TRANSFORMING THROUGH NEP2020: A VISION FOR SKILL-BASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

In today's rapidly evolving world, skill development has become an essential requirement for individuals of all ages and professions. Skills are the foundation of innovation and progress, and their enhancement fosters new ways of thinking, leading to the generation of creative ideas. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a future-ready generation equipped with diverse skills to meet emerging challenges and opportunities. Skills such as computer programming, problem-solving, self-management, and communication are crucial in this context. Computer skills enhance typing, graphic design, and video creation abilities. Problem-solving skills nurture logical and analytical thinking. Self-management, closely linked with time management, promotes discipline and punctuality. Communication skills foster confidence, which is integral to holistic personality development. Skill development, therefore, is vital for every generation. Humans are inherently innovative, and education must nurture this potential. NEP 2020 plays a transformative role by embedding skill-based, experiential learning into the education system, paving the way for creative and critical thinkers. The policy introduces significant reforms aimed at equipping students with practical skills applicable in real-life situations. This study explores the skill-building suggestions outlined in NEP 2020 and discusses effective strategies for their implementation, emphasizing the policy's role in shaping a skilled, confident, and innovative generation prepared for the future.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Skill Development

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern era, skill application has become a foundational requirement across all sectors and professions. An individual's effectiveness in the workplace is largely determined by the extent and relevance of their skills. Without the necessary skills, one's performance may lack innovation, productivity, and efficiency. Thus, skill development is not confined to a specific age group but is essential for everyone throughout life. Recognizing this critical need, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emerges as a transformative initiative aimed at integrating skill-based and

experiential learning into the Indian education system from the foundational stage itself Ministry of Education (2020). NEP 2020 emphasizes the cultivation of a wide range of competencies, including soft skills, communication, self-management, and digital literacy such as programming and computational thinking. These are not only essential for individual success but also crucial for national development in the context of a rapidly changing global landscape Kumar and Srivastava (2021). The policy envisions a generation that is not only academically proficient but also equipped with the practical skills necessary for lifelong learning and adaptability. As the youth of today are the architects of tomorrow's India, embedding skill development in the early stages of education is crucial. NEP 2020 plays a pivotal role in this transformation by promoting multidisciplinary, flexible, and learner-centered education designed to nurture critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration Sharma (2022). To achieve the full potential of NEP 2020, it is imperative to implement its recommendations at the grassroots level—from schools to higher education institutions—ensuring that students across the nation acquire essential life and career skills. Skill development, as proposed in NEP 2020, is a key driver of holistic development. It aims to prepare future generations for diverse life roles and to meet the challenges of the 21st-century workplace. Therefore, the successful implementation of this vision requires collective effort, policy commitment, and institutional innovation.

2. VISION OF NEP 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions a paradigm shift in the Indian education system by focusing on holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and skill-oriented learning that aligns with the needs of the 21st century. At its core, NEP 2020 aims to transform the traditional rote-based education system into one that fosters critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration—commonly referred to as 21st-century skills Ministry of Education (2020). The policy strongly advocates for experiential learning—a model that emphasizes learning by doing, real-world application, and reflective thinking. The vision of NEP 2020 is not limited to academic excellence; it extends to equipping students with practical skills that enhance employability, innovation, and adaptability. This transformation begins at the foundational level, where the policy proposes a new curricular structure (5+3+3+4) that incorporates play-based, activity-driven, and skill-centric approaches to learning from the early years NEP (2020). Furthermore, it encourages vocational education and life skills training at all levels, including secondary and higher education Kaur and Mehta (2021). A key component of this vision is the integration of technology and digital skills into the curriculum, ensuring that learners are prepared for a technology-driven world. Programming, artificial intelligence, data literacy, and problem-solving are being introduced to nurture digital fluency Sharma (2022). These are complemented by soft skills such as communication, emotional intelligence, and time management, which are essential for success in both personal and professional spheres. The NEP 2020 also envisions the establishment of skill labs, internships, and project-based learning in schools and higher education institutions, creating an environment where learning is connected to real-life contexts and careers MHRD (2020). By fostering such an ecosystem, the policy seeks to empower students to become self-reliant, innovative, and future-ready. In essence, NEP 2020 lays the foundation for a skill-based, experiential education system that prepares students not just for exams, but for life. It is a forward-looking vision that redefines the purpose of education—from

