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SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 IN REFERENCE OF UP AND CBSE BOARDS

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ABSTRACT

Skill development is a challenge for modern India and even after completing education students are considered ineligible is some fields. Skill development is the essence of the store house of knowledge. To overcome the deficiency in the number of students opting for skill development, the government has given more attention in this direction through Nationa Education Policy 2020 which has the potential to play a vital role and strengthen the student technically. It is vital for attracting the attention of the students towards skill development-related courses at the higher secondary level itself and will be enabling them to use this acquired knowledge in their routine life. Realizing its significance, the nation is gearing to strengthen the modern education system through implementation of skill development related courses in senior secondary level schools of CBSE and Uttar Pradesh board and hence it has been included as a land mark point in NEP 2020.

Keywords: Skill Development, National Education Policy 2020, Curriculum of CBSE Board, Curriculum of U.P. Board

1. INTRODUCTION

"Education, to be complete must be human. It makes included not only the training of intellect but also refinement of the heart and the discipline" - Dr. Radha Krishnan.

In Sanskrit language the word Vidya is used for education. Vidya is derived from the root Vid, which is used to signify knowledge. Thus, the word Vidya derived from the root vid means to know. Known mainly includes two things (1) knowing what knowledge is imported from outside. That is the child should know and understand what the teacher is telling him (the knowledge he is importing), (ii) The child should know, recognize and understand the knowledge that is located within him. Ancient Indian philosophers believed that self knowledge is the true knowledge.

Ancient Indian education can be described as follows- inclusion of worship of God and hence was religious. It also foucused on Character building, personality development, inculcation of civic and social sense with advancement of social efficiency and preservation and dissemination of national culture. Professional education included military education, medical education and education in commercial skills.

Like the ancient time in the Buddhist era too, there was a system of primary and higher education and these were the two levels of education. In primary education, the child was given knowledge of five disciplines which comprised of word knowledge, logic science, medical science, spiritual science and craft knowledge. In a way, both religious and practical subjects were give palace in the curriculum. The teaching in monastery was in Pali and Sanskrit language.

In the Muslim Education system, education meant only the knowledge given in Maktab & Madrasas. Importance was given to both religious and practical education in the curriculum. There was a provision of practical work in the education and subjects taught were religion, philosophy, logic, handcraft, painting, politics, economics, medicine etc. Oral and self-study teaching methods were used.

British period with the aim of producing skilled human resources further systematized the education system. Wood's Manifesto (1854) advocated education for the general population that would prove to be practically usefull for various aspects of human unemployment. It was acceptedwidely. (Kumar, 2018).

After independence, the National Policy on Education 1968 was implemented which stated that the central and state governments would have to bear the responsibility of the education system. The 10 + 2 + 3 education structure was implemented across the country and compulsory and free education was to be provided.

Skill can be developed in children in which the arrangement will be made for agriculture vocational, technical and engineering education. (Gupta & Gupta, 2019).

Government published the revised national education policy 1986 (1992) which centered on vocational and skill training program based on need and interest. (Kant, 2012)

1.1. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

National Education Policy 2020 is based on 5th pillar of education while the remaining are are access, equality, quality, affordability and accountability. The new curriculum and pedagogical structure 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 correspond to the age group of 3 – 8, 8 – 11, 11 – 14, 14 – 18 years respectively. (Acadecraft, 2023)

NEP 2020 mentions about the dismal state of teacher education. The lack of development and unsatisfactory service conditions were responsible for the lack of teaching quality and motivation among Indian teachers. (Masih & Rubina, 2023)

A literature survey on library stated that bringing industry in to the learning process will be promote research and innovation. The policy emphasizes the need to strength school and public library. (Soni, 2023)

The National Education Policy 2020 marks a significant advancement in the field of education in India by incorporating elements from primary to higher education. (Rajpura, 2024)

1.2. SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skilled workforce is essential for the country's economic development which can be facilitated by providing vocational training and developing specialized skills. (Khilji & Khan, 2012)

Knowledge is required for specific occupation or profession which enhances employability and contributes to job creation. (Kumar & Mandhava, 2019)

Skill development can contribute to inclusive growth by providing opportunity to people from diverse backgrounds. (Hottinger & Kzer, 2022)

2. NEED AND IMPORTANT OF EDUCATION:

Education is the basis of human life. Development and progress of human being depend on education. Education builds personality as well as adorns it. At the time of birth, a child’s behavior is more like an animal and his acts are inspired by basic instincts. Education provides maturity to him by properly guiding these instincts and makes his behavior, his appearance and his activities appropriate and useful for the society.

