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## College Libraries as Catalyst of Change: Supporting the Vision of NEP 2020

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### Abstract

*The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's education system, emphasising multidisciplinary learning, flexibility, and holistic student development. Recognising the essential role of libraries in enriching educational quality, NEP 2020 repositions them as dynamic hubs of learning and knowledge. Academic libraries now contribute beyond traditional functions by offering access to diverse, skill-based, and socially relevant resources that support academic excellence and empower students and the nation. This paper explores the implications of NEP 2020 for higher education, focusing on the evolving role of college libraries. It examines key areas such as collection development, service delivery, resource utilisation, and the changing responsibilities of library professionals. Drawing on scholarly literature and the author's professional experience, the study highlights strategies to strengthen libraries' contributions toward realising the objectives of NEP 2020.*

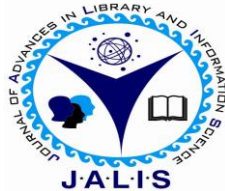
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College Libraries and NEP; Library Importance in NEP 2020; Library Innovation through NEP;

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## Introduction

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a holistic framework aimed at transforming the teaching-learning system in India. It was launched in July 2020 and replaces the past National Policy on Education (NPE) strategy of 1986. The new framework is built on inclusivity, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability principles. A key highlight of NEP 2020 is its strong focus on early childhood care and education. It recognizes the crucial role of early years in a child's development and proposes the establishment of anganwadis and pre-schools in every village or locality. The policy also emphasises ensuring universal access to quality education for all children aged 3 to 18. Beyond early childhood education, NEP 2020 also sets the stage for transformative growth in academic education. With its expansive network of universities and colleges, the country has a strong foundation to build. However, there is a growing opportunity to enhance quality and relevance in higher education to meet global standards and better align graduates' skills with industry needs.

Further, following the vision of NEP 2020, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has restructured the assessment and accreditation processes of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). These reforms focus on enhancing quality assurance, encouraging institutional autonomy, and promoting a culture of continuous improvement. By addressing existing challenges and leveraging emerging opportunities, the NAAC 2024 reforms have the growing power to bring about transformative change in the Indian higher education structure. In alignment with NEP 2020, they aim to create more inclusive, high-quality, and high-performing global standards of academic educational institutions in India (Rayalwar, AP 2024). Along with ensuring education for all and emphasising quality education, it is equally important to build students' employability skills to confidently enter the workforce and adapt to a rapidly changing world.

As India aspires to become a developed nation by 2047, investing in revitalising this sector is vital. A reimagined higher education system will help nurture a knowledgeable, skilled, and innovative workforce capable of driving sustainable economic development and inclusive social progress (Saxsena, N 2024). India's aspiration to become a developed nation (Viksit Bharat) depends largely on its capacity to

innovate, adapt, and empower its human capital. Reforming higher education through an approach that fosters self-directed learning models reliant can help nurture a generation of critical thinkers, problem solvers, and innovators (Mathew, S 2024). Such an educational shift will enable the country to achieve its developmental goals and establish India as a global leader in knowledge, education, and innovation (Rajpurkar, S 2023); (Saxena, N 2024). NEP 2020 is widely regarded as a transformative policy with the potential to bring significant positive changes to the Indian education system and contribute meaningfully to the nation's overall progress (Tomar et al 2024).

India's youth population, aged between 15 and 29 years, is approximately 37 crores, larger than the entire population of the United States. To harness this immense potential, it is essential to nurture our youth holistically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually—through quality education. They must be empowered and confident to face life's challenges and contribute meaningfully to nation-building. (Mittal, RK 2025). Investing in the development of our youth today will shape a stronger, more progressive India tomorrow. The policy's emphasis on holistic and multidisciplinary education, universal access, self-directed learning, flexible and multilingual learning, technology integration, and comprehensive teacher training and professional development can significantly enhance the quality of education in India.

