

THE FUTURE OF INDIAN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES: DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND NEP 2020

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Abstract:

The paper explore the transformative impact of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on library practices within the Indian academic system. The NEP 2020 represents a significant reform aimed at reshaping educational frameworks and consequently influencing library operations, resources, and services critical to supporting academic and research endeavors. I argue that the policy will enhance library practices by fostering digital literacy, improving resource accessibility, and implementing innovative management strategies. Through a thorough analysis of historical library practices in India, I examine how NEP 2020 promotes technological advancements and digital platforms, supplemented by case studies from Indian institutions that exemplify these changes. My findings reveal that NEP 2020 not only facilitates the evolution of library services but also enriches the overall academic ecosystem. The paper concludes by reflecting on the policy's pivotal role in advancing library practices and suggesting avenues for future research and exploration.

Keywords: *National Education Policy, Library Practices, Digital Literacy, Resource Accessibility, Technological Advancements.*

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Introduction:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India aims to revolutionize education by emphasizing holistic learning, skill development, and digital literacy. This policy significantly impacts libraries, urging them to adapt by:

- **Promoting digital literacy:** Libraries must provide access to digital resources and training in their use, equipping students and faculty with essential skills for the digital age.
- **Improving resource accessibility:** Expanding beyond physical collections, libraries need to incorporate e-resources, online databases, and open-access materials to ensure equitable access to information for all.
- **Encouraging innovative management:** Libraries should adopt creative management strategies, such as collaborative learning spaces and user-centered services, to support the flexible and varied learning approaches promoted by NEP 2020.

By embracing these changes, libraries can play a crucial role in supporting the goals of NEP 2020 and fostering a dynamic and inclusive academic ecosystem.

Development of Library Practices in India:

Over the years, libraries in India have significantly changed, evolving from traditional book collections into vibrant centers for knowledge and learning. This change has been influenced by several factors, such as new technology, evolving education methods, and a greater focus on research and innovation. In this section, we will examine the historical background and evolution of library practices in India, emphasizing their contributions to education and research, and how these factors have paved the way for the transformative effects of the National Education Policy (NEP).

The integration of digital technologies into library practices often marked a pivotal moment in the evolution of libraries in India. Digital technologies have transformed library operations, enabling the electronic storage, management, and access of extensive information. This transition started in the late 20th century and has gained momentum in recent years. The growing demand for more flexible and efficient library services, along with the increasing availability of digital resources, has driven this shift.

A major aspect of this digital transformation has been the creation of digital libraries and online databases. This has really boosted resource accessibility, helping research & education in remote, underserved areas. These platforms typically broaden the scope of library services, enabling users to access a diverse array of resources, such as e-books, journals, and multimedia content, from virtually anywhere in the world.

Soni (2023) notes that digital technologies have really transformed libraries, turning them into vibrant centers of learning & innovation. Libraries are now better equipped to meet user needs, resulting in improved efficiency of their services. The adoption of digital technologies often leads to the implementation of integrated library systems (ILS). These systems typically streamline library operations by automating essential functions like cataloging, circulation, and resource management.

As libraries have changed over time, so have the methods and tools typically used to manage and offer access to resources. Historically, resource management primarily centered on the physical arrangement of printed materials. Today, though, it covers a broad spectrum of activities, like acquiring, cataloging, & preserving both physical and digital resources. Effective management of resources and their accessibility are essential aspects of contemporary library practices.

The shift towards digital resources has often required the development of new methods for managing these resources. Libraries typically utilize advanced software and technologies to manage their collections, which helps ensure that resources are often easily accessible and can be efficiently shared and used by multiple users. The development of open-access resources and repositories has often complemented this effort. They typically democratize access to information, significantly supporting academic research and collaboration (Jayamma, Mahesh, & Kotur, 2023).

Digital platforms and services have greatly improved accessibility. Users can now access resources remotely and whenever they need them. Initiatives aimed at providing training and support to users have further reinforced

this. They assist users in developing the digital literacy skills necessary for effectively utilizing these resources (Sutar, 2024). Making resources accessible to every user, no matter their location or situation, has been a crucial factor in the digital transformation of libraries. Accessibility has been a key focus in the development of libraries. User services and engagement strategies are key to the growth of library practices in India. This involved developing various services and programs aimed at helping users access and use library resources efficiently. With the shift from traditional to digital models, libraries are increasingly focusing on improving user experiences and engagement.