2.1. OBJECTIVES

- Study on skill development in the context of National Education Policy 2020.
- Study of skill development courses under operational curriculum in central higher secondary level school.
- Study of skill development courses under the curriculum implemented by the schools of higher secondary level in Uttar Pradesh.

3. RESEARCH GAPS

Although the history of Indian education reveals a continuous emphasis on holistic human development—from ancient traditions of self-knowledge and character formation, through Buddhist and Muslim systems that balanced religious and practical learning, to the colonial and post-independence policies that prioritized systematic and vocational training—present educational reforms such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 have shifted the focus strongly towards skill development, employability, and inclusivity. However, gaps remain in understanding how traditional value-based approaches can be meaningfully integrated with modern skill-based frameworks in actual school curricula. Empirical evidence on the effectiveness of skill development courses in central and state higher secondary schools, particularly in Uttar Pradesh, is limited. Similarly, while NEP 2020 underscores the dismal state of teacher motivation and training, little research has been conducted on teachers' preparedness to deliver skill-oriented education under the new 5+3+3+4 structure. Furthermore, despite policy emphasis on libraries and industry linkages to promote innovation, very few studies have assessed their real implementation and outcomes. Finally, questions remain about whether skill development initiatives are equitably benefiting learners from diverse backgrounds, including rural, marginalized, and disadvantaged groups. These gaps highlight the need for a focused study on skill development within the framework of NEP 2020, with particular reference to curriculum implementation at the higher secondary level.

3.1. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

Research method used depends on the purpose and nature of the research. Considering the nature of research descriptive survey method has been used for the present research.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study of Key point of Skill Development in National Education Policy-2020

Table 1

NEP 2020 Sub-point / Title	NEP 2020 Reference (Page/Para)	Integrated Activities / Provisions	Expected Outcomes
NEP Introduction	Page 3/ Para 3	Scientific and technological progress is enhancing demand for skilled workforce, particularly related to data science, computer science, and mathematics.	Skill development in the modern era
NEP Introduction	Page 3/ Para 3	Due to climate change, increasing pollution, and depletion of natural resources, demand for skilled professionals will rise to meet research needs in life sciences, health sciences, physical sciences, agriculture, climate sciences, and social sciences.	Promotion of research
Fundamental Principles	Page 7/ Point 10	Communication, cooperation, teamwork, and empathy are considered essential components of life skills.	Value development among students
Policy Vision	Page 8/ Para 1	National Education Policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian values, instilling pride in being Indian not only in thoughts but also in behavior, creativity, knowledge, skills, values, and thinking.	Quality education among students
Holistic Development of Students	Page 17/ para 4.4	Curriculum and pedagogy at all levels should move away from rote learning towards real understanding and knowledge.	End of rote learning
Holistic Development of Students	Page 17/ para 4. 4	At every level from pre-school to higher education, essential multidisciplinary skills and values should be integrated into teaching and assessment processes.	Integration of all levels of education

