

# Skill Based Education in the Context of NEP-2020: A Research Perspective

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## ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant shift towards skill-based education, aiming to provide learners with practical competencies essential for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century employability. Traditional systems of education have primarily focused on knowledge acquisition, often neglecting the practical skills necessary for employability. NEP-2020 addresses this gap by integrating life skills, critical thought, creative thinking and problem-solving into the curriculum, ensuring a more holistic and application-oriented learning approach. This research explores the effectiveness of skill-based education in enhancing students' career readiness under NEP-2020. It examines key elements such as curriculum development, learner engagement, industry collaboration, and assessment methods. The policy emphasizes experiential learning, vocational training, and digital literacy, aligning education with global workforce demands. However, challenges like resource constraints, teacher training, and infrastructure gaps must be addressed to ensure successful implementation. By fostering multidisciplinary learning and flexibility in education, NEP-2020 prepares students for diverse career pathways, promoting entrepreneurial and job-oriented skills. This study highlights the need for continuous research and policy refinement to maximize the potential of skill-based education in bridging the gap between academia and industry, making learners future-ready in a rapidly evolving world.

**Keywords:** NEP-2020, Skill-Based Education, Knowledge-Based Learning, Holistic Development

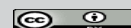
The National Policy of Education NEP-2020 has introduced a transformative paradigm in the Educational System of India, focusing on the holistic development at all levels of education. As India's third major education policy, initially drafted by the Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee in March 2019 and officially adopted on July 29, 2020, NEP-2020 brings significant reforms aimed at enhancing learning outcomes. It prioritizes critical thinking, creativity, and global competence while addressing gaps in the existing educational framework. The policy advocates for "lifelong learning for all" by ensuring an inclusive, flexible, and dynamic educational structure.

NEP-2020's emphasis on skill-based education rather than conventional knowledge-centric learning is one of its main features. In today's rapidly

evolving digital era, equipping students who has practical skills to enhancing their employability and overall development. By integrating life and employability skills into the curriculum, the goal of the policy is to close the gap between scholarly research and practical applications. NEP-2020 envisions a comprehensive learning framework aligned with 21st-century workforce requirements, offering a flexible approach that includes multiple exit options and subject choices based on students' interests and aptitudes.

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In the context of Digital India for the satisfactory demands of the present job market scenario, skill-based education has become essential. According to a survey on employability, 93% of Indian graduates with advanced professional degrees lack essential employability skills. This significant disparity highlights the urgent need for skill-based education helps to bridge the knowledge gap between professional preparation and academic learning.

To address this issue, Indian Government has established several institutions and actions taken to encourage skill development. These include the Skill Development Bureau, National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF)—all of these which aim to equip students with the necessary expertise for economic and social progress. Increasing public awareness of these initiatives is essential to ensuring that individuals can fully benefit from the opportunities they provide.

## Review of related Literature

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has been widely analyzed for its transformative approach to education in India. Several studies emphasize its role in promoting vocational education, bridging the employability gap, and aligning education with 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce needs.

Gading & Bhosale (2025) explores the NEP-2020's encourages towards entrepreneurial skill development through Vocational Education & Training by promoting innovation, creativity, business acumen and also emphasis to the individual to starts the ventures, generating employability and contribute to economic self-sufficiency.

Harikrishnan (2025) highlights NEP-2020 actional insights for policymakers, educators and institutions to develop Indias's educational framework for a prosperous inclusive and sustainable future.

Dash (2024) situates NEP-2020 within the broader socio-economic context, presenting it as a much-needed reform in response to post-pandemic challenges.

De and Majumder (2024) discuss that how NEP-2020 aims to start a discussion on evidence-based evaluation of the nation's skill situation and tackle the problem of skill development as a component of the curriculum.

Kanungo (2024) critically evaluates NEP-2020 in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), particularly focusing on accessibility, fairness, and competency-based learning.

Dash *et al.* (2023) explores the NEP-2020's targets for the inclusive growth at the grassroot level of education and suggests connections between symbiotic and co-creative domains in the nature.

Chaurasia & Veeriah (2023) discuss how initiatives like Skill India have contributed to workforce readiness by fostering contemporary skills aligned with market needs.

