries play a pivotal role in promoting equitable access to education by

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ensuring that students and educators, regardless of their backgrounds or locations, have access to essential learning resources. By leveraging their resources and expertise, libraries can serve as catalysts for advancing the objectives outlined in the NEP, thereby contributing to the broader transformation of India's education landscape.

**Essentiality of NEP 2020**

"Libraries play a crucial role in promoting equitable access to education, particularly in the context of the digital divide. Strategies aimed at bridging this gap, such as providing computer labs, internet connectivity, and a diverse array of materials, are essential. As emphasized by Sontakke *et al*. (2022), a transparent and consistently enforced education policy is vital for a nation's progress"[1]

The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 in India underscores the imperative of digital transformation in education. Libraries must adapt to the digital era and embrace technology to cater to the evolving needs of students and faculty. This entails prioritizing digital literacy and integrating technology into educational practices. Libraries, as pivotal hubs of information, should align their operations with these objectives and offer access to digital resources like online databases, e-books, and educational materials. The NEP provides a framework for libraries to bolster their digital infrastructure, develop digital literacy programs, and harness technology to enhance learning experiences.

"Furthermore, the NEP underscores the significance of research and multidisciplinary methodologies. Libraries can play a pivotal role in facilitating research by providing access to scholarly resources, academic journals, research publications, and literary works. Recognizing the importance of research-driven education, libraries can align their services with this objective. By supporting research endeavors and offering resources conducive to multidisciplinary exploration, libraries contribute to the overarching goals of the NEP and foster a conducive environment for academic advancement."[2]

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Patil (2022) underscores the pivotal role of libraries and resources in implementing NEP 2020. Libraries serve as vital components in the development of educational institutions and the successful execution of new educational policies. Beyond being repositories of knowledge, libraries also serve as mediums for disseminating information to support the learning and research needs of users. Alongside traditional resources like books and academic journals, libraries offer a wide array of digital resources crucial for students, faculty members, and researchers alike. These resources facilitate knowledge acquisition and enable impactful research endeavours.[3]

Vagdal & Acharya (2023) highlight the multifaceted role of academically oriented libraries in supporting the NEP 2020 initiative. Libraries play a crucial role in supporting academic communities by providing quality information resources, promoting continuous education, facilitating research and innovation, creating opportunities for collaboration and networking, and enhancing digital literacy competencies. Through these efforts, libraries contribute to achieving policy objectives and fostering the overall development of the academic community.[4]

Anirudh & Niranjan Arun (2021) present a comparative analysis examining the higher education systems of India and Japan. Education plays a pivotal role in societal advancement and national development. The study extensively assesses the education systems of both nations, examining recent policy initiatives, reform measures, and statistical data on universities, colleges, and enrollment rates. Additionally, the article addresses lower enrollment rates in higher education in both countries and raises questions about the contributing factors and barriers. Ultimately, the study underscores the fundamental importance of higher education in a nation's development.[5]

Raghavan & Rabinder (2021) discuss the challenges encountered in the digitization of education within the framework of NEP. These challenges hinder the progress of online teaching and learning, a key focus of NEP 2020. While NEP aims to reform India's educational landscape by fostering digital learning and improving infrastructure prerequisites, the transition to online education faces obstacles. The analysis emphasizes the importance of developing essential infrastructure, providing digital literacy training, ensuring equitable access to educational resources, promoting pedagogical transformations, and fostering collaborative efforts. These measures are crucial for overcoming identified challenges and ensuring the effective and successful execution of NEP 2020.[6]

## OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aims to investigate the role of libraries in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in higher education in India. Specifically, it seeks to explore how libraries contribute to achieving the goals outlined in the NEP by serving the following objectives:

1. To find the Promoting digital literacy
2. To find the fostering research and innovation
3. To know the ensuring inclusive and equitable access to information
4. To know enhancing the learning experience
5. To assess the promoting collaboration and networking6.Evaluating the adequacy of learning resources for the NEP curriculum.

The study aims to investigate the role of libraries in implementing the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in higher education in India. Specifically, it seeks to explore how libraries contribute to achieving the goals outlined in the NEP by serving the following objectives:

**Role of Libraries in Achieving the Objectives of NEP Implementation Inhigher Education**

The establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 1956, mandated by an Act of Parliament, marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of higher education in India. This significant step also had a profound impact on academic libraries across the nation. In 1957, the UGC formed a Review Committee on University and College Libraries, chaired by Dr. S.R. Ranganathan, to ensure effective administration and governance of these vital institutions (UGC, 1965). Subsequently, in 1959, the UGC organized a seminal seminar titled "From Publisher to Reader: Work Flow in University and College Libraries," laying the groundwork for addressing library-related issues. The findings of the committee and the seminar proceedings were published in 1965, marking the nascent stages of academic library development in post-independence India.