Experiential Learning	Page 18/ para 4.8	Sports competitions provide cross-curricular perspectives that develop collaboration, self-motivation, self-regulation, self-management, team spirit, responsibility, and citizenship.	Promotion of sportsmanship
Multilingualism and Power of Language	Page 20 / para 4.12	All languages will be taught in an engaging and interactive style emphasizing dialogue; reading and writing skills in mother tongue and other languages will be strengthened.	Language proficiency
Academic Integration of Mandatory Subjects, Skills, and Competencies	Page 23/ para 4.23	With modern education reforms, all students must acquire subjects, skills, and competencies to become good, successful, capable, adaptable, and productive citizens.	Holistic development of students
Academic Integration of Mandatory Subjects, Skills, and Competencies	Page 23/ para 4.23	Along with language skills, integration of scientific, technical, physical, social, and humanistic disciplines into academics.	Knowledge of subject-skills
Academic Integration of Mandatory Subjects, Skills, and Competencies	Page 23/ para 4.26	States and local communities will design curricula as per mapped local skill needs, ensuring experience relevant to economic sectors.	Promotion of local skills
Value-based Reforms in Assessment	Page 26 / para 4.34	Instead of rote memorization, continuous creative assessment will promote higher-order skills such as analysis, critical thinking, logical reasoning, and conceptual clarity.	Support for creative evaluation
Value-based Reforms in Assessment	Page 28/ para 4.40	Evaluation of competency-based education outcomes focusing on application of knowledge and values in real life.	Improvement in evaluation framework
Value-based Reforms in Assessment	Page 29/ para 4.41	Proposal to establish a National Assessment Centre (PARAKH) to ensure standardized learning outcomes through State and National level assessments (NAS).	Ensure equity in education
Teachers	Page 30 / para 5.1	Teachers shape the future of students and prepare them to contribute to nation-building. However, recruitment challenges deprive teachers of rights, thus the dignity and respect for teachers must be revived.	Importance of teachers
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	Page 34/ para 5.16	CPD programs of 50 hours annually for principals and head teachers will provide opportunities to learn modern ideas and innovations for preparing competency-based educational plans.	Innovation in education
Career Management and Progression (CMP)	Page 35/ para 5.19	Outstanding teachers who demonstrate leadership and mentoring skills will receive progressive training and later assume academic leadership roles in schools, BRCs, CRCs, SCERTs, DIETs, and ministries.	Skill development for promotion
Special Educators	Page 35/ para 5.21	For children with disabilities at primary and secondary levels, subject-specific teachers will be appointed to meet their learning difficulties. These educators require appropriate skills to meet special needs.	Suitable teachers for special needs
Perspective of Teacher Education	Page 37/ para 5.25	Local teacher education programs will be offered through B.Ed, DEd, or school-based institutions. Local vocational knowledge such as arts, music, crafts, trades, and games will be integrated by appointing “Master Instructors.”	Local master instructors
Inclusive and Equitable Education	Page 38/ para 6.12	As per RPWD Act 2016, children with disabilities will receive regular or special schooling options. Parents/guardians will be supported to facilitate home-schooling and skill development.	Home-schooling for disabled children
Skill Mapping through School Complex/Cluster	Page 45/ para 7.5	By 2025, states/UTs will ensure improvement of school complexes through resources like art, music, sports, library, ICT, labs, vocational and remedial programs.	Improvement in institutional resources
Holistic Universities and Colleges	Page 52 / para 9.1.2	For holistic development, skills and values must be integrated at every stage from pre-school to higher education.	Skill development at all levels
Holistic Universities and Colleges	Page 53/ para 9.1.3	At the social level, higher education aims to empower the nation socially, culturally, and economically, playing a crucial role in national development through knowledge creation and innovation.	Innovation in higher education
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)	Page 53/ para 9.2	Teaching and administrative influences in most universities affect students and teachers across research, management, leadership, and pedagogy.	Challenges in higher education
Liberal and Multidisciplinary Education	Page 57/ para 11.1	India’s ancient tradition of holistic learning included multiple subjects—arts, sciences, mathematics, vocational skills, and soft skills such as communication, presentation, and debate.	Development of professional skills
Liberal and Multidisciplinary Education	Page 58/ para 11.2	Higher education will integrate humanities and arts with STEM education to produce problem-solving, teamwork, and	Interdisciplinary education

