



Role of Public Libraries in National Education Policy 2020: A Theoretical Approach towards Prospects and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

It is necessary to follow a particular policy's guidelines to make a reliable decision. Education Policy influences a student's learning environment and society as a whole. National Education Policy has been developed in the global "Learning Crisis" context. The researcher in the present study entitled "Role of Public Libraries in National Education Policy 2020: a theoretical approach towards prospects and challenges" tries to find out the involvement of Public Libraries in National Education Policy 2020. To reach the research outcome, complete reading materials about National Education Policy 2020 were studied carefully and then pointed out areas where Public Libraries may support the National Education Policy 2020. Throughout NEP 2020, it has been noticed that the word 'Library' or 'Public Library' has been uttered several times, and the opportunity to provide services to schools, strong collection development, and Education Awareness has been emphasized. After going through point to the point analysis of the NEP 2020, Public Libraries may support all types of education in all respect. But the problem is the need for Public Libraries, especially in the locality of educational institutions.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”

- Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela



1.0 Introduction: A policy helps to operate a particular system having a hierarchical structure by providing guidelines, and without the policy, the decision-making becomes sporadic and unreliable. Education Policy is not the exception. It influences the learning environment of the students and society as a whole. It has a certain standard for all educational institutions, and it helps both the physical and mental well-being of the stakeholders, like students and teachers. It ensures a safe environment for all as the policies, principles, and laws governing the establishment and running of all educational institutions **(Teacmint, n.d.)**.

"Learning crisis" is the greatest global challenge today, and this situation is well exemplified by India, the largest education system in the world. In this context, Nation Education policy has been developed. The first National Policy on Education was launched by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in the year 1968 and by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986, which was modified in the year 1992 during the tenure of P. V. Narasimha Rao. Finally, National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) was published during the term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 29.7.2020.

The NEP 2020 is the replacement for the previous Education Policy, and it is based on Access, Equity, Quality, and Accountability. It is divided into four parts. Part – I: School Education comprises a 5+3+3+4 pattern structure instead of a 10+2 pattern. There are four stages, namely Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary. In the foundational Stage, there are two stages, a. Stage – I, Anganwadi / Preschool at the age of 3 years and Class 1 & 2 at the age between 6 to 8 years, b. Stage – II, Class 3 to 5 at the age between 8 to 11 years, c. Stage – III, Class 6 to 8 at the age of 8 to 11 years and Stage – IV, Class 9 to 12 at the age of 11-14 years; Part – II: Higher Education; Part – III: Other key areas of focus which include Professional Education, Adult education and life-long learning and Part – IV: Making it happen has administrative approach **(Government of India, 2020)**.

Being a People's University, a Public Library has the provision of rendering services like Lending services/loan of reading materials for home reading, Reading room services; Reference services, Current Awareness Services, Abstracting Services, Indexing Services, Bibliographic services, E-mail / Internet services, Inter-library loan services, Consultancy services, Organization of books, exhibition, lecture, seminar, workshops for developing book culture, literacy awareness, AIDS awareness, etc., Counseling and guidance services, etc. without any distinction of age, sex, religion, community, educational qualification, professions, social empowerment, etc. without any cost **(Kamila & Das, 2012)**. This paper deals with how Public Libraries may help NEP 2020 to reach its ultimate success.



There are four parts of NEP 2020, such as Part – I: School Education, Part – II: Higher Education, Part – III: Other key areas of focus, which include Professional Education, Adult education and life-long learning and Part – IV: Making it happen includes administrative approach.

Part – IV is not the author's concern for this research, and the rest are analysed area-wise regarding the areas where Public Libraries may have the scope to play a significant role in the present NEP 2020.

1.1 Objectives: The objectives of this research paper are as follows:

- i. To point out the areas where Public Libraries may help NEP 2020;
- ii. To find out the areas where NEP 2020 says about Libraries.

1.2 Scope: A Public Library is a People's University (**Kumar, 2003**). It also has sufficient educational resources and human capital to cope with the modern education system. So there is the scope of helping NEP 2020 to make it a grand success.

1.3 Methodology: Full reading materials about NEP 2020 were studied carefully and Part – I: School Education, Part – II: Higher Education, Part – III: Other key areas of focus, which include Professional Education, Adult education and life-long learning were analysed separately and then pointed out as per the objectives given above to reach the research outcome.

2. Areas of Public Library to support NEP

2.1. School Education:

2.1. 1 What NEP 2020 says:

“Over 85% of a child’s cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth. Presently, quality ECCE is not available to crores of young children, particularly children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Strong investment in ECCE has the potential to give all young children such access, enabling them to participate and flourish in the educational system throughout their lives. Universal provisioning of quality early childhood development, care, and Education must thus be achieved as soon as possible, and no later than 2030, to ensure that all students entering Grade 1 are school ready”.