Despite these commendable initiatives, challenges persist in the realm of university and college libraries. Issues such as inadequate financial resources, limited physical space, a dearth of well-trained personnel, suboptimal management practices, and deficient infrastructure continue to hamper their effectiveness. Furthermore, the significance of college libraries has often been overlooked in the reports of various commissions and committees.

However, the UGC, as the primary regulatory authority for higher education in India, has played a pivotal role in addressing these challenges and improving the infrastructure of university and college libraries. Recognizing the pivotal role of these libraries in shaping the quality of higher education and research, especially at the postgraduate level, the UGC has taken significant steps to enhance their standards and services.



## KEY POINTS TO NOTE

The library serves as the nucleus of academic institutions, playing a crucial role in fostering teaching, learning, and research. The UGC has acknowledged the critical importance of libraries and has incorporated the recommendations of various committees and commissions to enhance their functioning.

Adequate financial support has been allocated for various aspects of library development, including collection expansion, procurement of books and periodicals, furniture and equipment acquisition, and the construction of new library facilities. Efforts have also been made to improve the remuneration of college librarians.

Operational units focusing on information and library network enhancement, along with the modernization of library services and information centers, have collectively propelled the advancement of academic libraries within the sphere of higher education. INFLIBNET, in particular, has played a pivotal role in this regard.

Academic libraries within higher education institutions, notably universities and colleges, are pivotal in enacting the principles outlined in the New Education Policy 2020. They form an indispensable component of educational establishments across the spectrum. Various expressions and quotations underscore their significance in academia. As the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle aptly remarked, "The true university of these days is a collection of books." Post-independence, the Government of India established the University Education Commission, chaired by the esteemed scholar, philosopher, and educationist Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. He articulated, "The library is the heart of all the university's work, directly so as regards its research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work, which derives its life from its laboratories. Scientific research necessitates a library as much as its laboratories, while for humanistic research, the library serves as both library and laboratory combined

1. Access to Resources: Libraries provide students and educators with access to a wide range of resources including books, journals, research papers, and digital materials. This aligns with NEP's goal of providing equitable access to quality education resources for all learners.
2. Promotion of Multidisciplinary Learning: NEP emphasizes multidisciplinary learning and the integration of different disciplines. Libraries support this objective by offering diverse collections covering various subjects, enabling students to explore different fields of study and foster interdisciplinary approaches to learning and research.
3. Facilitating Research and Innovation: Libraries are hubs of information and knowledge, supporting research and innovation in higher education institutions. They offer access to scholarly literature, research databases, and other resources essential for academic research, thereby contributing to NEP's focus on promoting research and innovation across disciplines.
4. Digital Resources and Technology Integration: In line with NEP's emphasis on leveraging technology for education, libraries are increasingly digitizing their collections and adopting digital technologies to provide access to online resources, e-books, and databases. This facilitates remote learning, enables personalized learning experiences, and promotes the use of educational technology platforms, all of which are priorities under NEP.
5. Supporting Lifelong Learning: NEP emphasizes the importance of lifelong learning and continuous skill development. Libraries play a vital role in supporting this by offering continuing education programs, skill development workshops, and access to learning resources for professionals and lifelong learners beyond traditional academic settings.
6. Cultural and Community Engagement: Libraries serve as cultural and community hubs, promoting diversity, inclusion, and social cohesion. They host events, exhibitions, and discussions that foster cultural understanding, social interaction, and community engagement, all of which are aligned with the broader societal goals of NEP.
7. Collaboration and Networking: Libraries facilitate collaboration and networking among students, educators, researchers, and institutions. They provide spaces for group study, collaboration on projects, and networking opportunities, promoting a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing essential for achieving the objectives of NEP.

**Academic Libraries Role**

Libraries play a multifaceted role in higher education, supporting the objectives of NEP implementation by providing access to resources, fostering interdisciplinary learning, facilitating research and innovation, integrating technology, promoting lifelong learning, engaging with communities, and facilitating collaboration and networking among stakeholders.

**Facilitating Access to High-Quality Resources:** Libraries play a crucial role in providing inclusive and equitable access to diverse and high-quality informational resources, including literature, periodicals, databases, and digital assets. This aligns with the objective of NEP 2020 to ensure comprehensive access to educational materials.

**Digital Literacy and Technology Integration:** Libraries have the potential to enhance digital literacy among students and faculty by offering access to digital resources and providing training on digital tools and technologies. They also contribute to the integration of technology within teaching and learning methodologies, in line with the goals of NEP 2020.