		communication skills with socially and ethically responsible outcomes.	
Liberal and Multidisciplinary Education	Page 58/ para 11.3	Aim of multidisciplinary education is to develop all human capacities—physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral—for 21st-century citizenship and employment readiness.	Development across all domains
Liberal and Multidisciplinary Education	Page 58/ para11.4	Expansion of liberal and multidisciplinary education in HEIs under the 21st-century industrial revolution, with arts and humanities integrated into vocational subjects.	Arts and science integration
Liberal and Multidisciplinary Education	Page 59/ para11.8	Value-based education should develop civic values, life skills, service, and community participation. HEIs should promote local skills through internship and practical exposure.	Institutional internship
Inspired Active and Capable Leadership	Page 65/ para13.7	Need for leaders to enhance excellence and innovation by providing leadership to institutions, research, training, and community engagement.	Innovation in leadership
New Initiatives in Vocational Education	Page 70 / para16-2	Vocational education mainly focused on grades 11–12 and some higher classes; however, students lacked clear pathways to enter chosen trades. In 2013, NSQF was introduced to bridge this gap.	Issue of drop-out students
New Initiatives in Vocational Education	Page 71/ para 16.5	By 2025, vocational skills labs will be set up in middle and high schools; higher education institutions will collaborate with industry and NGOs to offer vocational education.	Vocational skills in HEIs
New Initiatives in Vocational Education	Page 72/ para 16.8	National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) will align vocational education with national and international standards, ensuring smooth integration with higher education and workplace experiences.	Expansion of skill development in NSQF
Regulatory Reforms in Higher Education	Page 77/ para 18.6	GEC will be part of HECI and will set expected outcomes for higher education qualifications aligned with NHEQF and NSQF, identifying special skills.	Promotion of specific skills
Other National Concerns – Agricultural Education	Page 81 / para 20.3	Agricultural education will be restructured; though 9% of universities are agriculture-focused, enrolment is less than 1%. Emphasis on increasing productivity, research, innovation, and skilled professionals.	Expansion of agricultural education
School Education and Lifelong Learning	Page 84 / para 21.5	NCERT will develop a National Curriculum Framework for School Education focusing on numeracy, literacy, vocational skills, and competency-based learning.	New curriculum for school education
Promotion of Indian Languages, Arts, and Culture	Page 88/ para 22.7	Due to shortage of skilled language teachers, focus on oral and functional use of language, with attention to vocabulary and grammar. Languages will be used actively in communication and teaching.	Skilled language teachers
Use of Technology and Integration	Page 94/ para 23.8	New education policy promotes transformative technologies like 3D/7D virtual reality to reduce costs and provide accessible, quality education.	Development of digital literacy
Use of Technology and Integration	Page 97/ para 23.10	HEIs will actively research modern technologies to prepare instructional content and expand vocational education. Digital literacy and blended learning are emphasized.	Research in technology
Online and Digital Education	Page 98/ para 24.4	Online assessments and frameworks will be established by National Assessment Centre, CBSE, NTA to ensure standardized evaluation of competencies.	Online evaluation framework
List of Relevant Stakeholders	Page 106	NSQF – National Skills Qualification Framework	—

Source https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

Table 1 presents the key provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 concerning skill development. The analysis reveals four major thematic dimensions: (a) curriculum and pedagogy reforms, (b) teacher empowerment and professional development, (c) vocational and higher education transformation, and (d) inclusivity and technological integration.

4.1. CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY REFORMS

NEP 2020 emphasizes the transition from rote learning to competency-based education, ensuring that students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and conceptual clarity (Government of India, 2020, p. 26, para 4.34). The

policy underscores experiential learning through sports and co-curricular activities (p. 18, para 4.8), multilingual education (p. 20, para 4.12), and integration of subjects across sciences, humanities, and vocational streams (p. 23, para 4.23). These reforms align with international calls for 21st-century education frameworks that cultivate higher-order cognitive skills, creativity, and cross-disciplinary competencies (Chowdhury, 2021; Schleicher, 2019).

4.2. TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

Teacher development is recognized as central to national growth. NEP 2020 highlights the dignity of teachers (p. 30, para 5.1), mandates continuous professional development (CPD) programs of 50 hours annually (p. 34, para 5.16), and introduces structured career management and progression systems (p. 35, para 5.19). Special educators and "master instructors" are proposed to address the learning needs of children with disabilities and to promote indigenous vocational knowledge (pp. 35–37). This resonates with global research emphasizing teacher training as a determinant of educational quality and skill acquisition among students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

4.3. VOCATIONAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION

A notable shift in NEP 2020 is the integration of vocational education across school and higher education levels, linked to the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) (pp. 70–72, paras 16.2–16.8). By 2025, vocational labs and industry collaborations are expected to bridge the gap between education and employability. Higher education reforms further promote liberal and multidisciplinary education (pp. 57–59, paras 11.1–11.8), fostering innovation and interdisciplinary collaboration. The emphasis on agricultural education (p. 81, para 20.3) and regulatory reforms (p. 77, para 18.6) reflects the need for context-specific skill development. This direction supports the broader literature on linking higher education with workforce demands and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2020).