As India envisions a transformed education system under the NEP 2020 policy, libraries and resource centres will be key enablers of this change. Libraries have been actively reforming their policies, procedures, systems, and professional roles to effectively meet their users' evolving information and research needs, supporting the vision of NEP 2020. India's education quality

### **College Libraries and their Role in Implementing NEP 2020 in Academic Education**

The concept of libraries has undergone significant transformation, even before the implementation of NEP 2020. The rapid advancements in information and communication technology have revolutionised information collection, storage, retrieval, and dissemination, leading to a transition from traditional to digital and virtual libraries.

Through the development of online catalogues and reference services, institutional repositories, digital collections and information literacy programmes,

libraries strive to expand access to knowledge in the digital era. The Government of India has launched several digital initiatives, such as e-ShodhSindhu, e-Pathshala, e-ShodhGangotri, e-ShodhGanga, e-PG Pathshala, and the National Digital Library to strengthen and integrate library resources into education. These efforts aim to benefit India's vast academic setup, which includes over 1.3 million schools, 611 universities, and 31,000 colleges (Pathak, N 2023). Academic libraries thus have a critical role in promoting the use of these platforms to support institution-wide teaching, learning, research, and extension activities. Libraries must effectively integrate traditional print resources with network-based information services, providing precise, timely, and student-centric services to meet the dynamic informational needs. In alignment with the objectives of NEP 2020, particularly its emphasis on student-centric learning, skill development, and holistic education, libraries should foster a literate, inclusive, and welcoming environment that encourages frequent visits and active engagement.

Aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 vision, which emphasises holistic, multidisciplinary, and technology-enabled education, libraries serve as inclusive learning centres. They offer access to diverse, multilingual resources, support digital and remote learning, and contribute to the professional development of educators by providing relevant academic content, training opportunities, and collaborative environments. Through these efforts, college libraries significantly contribute to transforming higher education by NEP 2020 objectives (Gajbe, SS & Bansod, B 2023); (Chaudhari, Y 2023).

A study of Karnataka State University libraries shows that the core principle of NEP 2020, which is toward equitable access to education, can be effectively supported by libraries. The study underscores the libraries' role in promoting research and innovation, empowering users with digital competencies, providing inclusive access to information, and enhancing the overall learning experience. Libraries contribute through digital transformation, collaborative learning spaces, and support for professional development and critical thinking. The researchers argue that libraries are pivotal in transforming higher education but stress that adequate resources, infrastructure, and institutional support are essential (Jayamma, KV, Mahesh, GT and Kotur, M 2023). Investing in library development

is crucial for the successful advancement of NEP 2020.

### **College Libraries Inclusive and Innovative Efforts (Aligned with NEP 2020)**

#### **1. Inclusive and Diverse Collection Development:**

A thoughtful selection of collections that support foundational literacy and help nurture creativity, critical thinking, and curiosity among learners is very important. For younger generations especially, meticulously selected resources can foster a love for reading, encourage lifelong and self-directed learning, and significantly contribute to individual growth and holistic development, leading to the nation's progress. This should focus on:

- Age-appropriate, culturally rich, and accessible resources for all types of learners
- Multiple genres: fiction, biographies, folk tales, science, history, motivational literature and more
- Include materials for persons with disabilities: Audiobooks, Braille and large-print books, accessible e-books
- Equip the library with assistive technologies to support inclusive reading environments For eg. Screen Readers tool like JAWS (Job Access With Speech) to help visually impaired users.

#### **2. Library Programs for Student Learning and Engagement:**

To enhance the academic and personal development of students, college libraries can serve as dynamic intellectual spaces and knowledge hubs by organising enriching, participative, and skills-based programs, which may include.

##### **Reading Promotion Initiatives:**

- **Book Clubs:** Regular scheduled discussions for students and faculty to discuss selected titles and exchange of ideas. Explore themes, genres, or authors, building reading habits and critical thinking.
- **Thematic Reading Weeks:** Organised displays and activities around themes such as Women's Literature, Science Fiction, Folk Literature and more.
- **Storytelling Sessions:** Especially for early learners and community engagement, helps improve listening and comprehension skills.