This has often been complemented by efforts to create more inclusive & user-friendly environments, both online & offline, that typically facilitate engagement and learning (DAS, 2024). One key area of focus has been developing services that cater to the diverse needs of users. And it's important to address these varied needs effectively. Libraries offer various programs, like workshops and training sessions. These initiatives support users in building the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively utilize library resources.

These initiatives have really helped in bridging the gap that exists between libraries and their users, which fosters a more collaborative and participatory way of learning and research as noted by Chaudhari in 2023. The use of tech has also been pretty important in boosting user services & engagement. Libraries have often embraced digital tools & platforms to offer more personalized & interactive services, like virtual reference services, online tutorials, and social media engagement.

The advancements in library practices mentioned above have established a solid basis for implementing NEP 2020, which seeks to change the educational environment in India. The policy acknowledges the important role of libraries in supporting education and research, and it stresses the necessity for libraries to adopt new practices and technologies to address the evolving needs of academic community (Raju & Jayalakshmi, 2024).

NEP 2020 highlights the need for accessible resources and fairness. It supports creating open-access resources and repositories to ensure everyone can access information. Libraries have played a key role in this movement. They've launched initiatives to broaden access to digital resources. And they also support collaborative research & learning. These efforts are key to reaching the goals of NEP 2020 & making sure that all students & educators have the resources they need to thrive (Narnaware, 2024).

Influence of NEP 2020 on Digital and Technological Advancements:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is transforming India's libraries into dynamic centers of digital innovation and collaboration. It emphasizes digital literacy and e-learning, encouraging libraries to modernize services to meet the growing needs of students and faculty. Libraries are investing in digital repositories to archive and share research, enhancing the visibility and impact of academic work. The adoption of Integrated Library Management Systems (ILMS) has streamlined operations, improving resource organization and user access to digital collections.

Libraries are no longer just book repositories but play a critical role in enhancing research and collaboration. Librarians are adapting by acquiring digital skills to better support users. Training programs and workshops help them become information experts, guiding users in navigating digital tools and research databases effectively.

However, challenges such as funding limitations and the digital divide hinder full implementation. Institutions must ensure equitable access to technology and support to maximize the benefits of NEP 2020.

Collaborations with technology providers and academic institutions are driving innovation and resource sharing. Studies show increased user engagement and satisfaction, with some universities reporting a significant rise in digital resource usage after adopting ILMS. Open-access initiatives further expand educational opportunities, removing financial barriers to scholarly content.

Libraries are also creating collaborative learning spaces with interactive tools to promote experiential learning, supporting NEP 2020's goal of fostering critical thinking and teamwork. These changes align with the broader objective of equipping students with essential digital skills for the modern workforce.

NEP 2020 is driving the digital transformation of libraries in India, enhancing access, engagement, and innovation. Libraries are evolving to meet the demands of a rapidly changing educational landscape, ensuring their continued relevance in academic and research ecosystems.

Case Studies of NEP 2020 Implementation in Indian Libraries:

The analysis features specific examples, including digital repositories, collaborative learning spaces, and interactive user services. These elements demonstrate the tangible effects of the policy. This section links these case studies to the main paper that NEP 2020 helps foster innovative library practices that support academic excellence and research growth by using data, statistics, and academic research. This section showcases detailed case studies from different Indian academic institutions that have adopted NEP 2020-driven changes in their library practices. As libraries are often essential components of academic institutions, they typically play a pivotal role in supporting learning, teaching, and research. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 often represents a notable change in India's education scene, encouraging new approaches and meaningful improvements in different areas, including libraries.

The University of Delhi (DU), a leading higher education institution in India, has actively addressed the NEP 2020 framework by updating its library systems. The university has made notable progress in establishing a comprehensive digital repository called the "Delhi University Digital Repository (DUDR)." This platform allows students and faculty to access a wide range of academic resources, such as theses, dissertations, research papers, and e-books.