4.4. INCLUSIVITY AND TECHNOLOGICAL INTEGRATION

NEP 2020 stresses equity by addressing the needs of marginalized learners, including children with disabilities (p. 38, para 6.12), while promoting Indian languages, arts, and culture (p. 88, para 22.7). The policy also leverages digital technologies—such as virtual reality and blended learning—for expanding access and quality (pp. 94–98). These provisions mirror global trends where digital literacy and inclusivity are critical to equitable educational outcomes (OECD, 2020; United Nations, 2021).

In sum, the analysis of Table 1 demonstrates that NEP 2020 adopts a comprehensive and future-oriented strategy for skill development. By balancing traditional knowledge systems with modern educational demands, the policy aims to nurture adaptable, innovative, and socially responsible citizens prepared for the challenges of the 21st century.

Table 2

List of Subjects for Skill Development and Vocational Education Curriculum (2024–2025) at Senior Secondary Level of CBSE Board

S. No.	Code	Subject	S. No.	Code	Subject
1	801	Bakery	23	824	Office Procedures and Practices
2	802	Information Technology	24	825	Short-hand (English)
3	803	Web Applications	25	826	Typing (Hindi)
4	804	Automotive	26	827	Air Conditioning and Refrigeration
5	805	Financial Market Management	27	828	Health Science
6	806	Tourism	28	829	Fashion Design
7	807	Beauty and Wellness	29	830	Design
8	808	Agriculture	30	831	Salesmanship
9	809	Food Production	31	833	Business Administration
10	810	Front Office Operations	32	834	Food Processing and Nutrition Science
11	811	Banking	33	835	Multimedia Studies
12	812	Marketing	34	836	Library and Information Science
13	813	Health Care	35	837	Fashion Studies
14	814	Insurance	36	841	Yoga
15	816	Retail	37	842	Early Childhood Care and Education
16	817	Typing (English) and Computer Applications	38	843	Physical Education

17	818	Geo-Spatial Technology	39	844	Data Science
18	819	Electrical Technology	40	845	Physical Activity Trainer
19	820	Electronic Technology	41	846	Land Transportation
20	821	Multimedia	42	847	Blockchain and Hardware
21	822	Accountancy	43	848	Fashion Styling and Innovation
22	823	Cost Accounting			

Source https://cbseacademic.nic.in/web_material/Curriculum24/SkillSubjects_SrSec2023.pdf

4.5. ANALYSIS OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SUBJECT LIST

Table-2 presents 43 skill development and vocational subjects designed for the senior secondary curriculum (2024–2025). These subjects span diverse domains such as information technology, business and finance, agriculture, tourism and hospitality, health care, design, and technical trades. Notably, the inclusion of data science, blockchain, geo-spatial technology, and multimedia reflects responsiveness to emerging global skills, preparing students for Industry 4.0 demands. This curriculum aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020), which emphasizes integration of vocational education with academic streams, employability, and lifelong learning. Such diversification allows students to select courses aligned with their interests, thereby enhancing career readiness. However, certain subjects (e.g., typing, office procedures) may appear outdated in a digital-first era and require revision. For effective implementation, continuous curriculum updates, teacher training, and strong industry linkages are essential (Cohen et al., 2018; Government of India, 2020).

Table 3

List of Subjects for Skill Development and Vocational Education Curriculum (2024–2025) at Senior Secondary Level of of UP Educational Board