Choure & Singh (2023) assert that education must move beyond information processing, incorporating skill development to enhance employability.

Roy (2023) envisages skill enhancement courses is essential for the undergraduate programs for the implementing NEP-2020. These course prepared student for the need and demand of the industry as well as society which required collaboration between academia and industry.

Sharma and Trivedi (2023) situate NEP-2020 emphasizing to develop skill-based model on the collaboration efforts of the both centers and state and also need to increase funding so that the education can be restructure and global standards.

Veerabhadraiah (2023) explores the potential of vocational education, highlighting its transformative capacity while addressing challenges in implementation.

Naveen (2022) outlines the history of vocational education as well as the policy viewpoint on vocational education in NEP-2020. In accordance with the UGC's recommendation, it also envisions the theoretical foundation for coordinating general education with vocational and skill-based education.

Paschal & Srivastav (2022) highlight that NEP-2020 served as a stimulus for reforming the Educational System of India to increase employability and emphasis on work happiness, also develop 2030 agenda for providing high quality education and life long learning to everyone.

Similarly, Bhatnagar (2021) highlights concern regarding graduate employability, stressing the importance of aligning education with industry demands.

Pathak (2020) studies that by 2025, at least 50% of the learners has explore their Vocational Education through their school and higher education system.

Sharma (2015) assert that NEP-2020 provide a roadmap but the ultimate journey was the all stakeholders on their dedication, collaboration and innovation by investing in the Youth India prepared skilled, employable and entrepreneurial citizens.

Overall, these studies collectively reinforce the significance of National Education Policy 2020 in restructuring education system of India to ensure practical skill development, economic growth, and career readiness. However, successful implementation remains a challenge, requiring strategic planning and policy execution.

### Significance of the Study

This study highlights the transformative effect of National Education Policy 2020 on education system of India by shifting the focus from traditional knowledge-based learning to skill-based education. It underscores the importance of practical skills, critical thinking, and creativity in enhancing students' employability and holistic development. By aligning education with industry needs, NEP-2020 aims to overcome the knowledge gap between academic and professional competencies, fostering learners for obstacles in the real world.

The study emphasizes the need for curriculum reforms that regale students' differentiated learning styles, attitude, aptitude, and career aspirations. By fostering experiential and competency-based learning, skill-based education enhances adaptability, problem-solving, and lifelong learning. Additionally, in a rapidly evolving, technology-driven world, such an education system gives them the tools they need to succeed invaried career pathways.

Through a qualitative analysis of policy frameworks and existing literature, this study provides valuable insights into the significance of skill-based education in shaping a future-ready workforce. Effective implementation of NEP-2020 can lead to an inclusive, dynamic, and globally competitive education system, ensuring that students are adequately equipped to handle the demands of the modern economy.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ❑ To assess the significance of skill-based education for the individual's future life.

### Methodology of the Study

This study adopts a qualitative research approach using secondary sources of data to analyze the impact of skill-based education under NEP-2020. Data is collected from government reports, policy documents, research articles, books, and educational surveys to examine curriculum reforms, employability trends, and pedagogical shifts. The present study is conducted to identify key trends, main features, challenges faced of skill education and implications of skill-based learning. Moreover, the study provides insights into policy effectiveness, highlighting the need for practical implementation and continuous assessment in India's education system.

### NEP-2020's Key Highlights

There are several key highlights of the Educational Policy NEP-2020 as follows:

- ❑ **Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education:** NEP-2020 promotes an integrated learning approach that combines arts, sciences, and vocational subjects. It aims to develop students' cognitive, social, and emotional skills for overall growth. The focus is on flexible learning beyond rigid subject boundaries.
- ❑ **Flexibility and Choice:** The policy allows students to select subjects based on their interests instead of fixed streams. It introduces multiple entry and exit options in higher education. This flexibility supports diverse career pathways and lifelong learning.
- ❑ **Language Policy:** NEP-2020 encourages multilingual education with a focus on mother tongue or regional languages in early schooling. It aims to enhance comprehension, cognitive skills, and cultural appreciation. English remains an option, but priority is given to Indian languages.
- ❑ **Assessment Reforms:** Traditional rote-based exams are replaced with competency-based assessments. Emphasis is on critical thinking, problem-solving, and application of knowledge. Continuous and adaptive evaluation methods

ensure a better understanding of students' abilities.