- **Reading Challenges and Competitions:** To promote reading habits and foster a love for diverse literature encourage students to read a set number of books or genres in a semester with recognition or certificates

##### **Book-to-Screen Events:**

- **Film and Documentary Screenings:** Organise 'Book-to-Screen' events where films or documentaries based on books are shown, followed by discussions. This helps students connect deeply with literature, improves visual literacy, and encourages comparative thinking.

##### **Skill-Building Workshops:**

- **Information Literacy Sessions:** Help students develop research and citation skills, evaluate sources, and use academic databases effectively.
- **Digital Literacy Workshops:** Introduce tools like academic search engines, online referencing tools, and digital note-taking apps.
- **Presentation and Communication Skills:** In collaboration with faculty or soft skills trainers.
- **Literary and Academic Events:**
- Author Talks, poetry readings, and interactive storytelling sessions.
- Celebrate National Reading Day, World Book and Copyright Day, and Reading Inspiration Day with displays, quizzes, or exhibitions.
- Organise Student writing competitions, like essay contests or short story submissions.

##### **Academic Support Activities:**

- **Library Orientation & Information Literacy for Newcomers:** Along with the Library Tour, familiarise them with library services, OPAC, e-resources, and borrowing policies. Offer information literacy sessions covering topics like:
- How to use OPAC (Online Public Access Catalogue)
- Effective use of digital library, reference tools and databases
- Plagiarism and Ethical use of information and citation styles (APA/MLA)
- **Exam Preparation Corners:** Highlight past papers, reference books, and quiet study zones during exam season.

- **Subject Help Resources:** Provide resources to support assignments, presentations, and project work across disciplines.
- **Language Learning & Improvement Resources:** Maintain a dedicated Language Learning Corner with grammar guides, thesaurus, spoken English resources, and multilingual dictionaries.

### 3. College Librarians Supporting Faculty in Academic Instruction:

Similarly, academic librarians play an essential role in supporting faculty and enhancing the teaching-learning across disciplines. Moving beyond their traditional responsibilities, they collaborate with faculty members, embedding information literacy into the curriculum, introducing students to the library's services, collections, knowledge hubs and intellectual spaces, and promoting self-directed life-long learning.

### 4. Technology Integration and Digital Empowerment:

- Facilitate access to digital resources and e-learning platforms (e.g., SWAYAM, NDLI, and NPTEL).
- Offer online catalogues, ebooks, ejournals, databases and digital library portals.
- Train users in digital literacy and online research tools.

### 5. Networking and Collaboration

- **Interdepartmental and Community Partnerships**  
Collaborate with academic departments, NGOs, schools, and local authorities to support literacy drives, reading initiatives, and educational events that promote lifelong learning.
- **Engagement with National Knowledge Platforms**  
Partner with national digital initiatives such as the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) and One Nation One Subscription (ONOS) to expand access to quality academic resources and enhance digital outreach.

### 6. College Libraries and Community Empowerment under NEP 2020

In accordance to NEP 2020 to build a culture of reading across the country, encourages the expansion of libraries not only in schools and colleges but also in public spaces. To promote this reading culture, the government should consider setting up libraries in common public places such as railway stations, hospitals, bus stops, and community meeting areas, locations where people often gather, socialize, and spend their leisure time. These public libraries can become vibrant hubs of lifelong learning. However, to ensure their effectiveness, it is essential to appoint trained librarians who can professionally organise resources and provide timely and accurate information to users (Joseph, J & Chinnaswamy, K 2024)

NEP 2020 also emphasises that library facilities, especially in villages, should remain accessible to the community even during non-school hours. This calls for libraries at all levels to adopt a proactive approach in serving their regular patrons and the general public. Likewise, college libraries should also move away from a culture of denial and strive to provide information and resources to all, regardless of formal membership. These inclusive approaches will not only lead to the maximum utilisation of library resources. Still, they will also support youth needing information, especially those who may not have access to formal educational systems but can benefit from the knowledge available in college libraries.