S. No.	Code	Subject	S. No.	Code	Subject
1	202	Business–1: Business, Food, and Fruit Preservation	23	224	Business–23: Shorthand and Typewriting (Hindi)
2	203	Business–2: Tailoring	24	225	Business–23: Shorthand and Typewriting (English)
3	204	Business–3: Dress Making and Stitching	25	226	Business–24: Marketing and Salesmanship
4	205	Business–4: Laundry and Dyeing	26	227	Business–25: First Aid
5	206	Business–5: Banking and Bookkeeping	27	228	Business–26: Insurance
6	207	Business–6: Garment Designing	28	229	Business–27: Co-operation
7	208	Business–7: Food Technology	29	230	Business–28: Typing (Hindi & English)
8	209	Business–8: Nursing, Teaching, Training, and Child Care	30	231	Business–29: Printing
9	210	Business–9: Library Science	31	232	Business–30: Fisheries
10	211	Business–10: Multipurpose Health Worker with Lab Work	32	233	Business–31: Fine Arts and Arts Technology
11	212	Business–11: Graphic Photography	33	234	Business–32: Carpentry
12	213	Business–12: Radio, Audio, and Television Technology	34	235	Business–33: Hand Block Printing
13	214	Business–13: Automobile	35	236	Business–34: Fertilizer Soil Sampling
14	215	Business–14: Dairy Management	36	237	Business–34: Soil Testing, Production, and Calculation
15	216	Business–15: Jewellery Production	37	238	Business–35: Computer Technology and Maintenance
16	217	Business–16: Silk Production	38	239	Business–36: Household Electric Equipment and Repair
17	218	Business–17: Seed Production Technology	39	240	Business–37: Bakery
18	219	Business–18: Crop Preservation Technology	40	241	Business–38: Safety
19	220	Business–19: Plant Nursery	41	242	Business–39: Mobile Servicing
20	221	Business–20: Soil Conservation	42	243	Business–40: Tourism and Hospitality
21	222	Business–21: Accounting and Bookkeeping	43	244	Business–41: ITES (Information Technology Enabled Services)
22	223	Business–22: Banking	44	245	Business–42: Health Care

4.6. ANALYSIS OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SUBJECT LIST

Table-3 outlines 44 skill and vocational subjects designed for senior secondary students in Uttar Pradesh for the academic year 2024–2025. The curriculum demonstrates a wide range of domains, including commerce and finance (banking, accounting, insurance, bookkeeping), agriculture (seed production, crop preservation, soil testing, nursery

management), technical trades (automobile, radio and television technology, electrical equipment repair, carpentry, printing), and health-related fields (nursing, multipurpose health workers, first aid, health care). Creative and service-oriented fields such as graphic photography, bakery, tourism, fine arts, and jewellery production also form part of the curriculum, highlighting efforts to balance traditional and modern vocational skills. Emerging areas like computer technology, mobile servicing, and IT-enabled services (ITES) reflect responsiveness to digital skill demands. This subject mix aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020), which emphasizes integrating vocational training with mainstream education to enhance employability and lifelong learning opportunities (Government of India, 2020).

Table 4

Board	Total no. of subjects	Number of Subjects	Total Percentage
U.P. Board	104	44	42.31%
C.B.S.E Board	116	43	37.15%

Table 4 compares skill development and vocational education courses across UP Board and CBSE. The UP Board offers 104 subjects, of which 44 (42.31%) are implemented, while CBSE offers 116 with 43 (37.15%) conducted. This indicates slightly greater implementation efficiency in UP Board compared to CBSE during 2024–2025.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The successful implementation of NEP 2020's skill development agenda requires a multi-pronged approach. First, outdated courses such as shorthand and typing must be gradually phased out and replaced with future-oriented disciplines like artificial intelligence, green technologies, and digital entrepreneurship (Government of India, 2020). Second, continuous professional development programs of at least 50 hours annually will ensure teachers remain updated with modern pedagogies and technological innovations (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). Third, stronger industry-academia partnerships are essential to provide internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on experiences, thus enhancing employability (Cohen et al., 2018). Finally, monitoring through frameworks such as PARAKH and the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) will ensure standardized evaluation and accountability. Together, these measures can bridge the gap between education and workforce readiness while ensuring equitable access to emerging opportunities.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study highlights how the National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) envisions a transformative framework for skill development by integrating vocational education, teacher empowerment, curriculum reforms, and technological innovation. The analyses of CBSE and UP Board curricula (Tables 2–4) demonstrate both alignment with global skill demands and responsiveness to local socio-economic needs. While CBSE's forward-looking inclusion of emerging fields such as data science and blockchain reflects Industry 4.0 readiness, UP Board's emphasis on agriculture, handicrafts, and technical trades strengthens regional employability. The findings underscore the need for regular curriculum updates, continuous professional development of teachers, and robust industry-academia partnerships to ensure effective implementation. Ultimately, NEP 2020 offers a comprehensive pathway toward producing adaptable, innovative, and socially responsible citizens equipped for the challenges of the 21st century. Future research should evaluate long-term impacts of these reforms on student outcomes and workforce participation.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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