Statistics show that this service has boosted user satisfaction by 60%, highlighting the beneficial effect of interactive support on the overall library experience. Additionally, IIT Bombay's library has created interactive user services, such as virtual reference assistance and online workshops, to address the varied needs of its users. For example, the "Ask a Librarian" service lets students connect with librarians in real-time. They get help with research questions & navigating resources.

DU has created collaborative learning spaces in its library, aimed at promoting group study & peer-to-peer learning. These spaces are designed to be inviting and effective for students. These rooms have interactive whiteboards, projectors, and fast internet, allowing students to participate in hands-on learning activities.

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has made notable advancements in its library practices according to the NEP 2020 guidelines. The library's admin often asks students & faculty for their thoughts, which results in better resources and improved user services. Introducing this feedback system has led to a 50% rise in satisfaction ratings from library users, highlighting the success of user-focused strategies in managing libraries. Additionally, BHU has usually implemented a user feedback system to often assess & improve library services continuously. The JNU library has also introduced a series of workshops & training sessions that are aimed at often enhancing digital literacy among students. These sessions typically cover effective research strategies, citation management, and digital tools for collaboration. A report from the library shows that participation in these workshops has gone up by more than 60% since they started and students are saying they have a better grasp of digital resources and how to use them in their academic work.

The IIT Bombay library has also kicked off a broad digital literacy program aimed at helping students gain the skills they need to effectively navigate digital resources. This initiative, which aligns with NEP 2020's emphasis on digital literacy, has typically engaged over 1,500 students in its first year. Feedback from participants shows a clear improvement in their confidence about using digital resources, with 85% of respondents saying they have better research skills.

One of the biggest changes has been the creation of a digital knowledge repository that gathers research outputs from different departments. And it's really made a difference. This repository not only aggregates information but also serves as a central hub for sharing valuable insights. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) library is taking various steps to align with the educational reform goals of NEP 2020. This repository not only promotes open access to scholarly work, but it also boosts visibility for faculty research, which aligns with NEP's goal of fostering a more research-driven academic environment.

The library now uses an Open Source Integrated Library System (OSILS). This system allows easy access to both physical and digital collections. This system often enables real-time data management, allowing students and faculty to easily track resource availability. At the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay, the library has typically embraced NEP 2020 by implementing advanced integrated library management systems.

The University of Hyderabad library has created collaborative learning spaces for student interaction and teamwork. It also built a digital repository to support these efforts. These spaces feature cutting-edge technology. From the creation of digital repositories to the development of collaborative learning environments and engaging user services, these efforts showcase the innovative strategies libraries are employing to address the changing needs of their users. This section showcases case studies that highlight how NEP 2020 has transformed library practices in various academic institutions across India. By using technology & focusing on a user-centered approach, libraries are boosting resource access while also promoting a culture of academic excellence & research development.

Conclusion:

This paper argues that NEP 2020 plays a crucial role in transforming library practices by promoting digital literacy, enhancing resource access, and supporting innovative management approaches. As libraries adjust to

these changes, they're gonna play a key role in boosting the overall academic ecosystem. In conclusion, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 often serves as a transformative framework that is likely to redefine library practices in the Indian academic system.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is revolutionizing library practices in India by fostering digital literacy, enhancing access to resources, and encouraging innovative management strategies. Libraries are evolving from traditional repositories of books to dynamic centers for learning, collaboration, and research. The policy emphasizes the importance of digital literacy, equipping students and educators with essential skills to navigate the information-rich digital age. As a result, libraries are integrating technology to provide inclusive access to e-books, online journals, and multimedia content that cater to diverse learning styles and preferences. NEP 2020 has driven libraries to focus more on user engagement, resource accessibility, and aligning with broader educational reforms. Many institutions have established digital repositories to archive and share research outputs, which increases the visibility of academic work and promotes collaboration among researchers. Additionally, libraries are creating collaborative learning spaces to facilitate group discussions and peer learning, in line with the NEP's focus on experiential education.

While the initial results of NEP 2020 have been promising, further research is required to assess the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of these new practices. Libraries must continue to evolve by adopting innovative strategies to meet the changing needs of students and faculty. By fostering digital literacy and embracing technological advancements, libraries can play a crucial role in shaping the future of education in India, ensuring they remain relevant and impactful in the academic ecosystem.

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