# EMERGING POSSIBILITIES AND PERSPECTIVES OF LIBRARIES IN REGARDS TO NEP 2020

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***Abstract :***

*National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a revolutionary policy in the field of education in India. This policy highlights the importance of holistic, multidisciplinary, flexible, inclusive, technology-based, and learner-centred education system. Such aspects of NEP 2020 have opened new vistas for academic libraries to redefine their conventional roles and serve as vibrant centres of learning, research, innovation, and engagement. Academic libraries not only collect and distribute books and journals, but are increasingly required to offer digital information, facilitate inter-disciplinary learning and research, promote digital and information literacy, OERs, preservation of Indian Knowledge System, and inclusive learning spaces. This paper will examine the emerging possibilities and new perspectives of libraries in achieving the goals of NEP 2020. It will discuss the issues related to technology-based library services, library's role in research, multilingual content provision, lifelong learning and community engagement. The paper will also throw light on technological gap, lack of funds, digital divide, copyright issues, and professional development of librarians as major challenges.*

**Keywords :** NEP 2020, academic libraries, digital libraries, multidisciplinary education, information literacy, research support, Indian Knowledge Systems, library transformation, emerging technologies.

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## Introduction :

There is a paradigm shift in the field of education owing to the advancement of technology, changes in learner expectations, globalization, interdisciplinary, and lifelong learning. In India, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 outlines a holistic approach for transformation in the field of education at all stages. In higher education, the policy focuses on multidisciplinary education, flexibility, innovation, technology, inclusion, Indian languages, Indian Knowledge Systems, and increased access to good educational content. As per the Ministry of Education, NEP 2020 is a policy that seeks to re-energize the higher education sector through multidisciplinary institutes, flexibility, better student services,

research, technology-based education, equity, inclusion, and distance/open learning.

Library constitutes an essential part of this educational ecology. Historically, the library in the context of the academy was considered to be a collection of books, periodicals, reference material, and other sources of information. In today's scenario, the library has become a learning commons, center for digital information, research support, collaboration, and window to the world of knowledge.

In the context of NEP 2020, it becomes even more pertinent for the libraries to seize the opportunity since the NEP 2020's educational philosophy is inextricably linked with the availability of knowledge. Multidisciplinary education needs resources of various fields; research-based education needs advanced information services; digital education needs e-resources and digital literacy; inclusive education needs accessible formats of information; and Indian knowledge systems need systematic documentation and dissemination of indigenous knowledge.

Thus, the execution of NEP 2020 must be seen by libraries as an opportunity to reflect on their mission, services, infrastructure, professional skills, and relation with students and teachers.

**NEP 2020 and Changes in Educational Context :**

NEP 2020 aims at overcoming fragmentation within higher education through supporting the establishment of massive multi-disciplinary universities, colleges, and institutional hubs. NEP 2020 also emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to undergraduate studies that integrates various fields of knowledge as well as skills.This change will have definite repercussions for the libraries.

The library that focuses on a particular field will not be able to cater to institutions with multidisciplinary programmes anymore. This means that when a student is pursuing computer applications, he/she will require materials from management, mathematics, communication, psychology, entrepreneurship, ethics, artificial intelligence and social sciences. Engineering students too might study environmental studies, economics, communication, design, entrepreneurship and humanities among others. Therefore, the library collection will have to be interdisciplinary and adaptive.

So, in this changed learning environment, a question is posed before the library – is it to merely provide information or should it be an active participant in the educational process? In the light of NEP 2020, the answer seems to lie in the latter.

**From Traditional Library to Knowledge and Learning Hub :**

Another highly significant aspect that can be created through NEP 2020 is that of the transformation of the traditional library into a full-fledged knowledge and learning hub.

The library of the future could incorporate:

- Hard copies of books and journals
- E-books and e-journals
- Institutional repositories
- Digital archives
- Open Educational Resources (OER)
- Research databases
- Multimedia sources
- Learning management systems
- Lectures and education videos online
- Research data and datasets
- Digital learning sources
- Assistive technologies

This kind of library would give access to information irrespective of the physical presence of its users on the campus.