**Role of Public Libraries:**

Public Libraries may play an essential role by providing children services and services to guardians too.

2.1.2 What NEP 2020 says:

“ECCE ideally consists of flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based, activity-based, and inquiry-based learning, comprising of alphabets, languages, numbers, counting, colours, shapes, indoor and outdoor play, puzzles and logical thinking, problem-solving, drawing, painting and other visual art, craft, drama and puppetry, music and movement. It also includes a focus on developing social capacities, sensitivity, good behaviour, courtesy, ethics, personal and public cleanliness, teamwork, and cooperation. The overall aim of ECCE will be to attain optimal outcomes in the domains of: physical and motor development, cognitive development, socio-emotional-ethical development, cultural/artistic development, and the development of communication and early language, literacy, and numeracy”.

Role of Public Libraries:

Extension services of Public Libraries may play an essential role in this respect.

2.1.3 What NEP 2020 says:

“...In particular, the numerous rich local traditions of India developed over millennia in ECCE involving art, stories, poetry, games, songs, and more, will also be suitably incorporated. The framework will serve as a guide both for parents and for early childhood care and education institutions”.

Role of Public Libraries:

Public Libraries may play an essential role by providing children services and guardians too.

2.1.4 What NEP 2020 says:

“The overarching goal will be to ensure universal access to high-quality ECCE across the country in a phased manner. Special attention and priority will be given to districts and locations that are particularly socio-economically disadvantaged. ECCE shall be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early-childhood education institutions consisting of (a) stand-alone Anganwadis; (b) Anganwadis co-located with primary schools; (c) pre-primary schools/sections covering at least age 5 to 6 years co-located with existing primary schools; and (d) stand-alone



preschools - all of which would recruit workers/teachers specially trained in the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE”.

Role of Public Libraries:

The collection of Public Libraries consists of Text Books, Reference Books, Books of Poetry, drama, fiction and other miscellaneous writings, Books for career guidance, etc. So Public Libraries may support the students, teachers and guardians too.

2.1.5 What NEP 2020 says:

“For universal access to ECCE, Anganwadi Centres will be strengthened with high-quality infrastructure, play equipment, and well-trained Anganwadi workers/teachers. Every Anganwadi will have a well-ventilated, well-designed, child-friendly and well-constructed building with an enriched learning environment. Children in Anganwadi Centres shall take activity-filled tours - and meet the teachers and students of their local primary schools, in order to make the transition from Anganwadi Centres to primary schools a smooth one. Anganwadis shall be fully integrated into school complexes/clusters, and Anganwadi children, parents, and teachers will be invited to attend and participate in school/school complex programmes and vice versa”.

Role of Public Libraries:

The establishment of social relations among Anganwadi, the Primary School and the local Public Library should be maintained under a single umbrella. This is Part of the work of a Public Library as a social institution.

2.1.6 What NEP 2020 says:

“To prepare an initial cadre of high-quality ECCE teachers in Anganwadis, current Anganwadi workers/teachers will be trained through a systematic effort in accordance with the curricular/pedagogical framework developed by NCERT. Anganwadi workers/teachers with qualifications of 10+2 and above shall be given a 6-month certificate programme in ECCE; and those with lower educational qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme covering early literacy, numeracy, and other relevant aspects of ECCE. These programmes may be run through digital/distance mode using DTH channels as well as smartphones, allowing teachers to acquire ECCE qualifications with minimal disruption to their current work. The ECCE training of Anganwadi workers/teachers will be mentored by the Cluster Resource Centres of the School Education Department which shall hold at least one monthly contact class for continuous assessment. In the longer



term, State Governments shall prepare cadres of professionally qualified educators for early childhood care and Education, through stage-specific professional training, mentoring mechanisms, and career mapping. Necessary facilities will also be created for the initial professional preparation of these educators and their Continuous Professional Development (CPD)”.

Role of Public Libraries:

Public Libraries may help in providing digital awareness among teachers.

2.1.7 What NEP 2020 says:

“A national repository of high-quality resources on foundational literacy and numeracy will be made available on the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA). Technological interventions to serve as aids to teachers and to help bridge any language barriers that may exist between teachers and students, will be piloted and implemented”

Role of Public Libraries:

Creation of National Repositories and Provision of Translation services are both available in Public Libraries.