**Research and Innovation Support:** Libraries serve as valuable resources for research assistance, offering scholarly resources, research databases, and academic journals. Beyond resource provision, they provide guidance on research methodologies, literature review strategies, and citation management, fostering a conducive environment for research and innovation.

**Learning Spaces and Collaborative Environments:** Libraries can create conducive learning spaces that encourage active learning, collaboration, and group discussions. They facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations, knowledge sharing, and networking among students, faculty, and researchers.

**Information Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills:** Libraries contribute to the cultivation of information literacy and the refinement of critical thinking skills among students through adept counsel in evaluating and utilizing informational resources. This aligns with NEP 2020's focus on fostering critical thinking capabilities and innovative proficiency.

**Cultural and Linguistic Diversity:** Libraries can curate resources that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity, promoting inclusivity in education as emphasized in NEP 2020. They provide materials in regional languages and ensure representation of diverse cultures and perspectives.

**Continuous Professional Development:** Libraries offer training and capacity-building programs for library staff to enhance their skills and competencies in areas such as digital literacy, information literacy, research support, and emerging technologies. This supports NEP 2020's emphasis on continuous professional development for educators**.**

It's important to acknowledge that the practical implementation of NEP 2020 in higher education in India may vary based on contextual factors and available institutional resources. Nevertheless, libraries have the potential to significantly contribute to the objectives outlined in NEP 2020 and enhance the overall educational landscape.

**Academic libraries are instrumental in realizing the objectives outlined in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) for transforming the Indian education system. However, they encounter various challenges in fulfilling their role effectively. Here are some of these challenges:**

**Funding**: Academic libraries necessitate substantial funding to procure and maintain resources, upgrade technology infrastructure, and deliver services. Yet, they often struggle to secure adequate funds from their institutions or government sources, hindering their ability to meet the evolving needs of users.

**Digital Divide**: While NEP-2020 emphasizes the importance of digital resources and online learning, not all students have equal access to the internet and digital devices. This digital disparity poses a challenge for academic libraries as they endeavor to ensure equitable access to their resources and services.

**Adapting to Changing User Needs**: NEP-2020 underscores the development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, necessitating a diverse range of resources and services. Academic libraries must adapt to the evolving needs of their users, providing resources and services that support the cultivation of these essential skills.

**Limited Physical Spac**e: Academic libraries often contend with spatial constraints for storing collections and offering study spaces. Balancing these physical space requirements with service demand presents a challenge, as libraries strive to accommodate the needs of users within constrained environments.

**Technology Integration:** NEP-2020 advocates for the seamless integration of technology across educational domains. Academic libraries are

tasked with incorporating new technologies to bolster teaching, learning, and research. However, this endeavor requires substantial investment and ongoing staff training to effectively harness the potential of technology in library services.

**Outreach and Engagement:** Effective outreach and engagement with the student and faculty community are essential for understanding their needs and promoting library resources and services. However, these efforts demand significant resources and dedicated staff efforts, posing challenges for libraries operating under limited budgets and staffing constraints.

Addressing these challenges necessitates collaborative efforts among institutional leadership, government bodies, and library professionals. By overcoming these obstacles, academic libraries can better align with the objectives of NEP-2020 and contribute to the enhancement of higher education in India.

**Infrastructure Development:** One of the primary hurdles faced by libraries is the necessity for improved infrastructure. Many libraries lack the physical space, modern facilities, and technological resources required to cater to the evolving needs of students and faculty. Upgrading infrastructure to facilitate collaborative spaces, provide access to digital resources, and enhance technological capabilities is imperative for effectively implementing NEP 2020.

**Digital Transformation**: NEP 2020 underscores the significance of digital pedagogy and technology integration within the education system. However, libraries encounter challenges in adapting to digital transformation. This includes the imperative to digitize existing resources, implement digital library management systems, and offer remote access to digital materials. Achieving this requires investments in digital infrastructure, staff training in digital technologies, and ensuring seamless access to digital resources for both students and faculty.

**Resource Management:** Effective resource management is essential for libraries to align with the objectives outlined in their policy documents. This involves acquiring a diverse range of relevant resources, both in physical and digital formats, to meet the needs of students and faculty. However, challenges such as budgetary constraints, licensing issues, and limited availability of quality resources hinder optimal resource management. To address these challenges, libraries should consider partnering with other institutions, joining consortia, and supporting open-access initiatives.