### 7. College Librarians: Catalysts for LIS Education, Upskilling, and Lifelong Learning (Aligned with NEP 2020):

NEP 2020's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) framework highlights the importance of advancing Library and Information Science (LIS) education and professional growth. College librarians, traditionally known for managing collections, are increasingly playing a pivotal role as mentors, facilitators, and enablers of knowledge. They support aspiring LIS professionals and student interns by organizing workshops, webinars, training programs, and certifications in emerging areas such as ICT, digital literacy, AI in libraries, research innovation, open educational resources (OERs), scholarly publishing, and innovative library services.

These initiatives empower library staff and students to remain adaptable and relevant in the ever-evolving knowledge economy, contributing directly to NEP 2020's vision of fostering lifelong learning and



creating a future-ready workforce. Through such programs, librarians promote professional development and ensure that the LIS community remains at the forefront of academic and technological advancements.

Such initiatives adhere to the goals of NEP 2020, reinforcing holistic and experiential learning, skill development, and student empowerment.

### **Initiatives at Ramniranjan Jhunjhunwala College (RJC) Library Aligned with NEP 2020**

In alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and Institutions goals towards empowering students through focused learning and research, academic excellence, student-centric activities, enhancing employability skills through the wide range of extension, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, harmonious relationships at all levels, excellence in sports, extension services to self and society, RJC library has build its collection with both print and digital resources and undertaken several student-centric and inclusive initiatives to foster a dynamic, engaging, and equitable learning environment which are highlighted below:

**A) Student-Centric and Inclusive Collection Development:** In line with the NEP 2020, RJC Library stresses dynamic and participative collection development. Its resources include over 1,00,000 books, 110 national and international journals, 5 databases, and more than 600 resources, including CDs and DVDs, Maps, Atlases and other reference materials. Inputs are sought from faculty and students, ensuring the library remains responsive to academic and personal interests. The borrowing limit has been increased from two to three or four books, including titles beyond the syllabus, with appropriate follow-up mechanisms for timely returns.

**B) Reading Culture through Displays and Communication:** Library notice boards are regularly updated with visually appealing news clippings and thought-provoking articles. Both physical and digital platforms are used to display new arrivals and themed book exhibitions. Short video clips of library events are circulated through student and teacher groups to reach even those who may not visit the library in person. These efforts stimulate curiosity, critical thinking, and sustained interest in reading.

**C) Expanding Access and Resource Utilisation:** Resource access has also expanded, with

multidisciplinary books and reading materials now available to all users, eliminating previous restrictions. The library offers a rich collection of print and digital resources that support inclusivity, multidisciplinary education, and lifelong learning, key pillars of NEP 2020. These include materials on gender equality, environmental awareness, skill development, digital literacy, AI, entrepreneurship and innovation.

**D) Academic Support Activities:** The library offers dedicated student corners with reference books and past question papers (accessible through the college website). Cubicles for quiet study and research purposes have been set up to support focused learning, along with Wi-Fi access to facilitate the use of online academic resources. Additionally, the library provides support for research writing, citation guidance, access to plagiarism detection software, and assistance in understanding and reducing plagiarism.

**E) Supporting Specially-Abled Learners:** The library provides an inclusive environment. It is equipped with assistive technologies like JAWS screen reader software. Separate reading spaces with railings, peer reading support, and accessible infrastructure ensure inclusive participation in the learning process. These efforts ensure that all learners can engage meaningfully with library resources.

**F) Library Orientation, Workshops, and Training Programs:** Regular academic support activities include annual library orientations, guided library tours, and reading skills workshops. Additionally, RJ College Library has been hosting a national-level, one-week training program for library support staff, well before NEP 2020, focused on sharing best practices and fostering upskilling and reskilling in line with evolving library and information science trends.

**G) Extended Access and Study Support for Non-Members:** In the spirit of inclusive learning, ex-students, non-members, and students from other institutions are allowed to free access to the library for study and academic reference. Furthermore, outside regular library hours, dedicated study rooms, separate for girls and boys, are made available during early mornings and late evenings to support academic goals in a safe setting.