2.1.8 What NEP 2020 says:

*“Enjoyable and inspirational books for students at all levels will be developed, including through high-quality translation (technology assisted as needed) in all local and Indian languages, and will be made available extensively in **both school and local public libraries**. **Public and school libraries** will be significantly expanded to build a culture of reading across the country. **Digital libraries** will also be established. School libraries will be set up - particularly in villages - to serve the community during non-school hours, and **book clubs may meet in public/school libraries to further facilitate** and promote widespread reading. A National Book Promotion Policy will be formulated, and extensive initiatives will be undertaken to ensure the availability, accessibility, quality, and readership of books across geographies, languages, levels, and genres”.*

Role of Public Libraries:

It particularly cited the involvement of Public Libraries and School Libraries in NEP 2020, and it is highlighted in the above text. It is also cited that the libraries will have some inspirational books and other reading materials.

**2.1.9 What NEP 2020 says:**

"Children are unable to learn optimally when they are undernourished or unwell. Hence, the nutrition and health (including mental health) of children will be addressed, through healthy meals and the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors, and community involvement into the schooling system. Furthermore, research shows that the morning hours after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of cognitively more demanding subjects and hence these hours may be leveraged by providing a simple but energising breakfast in addition to midday meals. In locations where hot meals are not possible, a simple but nutritious meal, e.g., groundnuts/chana mixed with jaggery and/or local fruits may be provided. All school children shall undergo regular health check-ups, especially for 100% immunisation in schools and health cards will be issued to monitor the same".

Role of Public Libraries:

This portion tells about child health and nutrition. Public Libraries have full capabilities to provide health and nutrition information.

2.1.10 What NEP 2020 says:

"...The GER for Grades 6-8 was 90.9%, while for Grades 9-10 and 11-12, it was only 79.3% and 56.5%, respectively - indicating that a significant proportion of enrolled students drop out after Grade 5 and especially after Grade 8. As per the 75th-round household survey by NSSO in 2017-18, the number of out-of-school children aged 6 to 17 years is 3.22 crore. It will be a top priority to bring these children back into the educational fold as early as possible and to prevent further students from dropping out, with a goal to achieve a 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio in preschool to secondary level by 2030. A concerted national effort will be made to ensure universal access and afford the opportunity to all children of the country to obtain quality holistic education—including vocational Education - from preschool to Grade 12".

Role of Public Libraries:

A general person or a child will only be a library member if he/she is an educated one or in continuous reading. Therefore school awareness programmes along with library awareness programmes may be done through Public Library extension services.

**2.1.11 What NEP 2020 says:**

“Efforts will be made to involve community and alumni in volunteer efforts for enhancing learning by providing at schools: one-on-one tutoring; the teaching of literacy and holding of extra- help sessions; teaching support and guidance for educators; career guidance and mentoring to students; etc. In this regard, the support of active and healthy senior citizens, school alumni and local community members will be suitably garnered. Databases of literate volunteers, retired scientists/government/semi government employees, alumni, and educators will be created for this purpose”.

Role of Public Libraries:

This portion deals with Career Guidance and the Creation of databases. Public Libraries may provide a list of Human Libraries to the schools so that the school may create a list of experts. Moreover, it may support the selection of books and translation services.

2.1.12 What NEP 2020 says:

*“The first requirement in this direction will be to ensure decent and pleasant service conditions at schools. Adequate and safe infrastructure, including working toilets, clean drinking water, clean and attractive spaces, electricity, computing devices, internet, **libraries**, and sports and recreational resources will be provided to all schools to ensure that teachers and students, including children of all genders and children with disabilities, receive a safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment and are comfortable and inspired to teach and learn in their schools. In-service training will have inputs on safety, health and environment at workplace in schools to ensure that all teachers are sensitised to these requirements”.*

Role of Public Libraries:

This tells particularly about the library.

2.1.13 What NEP 2020 says:

*“...**Libraries** and laboratories will be strengthened, and adequate reading materials like books, journals, etc., and other teaching-learning materials will be made available”.*

Role of Public Libraries:

This portion supports the collection development of the libraries.



2.1.14 What NEP 2020 says:

*“...key areas such as music, arts, and sports are too often simply not taught; and physical resources, such as lab and sports equipment **and library books, are simply not available across schools”.***

Role of Public Libraries:

This portion describes the negligence towards library use.

2.1.15 What NEP 2020 says:

“...(b) adequate resources (shared or otherwise), such as a library, science labs, computer labs, skill labs, playgrounds, sports equipment and facilities, etc. ...”

Role of Public Libraries:

Tells about the arrangement of libraries.

2.2. Higher Education:

NEP 2020 aims to develop good, thoughtful, well-rounded, and creative individuals. It must enable an individual to study one or more specialized areas of interest deeper. These are quite impossible without the support of the libraries in a different respect, such as Education and research, Inter-Library Loans, information and inspiration. In all respects, Academic Libraries support most.