information transmission to empowerment through application, thereby creating a generation of learners who are equipped to transform India's future.
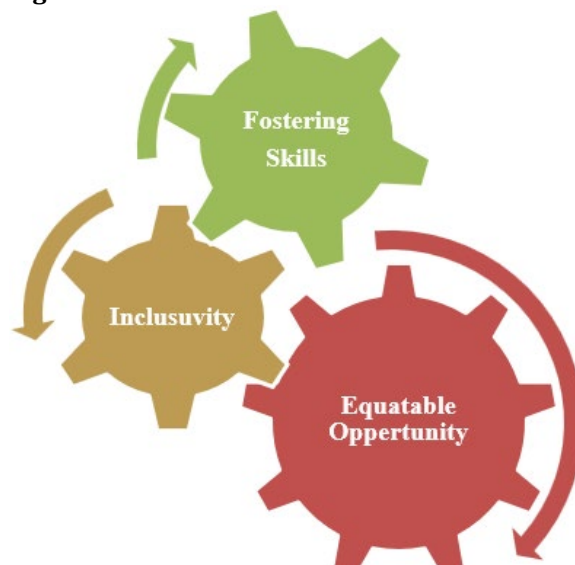
Figure 1

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVE IN ENCOURAGING SKILL LEARNING

As discussed in the introduction, skill enhancement is essential for individuals across all age groups—children, youth, and senior citizens alike. In this section, we will explore the fundamental aims and objectives of skill development, which will set the foundation for a more detailed discussion on specific skills.

3.1. AIM

The primary aim of skill learning, especially soft skills, is to identify and nurture the latent potential within individuals—awakening the inner capabilities that drive innovation and productivity. The overarching goal is to create a comprehensive framework for soft skill development across the country, thereby improving employment opportunities, enhancing productivity, and aligning skill development with market demand. India has taken significant strides toward strengthening its skill development landscape. The government has introduced numerous initiatives, schemes, and training programs aimed at equipping individuals with relevant skills that cater to the evolving job market. This, in turn, contributes to the nation's economic growth and sustainable development.

3.2. OBJECTIVE

The core objective of skill development is to address the challenges of scale, speed, and quality in delivering soft skills training. Effective implementation of these objectives enables the expansion of skill development across various sectors, institutions, colleges, and schools. Through well-defined objectives, future plans and strategies gain direction, leading to the successful implementation of skill-building initiatives. Such development not only enhances individual capability but also fosters creativity and innovation—key elements in education, research, and technology. Humans are inherently capable of innovation and discovery. Therefore,

it is our responsibility to prepare future generations to become enlightened, skilled, and successful contributors to society.

3.3. SKILL BASED EDUCATION

After understanding the aims and objectives of soft skills development, it is essential to recognize the necessity of acquiring skills for survival and success in the 21st century. Skills are essentially the abilities and capabilities that individuals develop through deliberate, systematic, and sustained efforts. These skills are critical for effectively carrying out complex tasks and job functions, involving:
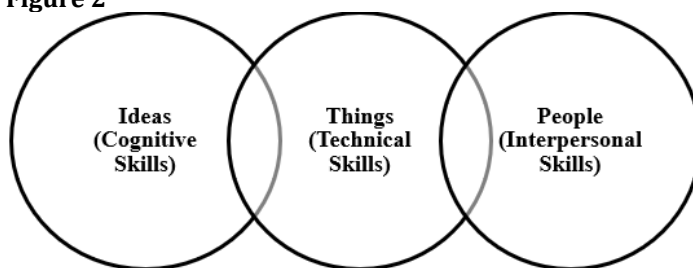
Figure 2

Figure 2 Skills

In India, unemployment continues to be a significant issue, affecting millions of individuals, particularly the youth. According to the Indian School Report (ISR) 2022, only 48% of India's youth are employed, meaning that one in two young Indians are unemployed. Furthermore, the same study highlights that 75% of companies report a skill gap in the workforce, pointing to the urgent need for targeted skill development. The International Labour Organization (ILO) predicts a skill deficit of 29 million by 2030, which will have a detrimental impact on the country's GDP. To reverse this trend, it is crucial that we work toward improving the skill sets of our youth to close these gaps. As of 2020, India ranked 68th on the Global Skills Index (GSI). To elevate this ranking and ensure the economic prosperity of the nation, four key skills must be emphasized for holistic development. While the traditional LSRW skills (Listening, Speaking, Reading,Writing) are important, they are only a part of the puzzle. They are the pathway but not the destination. The four crucial skills I believe are necessary for our generation's development are:

3.3.1. PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILL

In this complicated world, people face numerous problems and are always seeking ways to solve them. It is natural to look for appropriate solutions to overcome these challenges, and this process continues throughout life Yenlicde et al. (2012). Problem-solving can be described as a process that involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral transactions Yenlicde et al. (2012). In my view, science and academic subjects are not the only ways to develop this skill. The most effective way to develop problem-solving abilities is when individuals engage in tasks or work toward goals that require solutions. It is through these experiences that youth will truly develop their problem-solving skills.

3.3.2. SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILL

Self-management is an essential competency, often defined medically as the ability to take responsibility for one's actions and behavior Stent and Staden (2018).

It involves monitoring and evaluating one's behavior and reinforcing improvements in performance Hughes and Lloyd (1993). I believe self-management is a skill that helps individuals create a structured routine, such as a timetable or daily plan. This can only be achieved when problem-solving skills are present, as effective problem-solving enables individuals to manage their time and tasks efficiently. A perfect example of both problem-solving and self-management skills is Sachin Tendulkar, also known as "The Master Blaster." Despite not excelling in academics and facing discouragement from others, he did not lose hope. Through problem-solving and effective self-management, he became the highest scorer in both Test and One Day International matches. His story serves as an excellent model for today's youth in developing these skills.

3.3.3. COMMUNICATION SKILL

Communication skills encompass the personal, interpersonal, and social abilities needed to achieve goals. These skills are often referred to as "soft" because they relate to emotions or perceptions that enable individuals to understand others. Effective communication is essential in nearly every career, as most jobs require interaction with others Al-Alawneh et al. (2019). From my perspective, communication skills are built on five key aspects: gestures, posture, eye contact, listening, and speaking. These skills can be developed when confidence is nurtured through a positive mindset. Once confidence is built, these five elements naturally emerge. Communication is vital for survival and success. Youth who are "life-ready" possess a growth mindset, empowering them to approach the future with confidence, dream big, and achieve great things. Just as a diamond is not perfect at first but gradually becomes refined, individuals too can become polished communicators by continuously working on these skills.

3.3.4. COMPUTER PROGRAMMING SKILL

Problem-solving involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral transactions, guiding individuals to respond effectively to internal or external demands Heppner and Peterson (1982). Skill-based learning encourages active engagement, enabling students to practice, analyze, synthesize, and apply information in various contexts. In today's world, programming skills are essential in almost every field. These skills are the "capsule" that every individual needs to enhance their livelihood. Programming is essentially the process of creating tangible results, whether it's software applications, websites, or even images. Nowadays, we see numerous brilliant minds from IITs creating innovative solutions and ideas. However, in many schools, computers are often seen as a showpiece, and students may feel intimidated. To address this, teachers should start introducing computer programming skills to students as early as third grade. Activities like typing, drawing, and image manipulation can familiarize children with technology and set the foundation for more advanced programming skills. As this skill is increasingly vital in every field, everyone should learn it.

4. ROLE OF NEP: 2020 IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a transformative framework for India's education system, serving as the backbone for educational reform. One of the most significant aspects of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on skill development, which is critical to shaping the future of India's workforce. By focusing on promoting both inclusion and excellence Ganeshi Lal (2023), NEP 2020 aims to create a balanced

approach to education—fostering creativity, innovation, and skill development at all levels.

5. PROMOTING SKILL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH NEP 2020

India, with its rich traditions and diverse value systems, is undergoing a major shift toward integrating modern educational tools, including skill development. This approach not only enhances the employability of the youth but also equips them with the tools needed to thrive in an ever-evolving global economy. Skill development under NEP 2020 seeks to go beyond traditional academics by encouraging hands-on, experiential learning. The policy outlines various methods, tools, and techniques that enable children to not only learn but also practically apply their knowledge to secure a prosperous future. NEP 2020 envisions a holistic development strategy, one that includes the development of both hard and soft skills, with soft skills—such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability—being an essential focus area. These skills are important because they equip individuals to navigate real-world challenges and perform effectively in the workplace. The government's ambition to make India a five trillion-dollar economy by 2024-2025 hinges on the ability of educational and training institutions to provide young people with the necessary knowledge and skills. NEP 2020 plays a pivotal role in achieving this vision by integrating skill-building opportunities at various stages of education, ensuring that students are well-prepared for the demands of the evolving job market.

6. GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

To support the skill-building efforts outlined in NEP 2020, the Indian government has introduced several key initiatives and schemes, aimed at improving the employability and vocational skills of the youth. The government's investment in these programs underscores its commitment to creating a highly skilled and competent workforce. Below are a few significant initiatives that complement the objectives of NEP 2020:

1) **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) 4.0:** Launched as part of the Union Budget 2023-24, this program aims to provide skill development to youth across India over the next three years. The initiative focuses on training individuals in cutting-edge fields such as coding, Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, 3D printing, and drones, along with essential soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. By emphasizing modern technological skills, the scheme helps bridge the gap between education and industry needs, ensuring that the youth are equipped for jobs that are in high demand globally.

2) **SANKALP (Skill Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion):** This program is designed to improve the quality and reach of short-term skill training in India. SANKALP focuses on enhancing institutional capacity, strengthening quality assurance processes, and ensuring that marginalized communities are included in skill-building programs. The initiative aims to empower individuals from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, enabling them to access better job opportunities and contribute to India's growth.

3) **Skill Loan Schemes:** To facilitate access to skill development, the government has introduced a scheme offering institutional credit to individuals pursuing skill-based training programs. The Skill Loan Scheme is designed to provide financial support to students enrolled in courses leading to certificates, diplomas, or degrees as per the National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) guidelines. This scheme ensures that financial constraints do not limit access to skill development opportunities, particularly for those interested in vocational training that leads to meaningful employment.

7. BENEFITS OF SKILL DEVELOPMENT

As we have discussed in detail, skill development is crucial for today's youth at every stage of their lives. Whether it's related to communication, self-management, problem-solving, or technology, the need for skill-building has become increasingly important. In this section, we will explore the benefits of skill development, highlighting why it is an essential component for the growth and success of individuals in the modern world.

- One of the primary benefits of skill development is the significant enhancement of employability and productivity. For both organized and unorganized sectors, skill development plays a key role in creating a competent workforce. As industries evolve and new technologies emerge, a workforce that is skilled in various areas is better equipped to meet the demands of the labor market. This helps reduce unemployment and underemployment by aligning the skills of individuals with the needs of employers, thereby boosting productivity across various sectors.

- Skill development ensures that individuals are continuously upgrading their skills, knowledge, and qualifications, which helps them stay competitive in both national and international job markets. A skilled workforce is more likely to secure decent employment opportunities, and this contributes to the overall growth of the economy. International qualifications and specialized skills open doors to a wide range of job opportunities, improving the global employability of individuals.

- Skill development initiatives play a vital role in empowering marginalized groups in society, including youth, women, disabled individuals, and other disadvantaged communities. By providing training and educational opportunities to these groups, skill development helps bridge social and economic gaps, fostering greater inclusivity. As more individuals from diverse backgrounds acquire skills, they become active contributors to the economy and society.

- Skill development goes beyond technical skills; it also helps in personal growth. As individuals develop essential soft skills like communication, critical thinking, and leadership, their confidence grows. For instance, the ability to speak effectively and express themselves clearly boosts self-esteem, helping individuals navigate social and professional interactions with greater ease. This is particularly important in an increasingly competitive world where strong communication skills are crucial for success.

- Skill development enhances a person's ability to communicate effectively, which is invaluable during job interviews. Confidence, a key outcome of skill development, plays a significant role in ensuring that individuals

perform well in interviews. Those who have developed their communication skills will find it easier to articulate their thoughts, answer questions confidently, and present themselves as strong candidates for employment. This boosts their chances of securing job offers and advancing in their careers.

8. CONCLUSION

With the above information it is clear that how much skill development is necessary for today's generation, that's why it is necessary to have a generation of skilled students. As we have already discussed above that how NEP plays a vital role to encourage or can say to upgrade skill building education in all sectors of India. As India is known for its hard work as it is possible for us to develop and trained the person with all skills through which holistic development is possible. Through above discussion it is also clear that how government is taken initiative by launching so many different kinds of schemes and implementing them at all levels whether at primary level or secondary level. We have also discussed about the basic and necessary skills which are beneficial for the national educational policy because with such skills one should have the holistic development in him/her. They are problem solving skill, self- management skill, communication skill and computer programming skill.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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