The digital programmes and initiatives undertaken by the Ministry of Education concerning technology through NEP 2020 highlight the increasing significance of digital learning infrastructures. The examples include those that are related to digital education, NDEAR, and NETF.

Libraries thus can act as gateways to these knowledge systems.

**Promoting Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Education :**

One of the key aspects of NEP 2020 is multidisciplinary education. The NEP 2020 promotes interdisciplinary learning among the students by encouraging them to undertake subjects that are beyond their own disciplinary domains.

It offers a new outlook to library collection development.

Rather than developing acquisitions mainly based on individual departments, the library could adopt an interdisciplinary approach for collections development. The collections could be developed based on themes like:

- Artificial intelligence and society
- Climate change and sustainability
- Entrepreneurship and innovation
- Digital humanities
- Data science
- Public health
- Sustainable development

- Gender and society
- Indian Knowledge Systems
- Ethics and technology

Subject guides and research guides could be developed by the library for resources related to different disciplines.

Librarians could collaborate with faculty members to develop reading lists on an interdisciplinary basis, subject-specific resource guides, and provide information beyond their core subjects to students.

Therefore, the library would serve as a bridge between disciplines.

**Libraries as Teaching and Learning Partners :**

Another perspective that can be changed is to see librarians as partners in academia rather than just supportive personnel.

As per NEP 2020, learner-centric education, experiential learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and better student services are among its main goals. These goals can be achieved with the help of libraries.

Some of the activities that librarians can carry out include:

1. Orientation of libraries
2. Workshops on information literacy
3. Database search training
4. Training on citation and referencing
5. Workshops on plagiarism
6. Workshops on research methodologies
7. Programmes on digital literacy
8. Evaluation of online information
9. Academic writing help
10. Awareness on open access sources

Students now face very large amounts of online information. It is not enough just to be able to find the information. They must be able to judge authority, accuracy, relevance, bias, currency, and use ethically.

So information literacy must be made part of higher education.

**Building Digital Libraries and Electronic Resources :**

The digital revolution might be the most obvious area of development for libraries under the NEP 2020.

An efficient academic library will create a cohesive digital environment where the learners will be able to search and obtain information using a common platform. This can be done by:

- E-books
- E-journals
- Bibliographic databases
- Institutional repositories
- Electronic theses and dissertations
- Digitization of rare resources
- Open-access journals
- Learning audio-video materials
- Research datasets
- Digital archives

The development of electronic collections, however, does not imply that libraries should ignore physical media. Instead, a mixed model would be better since students have diverse ways of learning and access to digital technology. Moreover, libraries should emphasize the importance of authentication in remote locations and access off-library premises.

**Emerging Technologies and Smart Libraries :**

The focus of NEP 2020 on technology-enhanced learning paves the way for the implementation of emerging technologies in libraries.

Artificial intelligence may come handy when it comes to discovery systems, virtual reference desks, recommendation systems, metadata creation, and general administration procedures. Chatbots will be able to answer typical questions, and data analysis will allow libraries to detect resource usage patterns.

Other possible technological developments that might affect future libraries can include:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Machine learning
- Internet of Things
- Cloud computing
- Mobile applications
- Digital repositories
- Data analytics
- QR codes-based services
- RFID
- Virtual/Augmented reality

- Automated discovery services

Still, technology should not be an end in itself. What matters is to make things better in terms of access, discovery, learning, inclusiveness, and user experience.

**Libraries and Research Services :**

NEP 2020 puts a lot of importance on research and innovation. NEP is expected to strengthen the research environment and create methods for encouraging research of high quality. Areas of NEP implementation, as mentioned by the Ministry of Education, include academic research and internationalization. This is a good chance for the libraries to develop research services.

Libraries can help researchers in the following areas:

- Literature search
- Systematic literature review
- Bibliometrics
- Citation management
- Research impact assessment
- Research data management
- Reference management
- Scholarly communication
- Open access publishing
- Copyrights
- ORCID & researcher profile
- Institutional repository services
- Research visibility services

The librarian can become an expert on research information, enabling faculty and research scholars to handle the growing complexity of the scholarly communication landscape.