2.3. Other Key Areas of Focus: This Part is divided into the following ways

- a. **Professionals Education:** It includes agricultural universities, legal universities, health science universities, technical universities, and stand-alone institutions in other fields. The services are to be given to those institutions from Institutional libraries as well from Public libraries too.
- b. **Adult Education and Life-long learning:** This is an extension service of Public Libraries

2.3.1 What NEP 2020 says:

“...(a) foundational literacy and numeracy; (b) critical life skills (including financial literacy, digital literacy, commercial skills, health care and awareness, child care and Education, and family welfare); (c) vocational skills development (with a view towards obtaining local employment); (d) basic education (including preparatory, middle, and secondary stage equivalency); and (e) continuing education (including engaging holistic adult education courses in arts, sciences, technology, culture, sports, and



recreation, as well as other topics of interest or use to local learners, such as more advanced material on critical life skills). The framework would keep in mind that adults in many cases will require rather different teaching-learning methods and materials than those designed for children...”

Role of Public Libraries:

Public Libraries may render extension services to achieve this goal.

2.3.2 What NEP 2020 says:

*“...A key initiative in this direction will be to use schools/ school complexes after school hours and on weekends and **public library spaces** for adult education courses which will be ICT-equipped when possible and for other community engagement and enrichment activities...”*

Role of Public Libraries:

This says about the use of Public Library spaces for adult education.

2.3.3 What NEP 2020 says:

*“Fifth, improving the availability and accessibility of books is essential to inculcating the habit of reading within our communities and educational institutions. This policy recommends that all communities and educational institutions - schools, colleges, universities and **public libraries** - will be strengthened and modernised to ensure an adequate supply of books that cater to the needs and interests of all students, including persons with disabilities and other differently-abled persons. The Central and State governments will take steps to ensure that books are made accessible and affordable to all across the country including socio-economically disadvantaged areas as well as those living in rural and remote areas. Both public and private sector agencies/institutions will devise strategies to improve the quality and attractiveness of books published in all Indian languages. Steps will be taken to enhance online accessibility of library books and further broad basing of digital libraries. For ensuring vibrant libraries in communities and educational institutions, it will be imperative to make available adequate library staff and also devise appropriate career pathways and CPD for them. **Other steps will include strengthening all existing libraries, setting up rural libraries and reading rooms in disadvantaged regions, making widely available reading material in Indian languages, opening children’s libraries and mobile libraries, establishing social book clubs across India and across subjects, and fostering greater collaborations between education institutions and libraries”.***



Role of Public Libraries:

This is most important in respect of all libraries. It deals with the strengthening of existing libraries and the establishment of rural libraries and others, and it emphasises creating and enhancing the reading habits of people.

3. Findings:

- i. At various points in NEP 2020, the word 'Library' or 'Public Library' is uttered several times;
- ii. There is the opportunity to provide services to schools through its valuable resources;
- iii. There is the opportunity to support teachers in their self-development and also their career development;
- iv. The motto of the NEP 2020 is "Light but tight", and to execute this, Public Libraries may help most;
- v. Emphasis was also given to Education Awareness among the downtrodden people, and the Public Libraries may help to achieve the goal;
- vi. Emphasis was also given to services to the Physically Challenged people, which is the Part of activities of Public Libraries;
- vii. Emphasis was also given to the collection development of Public Libraries.

4. Challenges:

- i. Negligence towards the library due to unavoidable circumstances;
- ii. Insufficient Government Policies towards Public Libraries;
- iii. Negative attitudes of the people towards Public Libraries;
- iv. Insufficient funding for Public Libraries;
- v. Insufficient Public Libraries in the areas where Educational Institution is situated.

5. Suggestions:

- i. Positive attitude and participation of the librarian along with other library staff (s) in NEP 2020;
- ii. Contemporary Development Programme for the Librarian should be arranged so that they can cater advanced services to the users;
- iii. Collection development of the Public Libraries should be arranged according to local as well as present requirements.



6. Conclusion:

The educational Institution is the "Centre for Social Consciousness". The collection development of Public Libraries should be made in consideration of local needs as well as social needs. After going through point to point analysis of the NEP 2020, it may be concluded that Public Libraries may support in all respect of all types of Education. But the problem is the absence of Public Libraries, especially in the areas of educational institutions. NEP 2020 says about setting up sufficient Public Libraries so that services of Public Libraries available to the stakeholders of educational institutions. All of the above Public Libraries, with their valuable resources and rigorous, prompt and pin-pointed services, may support NEP 2020 to achieve its ultimate success.

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