- ❑ **Teacher's Professional Development and Training Program:** NEP-2020 emphasized on improving teacher education through continuous training and skill enhancement programs. It emphasizes modern pedagogical approaches, digital literacy, and research-based teaching methods. Well-trained teachers are key to quality education reforms.
- ❑ **Technology Integration:** Digital tools are promoted by the policy, online platforms for learning, and AI-based teaching aids. It aims to overcome the digital divide and make education accessible to all. Technology is integrated for personalized learning, assessments, and remote education.
- ❑ **Higher Education Reforms:** NEP-2020 restructures higher education with a multidisciplinary approach and flexible course structures. It introduces a four-year undergraduate program with multiple exit options. The focus is on research, innovation, and global academic collaborations.
- ❑ **Inclusive Education:** The policy ensures equal learning opportunities for marginalized and differently-abled students. Special provisions, scholarships, and assistive technologies support inclusive learning environments. NEP-2020 aims to bridge socio-economic and regional disparities in education.
- ❑ **Global Engagement:** NEP-2020 encourages international collaborations, student exchange programs, and research partnerships. By encouraging international universities to establish campuses, it seeks to make Indian colleges more competitive on a worldwide scale. The goal is to raise the standard and international recognition of Indian education.

### Main features of NEP-2020

NEP-2020 is a transformative reform purpose at revamping education system of India to make it more holistic, flexible, and skill-oriented. It introduces several key features to align education with 21<sup>st</sup>-century needs. One of its major highlights is the change from memorization to conceptual understanding, promoting critical thoughts,

creativity, and problem-based approaches. The school education structure has been revised to a 5+3+3+4 system, emphasizes on foundational learning and early childhood education. Multilingual education is encouraged, emphasizing regional languages as a medium of instruction.

The policy integrates skill-based learning, vocational training, and experiential education to enhance employability. It introduces flexibility in subject selection, allowing students to choose based on their interests. Higher education reforms include multiple entry-exit options, a four-year undergraduate program, and a focus on multidisciplinary learning.

NEP-2020 also emphasizes technology integration, promoting digital learning, online education, and AI-based tools. Teacher training and professional development are prioritized to improve the quality of education. Furthermore, the policy supports inclusive education, ensuring learning opportunities for marginalized groups.

Overall, NEP-2020 aims to create a student-centered, future-ready education system, preparing learners for global challenges and career opportunities.

- ❑ **Empowering Education from Fact Learning to Learning 'How to Learn':** NEP-2020 change from memorization to conceptual understanding and self-directed learning. It encourages students to develop inquiry-based and problem-solving skills. The aim is to make learners independent thinkers and lifelong learners.
- ❑ **To Develop Human Potential for the Promotion of National Development:** The policy aims to nurture talent and skills that contribute to India's economic and social progress. Education is seen as a tool for empowering individuals to drive innovation and national growth. Holistic development is prioritized to create responsible and skilled citizens.
- ❑ **To Prepare the Country for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:** NEP-2020 aligns education with global trends, technological advancements, and modern workforce demands. It integrates digital literacy, vocational training, and interdisciplinary learning. The goal is to equip learners with future-ready skills and adaptability.
- ❑ **To Provide Skill-based Education for Better Job Requirements:** The policy emphasizes vocational training, internships, and industry



linkages to improve employability. Practical and hands-on experience learning are consolidated the curriculum. This ensures individuals are job-ready and equipped with relevant workplace skills.

- ❑ **To Develop Knowledge, Skills, Attitude, and Values Among Individuals:** NEP-2020 promotes a balanced approach to education, nurturing intellectual, ethical, and social competencies. It fosters creativity, innovation, and emotional intelligence in learners. The focus is on holistic personal and professional growth.
- ❑ **To Focus on Experiential, Inquiry-based, and Learner-Centered Methodology:** The policy encourages learning through real-world experiences, projects, and case studies. Students actively engage in problem-solving and research-based learning. This approach enhances curiosity, understanding, and retention of concepts.
- ❑ **To Develop Critical Thinking, Creativity, Problem-Solving, and Communication Skills:** NEP-2020 prioritizes higher-order thinking skills essential for success in a dynamic world. It fosters analytical reasoning, innovation, and collaboration. These skills prepare learners to navigate complicated issues and make a contribution meaningfully to the society.