Libraries can also provide repository services for institutional research, including theses, dissertations, papers, journal articles, data sets, and other scholarly works.

**Open Educational Resources and Open Access :**

One final option is the development of open educational resources and open access to materials. The expense associated with academic information may pose obstacles to students and academic institutions. The library can lessen these obstacles through the use of reliable OERs.

Librarians can develop OER directories for each subject including:

- Open textbooks
- Open journals
- Government publications
- Educational videos
- Open courses
- Research repositories
- Digital archives
- Educational datasets

In addition to that, libraries can also guide faculty members about open licensing and help them find openly licensed teaching materials.

This would help fulfill the objectives of NEP 2020 regarding access, affordability, flexibility, and quality..

**Indian Knowledge Systems and Local Knowledge :**

The NEP 2020 emphasizes the intellectual wealth that India has, along with its diverse cultural traditions. This policy advocates the integration of Indian knowledge systems along with creation of material in Indian languages. This is where the libraries come into the picture.

The academic libraries may form separate collections based on:

- Indian Philosophy
- Traditional Sciences
- Ayurveda
- Yoga
- Indian Mathematics
- Indigenous Technologies
- Folk Literature
- Local History
- Regional Culture
- Oral Traditions
- Manuscripts
- Traditional Arts & Crafts

Digitization can aid in preserving these materials as well as making them available to researchers and scholars.

Another idea is that libraries should be able to work together with history, linguistics, sociology, and anthropological departments in order to record local knowledge. In this way, there will be a completely different view of the library, and instead of being a gateway to

global knowledge, it will also be a repository of local knowledge.

**Multilingual libraries and promotion of Indian languages :**

The NEP 2020 stresses the importance of Indian languages and promotes the availability of education in Indian languages. The Ministry of Education also stresses the provision of course study materials in Indian languages in digital format. A library can help through providing multilingual library collection and digital content.

Such activities may include:

- Provision of books in local languages
- Digitization of local language content
- Multilingual search interfaces
- Translation services
- Local language databases
- Audiobooks
- Text to speech services
- Local history collection

Multilingual library services will help increase access for students who prefer to learn in Indian languages.

**Accessible Libraries :**

Equity and inclusion are essential elements in NEP 2020. In fact, NEP 2020 stresses the importance of making facilities and learning materials available to learners with disabilities.

Libraries may contribute by establishing accessible learning environments through:

- Electronic content readable by screen readers
- Accessible websites
- Audiobooks
- Text-to-speech software
- Large print material
- Braille materials, where applicable
- Accessible furniture and spaces
- Signage that is easily understandable
- Assistive technology
- Accessible electronic documents

The aim here is to develop an accessible library where all learners will be able to discover and use information independently. Accessibility must be considered in the

following areas: collection development, building design, digital services, procurement, and staff training..

**The Library as an Innovative and Collaborative Space :**

The library of today's world cannot be made simply for silent reading purposes alone. The NEP 2020 emphasizes creativity, innovation, experiential learning, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. In that light, libraries can create flexible learning spaces with:

- Collaborative study zones
- Discussion zones
- Digital learning zones
- Innovation zones
- Media production zones
- Presentation zones
- Reading zones
- Research consultation zones
- Experimentation and maker spaces

These spaces can inspire interaction between students from various disciplines. The library can transform into a knowledge commons space for reading, discussion, creation, collaboration, research, and innovation among students.

**Libraries and Lifelong Learning :**

NEP 2020 acknowledges the need for lifelong learning and flexible education. The increase in the practice of online and open-distance learning makes way for a greater possible user base of libraries.

Lifelong learning can be facilitated through libraries as they offer access to:

- Online courses
- Learning materials online
- Career materials
- Skill development materials
- Professional databases
- Entrepreneurship materials
- Materials related to competitive examinations
- Lifelong learning materials

This way, libraries can broaden their scope of services to serve people who are not traditional enrolled students.

**Evolving Role and Skills of Librarians :**

The evolution of the library involves the evolution of the professional role of librarians.