**H) Mentoring, Internships, and Employability Skills:** The library also contributes to student

mentoring and skill development by guiding internal students working under the Earn and Learn scheme and mentoring Library and Information Science (LIS) interns from other universities. These initiatives help students develop employability skills and provide career guidance, aligning with NEP's holistic and skill-oriented education vision.

**I) Eminent Resource Persons and Intellectual Engagement:** Reinforcing the belief that "**Reading good books and meeting good people shape our future,**" the library regularly invites eminent resource persons, academicians, authors, professionals, and thought leaders for guest lectures, interactive sessions, book talks and for developing reading skills. These engagements enrich the intellectual environment and inspire students towards excellence, leadership, and informed citizenship.

**J) Book-to-Screen Initiative:** RJ College Library organises *Book-to-Screen* events featuring films and documentaries based on literary works, as well as inspirational, motivational, and patriotic themes. These screenings, often followed by discussions, foster critical thinking, visual literacy, and emotional engagement. The initiative inspires students to grow in their careers and become responsible citizens and reinforces NEP 2020's emphasis on holistic and experiential learning.

The growing number of reading promotion activities and programs has significantly increased library footfalls. Additionally, the rising demand from external users for study space and access to specific reference materials has reinforced the library's value within the college and the broader community. As a result, college libraries are increasingly being recognized as vital centres of knowledge and active learning hubs, playing an essential role in academic and intellectual development.

RJ College Library remains committed to fulfilling NEP 2020's vision by fostering an inclusive, collaborative, and engaging learning culture for all.

### **Concluding Remarks**

As a result of advances in computers, automation, and digitisation, libraries have continually evolved, expanding their roles in collection development, technology integration, and digital transformation. Likewise, with the adoption of modern trends, libraries have transitioned from traditional repositories to dynamic learning environments.

Similarly, in alignment with the NEP 2020's emphasis on student-centric learning, libraries are now evolving further to become more welcoming, supportive, and resource-rich spaces. They actively guide learners, introduce innovative services, and facilitate access to information resources that satisfy the diverse and evolving demands of students and academic communities.

To support and sustain this evolution, adequate financial support, infrastructure development and qualified human resources is necessary. When such support systems are inadequate or unavailable through the government and institutional authorities, libraries should proactively explore alternative strategies. Mindful use of the available resources and infrastructure and a strategy to engage alumni, corporate sectors, and philanthropists to support the cause can significantly contribute to a transformative role. Such backing will enable libraries to maintain and upgrade their collections and services, remain technologically current, and effectively respond to the dynamic needs of learners and educators in a rapidly changing academic framework.

In the context of NEP 2020, libraries act as a catalyst of change, driving educational transformation through innovation, inclusivity, and equal access to information. To fully realize this potential, libraries must expand their scope, foster collaborative networks, enhance lifelong learning and actively facilitate the development of a skilled and future-ready workforce. Library professionals, in turn, must work collectively to strengthen LIS systems, support professional communities, and continually enhance skill development and capacity-building efforts to meet the dynamic needs of learners and society at large.

Library professionals must take the lead in introducing innovative strategies that encourage students to actively visit the library, engage with its resources, pursue research, and apply the knowledge gained to become self-reliant and socially responsible citizens. Libraries can significantly contribute to individual growth and national development by fostering an environment of curiosity and lifelong learning. As a result, professionals play a pivotal role in advancing the goals of NEP 2020 and find fulfilment and job satisfaction through their active involvement in this transformative process.

Thus, the vision of NEP 2020 can only be realized when libraries become dynamic, accessible, and

inclusive knowledge centers. By implementing the above strategies, college libraries will significantly contribute to fostering a learning ecosystem that benefits students, faculty, and the wider community. Librarians and libraries at all levels must take a proactive role in serving their registered members and the wider public, offering information and support to all who seek it.

### Looking to the Future

Further empirical research is necessary to gain deeper insights into how libraries are implementing the objectives of NEP 2020 in the context of their increasingly challenging and technology-driven environments. Such research should also explore the broader impact of the policy on libraries and library professionals, particularly in terms of their dynamic roles, the integration of digital resources, and the shift toward learner-centric services aligned with national educational goals.

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