## Skill Based Education in the light of NEP-2020

NEP-2020 emphasis on skill-based education over traditional knowledge-centric learning. In today's rapidly evolving digital era, equipping students with practical skills is crucial to enhancing their employability and overall development. By integrating life and employability skills into the curriculum, the policy wants to fill the gap between academic knowledge and real-world applications. NEP-2020 envisions a comprehensive learning framework aligned with 21st-century workforce requirements, offering a flexible approach that includes multiple exit options and subject choices based on students' interests and aptitudes.

In the context of Digital India, skill-based education has become a necessity to overcome the demands of the present job sector. To address this issue and

challenges, the Government of India has established many institutions and actions to encourage skill development for the better life of the individual. These include the Skill Development Bureau, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF)—all of which aim to equip students with the necessary expertise for economic and social progress. Increasing public awareness of these initiatives is essential to ensuring that individuals can fully benefit from the opportunities they provide. There are several Schemes of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) as follows:

- ❑ PMKVY stands for Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
- ❑ Rozgar Mela.
- ❑ PMKK stands for Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendras.
- ❑ Scheme for Capacity Building.
- ❑ Udaan.
- ❑ Higher Education and School Initiatives.
- ❑ The International Skill Centers of India.
- ❑ PDOT stands for Pre-departure Orientation Training.

NEP-2020 aims to provide high-quality education to the individual and skill development opportunities for the diverse career paths. Skill development reduces reliance on traditional job channels, instills confidence, and enhances socioeconomic status. As individuals leverage their skills to drive innovation and progress. In India, empowering young people with skills is essential to establishing self-reliance for their future purpose.

## Benefits of Skill-Based Education in the Light of NEP-2020

Skill-based education under NEP-2020 enhances employability, boosts economic growth, and fosters entrepreneurship. It promotes social inclusion, bridges the education-industry gap, and equips learners for technological advancements. The policy encourages lifelong learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. By integrating vocational training, it improves job readiness, global competitiveness, and productivity. Skill-based learning reduces dependence on government jobs, supports innovation, and empowers marginalized

communities, making education more practical and future-oriented.

1. **Enhances Employability:** Equips students with practical skills needed for jobs, reducing unemployment rates.
2. **Boosts Economic Growth:** Skilled professionals contribute to industrial productivity and national development.
3. **Fosters Entrepreneurship and Innovation:** Encourages self-employment, startups, and creative problem-solving.
4. **Promotes Social Inclusion and Equality:** Provides equal opportunities for all, including marginalized groups.
5. **Helps in Adjusting to Technological Disruptions:** Prepares students for evolving digital and AI-driven workplaces.
6. **Encourages Lifelong Learning:** Develops adaptability and continuous skill enhancement throughout life.
7. **Bridges the Gap Between Education and Industry:** Aligns academic learning with market demands.
8. **Increases Job Satisfaction:** Practical skills enable individuals to work efficiently and confidently.
9. **Strengthens Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Encourages analytical reasoning and decision-making abilities.
10. **Supports Multidisciplinary Learning:** Integrates vocational training with traditional subjects for holistic development.
11. **Improves Productivity and Performance:** Hands-on experience enhances efficiency and work output.
12. **Facilitates Global Competitiveness:** Prepares students to meet international skill standards.
13. **Reduces Dependence on Government Jobs:** Encourages private sector employment and entrepreneurship.
14. **Improves Communication and Teamwork:** Enhances collaboration and interpersonal skills in workplaces.
15. **Empowers Rural and Underprivileged Communities:** Provides job-oriented education, improving living standards.

## Challenges faced by Skill-based Education

Despite the numerous benefits of skill-based education, several challenges hinder their effective implementation:

- ☐ Lack of Awareness
- ☐ Quality Assurance
- ☐ Infrastructure and Resources
- ☐ Industry Alignment
- ☐ Funding and Sustainability

## Effective strategies for the improvement

- ☐ Linking Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to Skill India Movement
- ☐ Ensure Policy Frameworks Are Attractive
- ☐ Support for educational institutions
- ☐ Facilitate Industry Collaboration
- ☐ Market Trends and Opportunities
- ☐ Government Funding for Innovation.