The librarian of the NEP era requires skills in:

- Electronic library management
- Information literacy
- Research services
- Data literacy
- Scholarly communication
- Bibliometrics
- Open-access publishing
- Copyright and licensing
- Use of artificial intelligence technology
- Digital preservation
- Metadata
- User experience design
- Accessibility
- Communication and teaching

UGC's documentation recognizes development and management of e-resources, digitization, electronic dissemination of information, and user awareness programs as important professional library activities.

Continuous professional development becomes necessary. Librarians must take part in workshops, webinars, certification programs, professional networks, and collaboration.

**Challenges in Implementing the New Library Perspective :**

Although NEP 2020 offers numerous opportunities, its implementation would also be accompanied by some challenges.

**1. Financial Barriers :**

Digital collections, databases, infrastructure, assistive technologies, and library system require certain investments. This would be problematic for smaller establishments.

**2. The Digital Divide :**

Students do not all have equal access to devices, fast Internet connection and digital literacy. Therefore, libraries should keep providing physical resources and on-campus access to the digital world.

**3. Copyright and Licensing Issues :**

Digital resources are bound to many licensing and copyright terms that should be handled adequately by librarians who should possess the required knowledge.

**4. Skills Gap :**

The continuous development of technology implies that librarians are required to regularly improve their knowledge and competencies.

**5. Resistance to Change :**

Resistance within an institution may hinder the transition from traditional libraries to learner-centered and technology-driven services.

**6. Preserving Digital Resources :**

Digital resources need to be systematically preserved, backed up, migrated, managed with metadata, etc.

**A Proposed Model for NEP-Oriented Libraries :**

A useful model of NEP oriented libraries could consist of six key dimensions:

1. **Access :** Ensure equitable access to print, digital, multilingual, and accessibility information sources.
2. **Learning :** Ensure integration of library and information literacy into teaching-learning process.
3. **Research :** Offer research and scholarly communication services.
4. **Technologies :** Utilize suitable digital technologies and smart library systems.
5. **Inclusion :** Design services and spaces for diverse learners and people with disabilities.
6. **Innovation & Community :** Develop library as an innovative knowledge, culture, and lifelong learning center.

This model would assist institutions to link library development to their overall NEP 2020 implementation strategies.

**Future Perspectives :**

The future library as envisaged by the NEP 2020 will be a more networked, personalized, interdisciplinary, digitized, inclusive, and collaborative one.

The future library may well emerge as:

- **A Learning Commons :** for learning both independently and collaboratively.
- **A Research Center :** helping researchers at all stages of their research.

- **A Digital Knowledge Resource Center :** linking the user with the country's and global information resource.
- **An Innovation Lab :** fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.
- **A Cultural Heritage Center :** conserving India's indigenous knowledge.
- **An Information Literacy Center :** producing critical and responsible information users.
- **A Community Learning Center :** extending its learning services to the outside community.

These perspectives make it clear that the future of the library does not lie in the extinction of the book but in the enlargement of the library's learning role.

**Conclusion :**

NEP 2020 offers an important chance to re-examine the importance and relevance of academic libraries in India. The NEP 2020 stresses multidisciplinary education, technology, research, inclusiveness, flexibility, Indian languages, Indian Knowledge Systems, innovation, and lifelong learning – all of which are aligned with the changing functions of contemporary libraries.

Therefore, the library needs to evolve from being a collection-based institution to become a learner-based knowledge system. The success of such a library should not be assessed merely on the basis of the number of books collected or the number of people using the library.

For this kind of change to happen, collaboration between institutional administrators, teachers, librarians, technologists, and students is imperative. Financial support, up-to-date infrastructure, continuous professional development, digital inclusion, and awareness of the strategic importance of the library in the institution are necessary.

NEP 2020 does not just offer education reforms but offers guidelines for building a knowledge-based society. The library is one of the most crucial institutions that can enable this kind of society. Through digital transformation while keeping its core values, libraries can be great facilitators of NEP 2020.

The future library must thus refrain from questioning whether technology will take the place of the conventional library. The question that the library should rather consider is how all of the above, together with technology, will be woven into an inclusive knowledge system. In this context, NEP 2020 presents a big opportunity for Indian libraries to redefine themselves and be an important part of India’s new knowledge system.

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