**Training and Capacity Building:** Libraries require adequately trained staff with the necessary skills to effectively implement NEP 2020. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of skilled professionals in areas such as digital literacy, information literacy, and research support. Therefore, libraries need to prioritize training and capacity-building programs for their staff to enhance their competencies and keep pace with evolving trends and technologies.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Engaging stakeholders, including students, faculty, and administrators, is crucial for the successful implementation of NEP 2020 in libraries. However, challenges arise due to limited awareness about the role of libraries, resistance to change, and a lack of collaboration. To overcome these challenges, libraries should actively engage with stakeholders through awareness campaigns, user surveys, and feedback mechanisms. It is also important to build strong partnerships with academic departments and involve stakeholders in decision-making processes to foster support and collaboration.

**Libraries are Powerful Tool to build a Knowledge Society n Higher Education**

Libraries indeed serve as powerful tools for constructing a knowledge society, particularly within higher education. Here's how:

**Access to Information**: Libraries are repositories of vast knowledge and information resources. They offer access to books, journals, databases, and multimedia materials, empowering individuals to acquire knowledge across various domains.

**Promotion of Lifelong Learning**: Libraries support lifelong learning by providing resources and services for individuals at all stages of their academic and professional journeys. They offer opportunities for self-directed learning, skill development, and personal enrichment.

**Facilitation of Research and Innovation:** Libraries play a pivotal role in fostering research and innovation within higher education institutions. They provide access to scholarly literature, research tools, and specialized collections that facilitate inquiry and discovery. Libraries also offer spaces for collaboration and knowledge exchange among researchers, contributing to the advancement of knowledge.

**Preservation of Knowledge**: Libraries serve as custodians of cultural heritage and intellectual heritage. They preserve rare and valuable materials, ensuring their accessibility for future generations.

By maintaining archives, special collections, and digital repositories, libraries contribute to the preservation and dissemination of knowledge.

**Promotion of Critical Thinking and Information Literacy**: Libraries promote critical thinking and information literacy skills among users. Librarians offer guidance on evaluating sources, navigating information landscapes, and conducting effective research. These skills are essential for navigating the complexities of the information age and contributing meaningfully to society.

**Cultural and Community Engagement**: Libraries serve as vibrant hubs for cultural and community engagement within higher education institutions. They host events, exhibitions, and workshops that celebrate diversity, promote dialogue, and foster a sense of belonging. By engaging with diverse communities, libraries contribute to the creation of a more inclusive and interconnected knowledge society.

In summary, libraries are integral to the development of a knowledge society in higher education. Through their diverse resources, support services, and community engagement initiatives, libraries empower individuals to access, create, and share knowledge, thereby contributing to the intellectual, social, and cultural advancement of society.

**Suggestions for the Success of NEP-2020 in Academic Libraries:**

**Strengthening Digital Infrastructure**: Academic libraries must prioritize building robust digital infrastructure to align with NEP-2020's emphasis on digital technologies in education. This entails providing access to a wide array of digital resources such as e-books, e-journals, databases, and online archives. Additionally, creating platforms for digital collaboration and communication is essential to support e-learning and remote access to library resources effectively.

**Promoting Research and Innovation**: To foster research and innovation, libraries should offer access to cutting-edge research tools and resources. Providing training and support for research methodologies, data analysis, and citation management is crucial. Collaboration with research institutions and organizations can facilitate the creation of research data repositories and promote open access to research findings, aligning with NEP-2020's objectives.

**Fostering Lifelong Learning**: Academic libraries should design programs and initiatives to promote lifelong learning among students, faculty, and the wider community. Access to diverse learning resources such as textbooks, reference materials, and multimedia resources should be facilitated. Organizing workshops, seminars, and conferences can further enhance the skills and knowledge of library users, contributing to lifelong learning goals outlined in NEP-2020.

**Strengthening Outreach and Engagement:** Engaging with users and communities through outreach programs and activities is vital. Libraries can organize book clubs, reading groups, and cultural events to promote reading and literacy. Partnerships with schools, colleges, and community organizations can expand the library's reach and impact, aligning with NEP-2020's focus on community engagement.

Creating a Culture of Innovation and Experimentation: NEP-2020 encourages experimentation and innovation in education, and libraries should embrace this ethos. Adopting new technologies, exploring innovative service delivery methods, and collaborating with diverse stakeholders are essential. Creating spaces for innovation and creativity, such as maker spaces, can foster experimentation and encourage users to explore new ideas and concepts, aligning with the spirit of NEP-2020.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, academic libraries play a multifaceted role in advancing the goals outlined in the National Educational Policy 2020 for higher education in India. By serving as knowledge repositories, embracing digital transformation, promoting research and innovation, fostering information literacy, and facilitating community engagement, libraries contribute significantly to the holistic development of students and the advancement of knowledge and scholarship. As such, they are integral to the realization of NEP 2020's vision of an equitable, inclusive, and globally competitive higher education system in India.

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