## REVIEW BASED DISCUSSION

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has ushered in a paradigm shift in India's educational landscape, emphasizing the integration of skill-based education to foster employability, entrepreneurship, and economic self-reliance. Numerous scholars and researchers have explored the policy's implications, particularly in aligning the curriculum with 21st-century skill demands and industry expectations. Gading and Bhosale (2025) underscore NEP-2020's emphasis on fostering entrepreneurial skills through vocational education and training. Their study highlights how the policy promotes innovation and business acumen among students, aiming to nurture job creators rather than job seekers. Harikrishnan (2025) further emphasizes that NEP-2020 provides actionable insights for stakeholders to build a sustainable and inclusive educational framework that is responsive to national aspirations.

From a socio-economic lens, Dash (2024) interprets NEP-2020 as a timely reform in response to the post-pandemic employment crisis, advocating skill development as a pathway to economic revival. De and Majumder (2024) support this by stressing the importance of evidence-based evaluations and the inclusion of skill components in the mainstream curriculum, ensuring a structured approach to

workforce readiness. Kanungo (2024) assesses NEP's role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), noting that the focus on competency-based and accessible learning models supports educational equity and quality. This viewpoint is complemented by Dash *et al.* (2023), who examine grassroots-level education under NEP-2020, suggesting a symbiotic approach to integrating skills across formal education systems.

The role of national initiatives like Skill India has also been a key area of discussion. Chaurasia and Veeriah (2023) indicate that these initiatives have effectively prepared youth for the modern job market by aligning educational content with industry demands. Choure and Singh (2023) argue that skill development must transcend rote learning and focus on practical, application-based learning to boost employability. Roy (2023) advocates for mandatory skill enhancement courses at the undergraduate level, highlighting the necessity of academia-industry collaboration. Sharma and Trivedi (2023) reinforce this view, calling for joint efforts from central and state governments, as well as increased funding, to restructure education on global lines. Vocational education is another pillar explored extensively. Veerabhadraiah (2023) recognizes its transformative capacity but also points to challenges in implementation such as infrastructure, trained manpower, and perception barriers. Naveen (2022) discusses the historical trajectory of vocational education in India and contextualizes NEP-2020 within that evolution, promoting the convergence of academic and vocational learning streams.

Paschal and Srivastav (2022) view NEP-2020 as a catalyst for systemic reform, enhancing employability and life-long learning. Bhatnagar (2021) emphasizes the pressing concern of graduate employability, advocating curricular reforms aligned with labor market needs. Earlier projections by Pathak (2020) envisaged that by 2025, at least half of all students would access vocational education through formal institutions.

Finally, Sharma (2015) asserts that while NEP-2020 provides a visionary roadmap, its success ultimately depends on the collective efforts of stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and industry partners. The reviewed literature affirms that NEP-2020 has redefined the role of skill-based

education in India. However, translating policy into practice requires coordinated implementation, sustained investment, and continuous stakeholder engagement to truly empower youth and drive national development.

## CONCLUSION

NEP-2020 represents a change in perspective towards skill-based education, integrating life skills and employability to bridge the gap between academic learning and its real-world application. This approach emphasizes critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and practical competencies, equipping students with essential tools to navigate the challenges of the 21st-century workforce.

The policy acknowledges the limitations of traditional rote learning and focuses on experiential and vocational training, ensuring that students acquire hands-on experience relevant to their career aspirations. By aligning education with industry demands, NEP-2020 fosters entrepreneurship, innovation, and adaptability, crucial for professional success in an evolving job market.

Moreover, this study highlights the characteristics, benefits, and challenges of skill-based education, emphasizing the need for curriculum reforms that cater to students' prior knowledge, learning styles, and interests. A well-structured, competency-driven education system not only enhances career readiness but also fosters lifelong learning and self-sufficiency. The effective implementation of NEP-2020 is critical in shaping a future-ready generation, equipped with technical, cognitive, and interpersonal skills essential for sustainable success in an increasingly global and technology-driven economy.

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