

Pedagogical Transformation in Indian Education: A Learner Centered Perspective of NEP 2020

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Abstract:

The present Indian education system is changing according to its way of teaching and learning. Before, our formal education system mainly focused on teacher-centered teaching, memorization, and examination results. At that time, students were listening to the teacher, memorizing that, and reproducing that in examinations. But, NEP 2020 specified their aims to transform this teacher-centered approach to learner-centered, meaningful learning, flexibility, and practical learning. It encourages students to actively participate in discussion, problem solving, practical skills, and real-life activities, and this policy gives special importance to creativity, critical thinking, and overall development of the students. Therefore, in 2020, the teacher-centered approach was transformed to the learner-centered approach of learning, where learners actively participate in the teaching-learning process and construct their own knowledge.

Keywords: Pedagogical, NEP 2020, Learning, Learning Methods.

1. Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in the development of individuals as well as society. In the way of continuously changing the time, society, technology, and the different works of the world, with this, our aim and purpose of education is also changing. Today's education not only develops our knowledge but also develops creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, values, attitude, ability, and skills and also teaches us how to apply these ideas in our real-life context. Therefore, it is necessary to change the traditional teaching approach and strategies.

The national education policy gives a new vision to our present education system. Its perspective is highly visioned on quality, equity, and inclusivity, where learners play an important role in success in these visions. So, this policy emphasizes learner-centered, experiential learning, competency-based, and holistic education. Here students actively participated in the teaching-learning process and were involved in different hands-on experiential activities. Here students learned through activities, experiences, discussions, projects, creative works, problem solving, and real-life situations.

A learner-centered approach is an important thing in the teaching-learning process. Where learners actively participate in the teaching-learning process, try to solve their own problems, and construct knowledge on their own experiences. In this approach students play the role of an active participant rather than a passive recipient. In this approach the teacher's role also changes; he is not only a transmitter of bookish knowledge but also a facilitator, mentor, guide, and motivator. Teachers always encourage students to ask questions, explore ideas, work collaboratively, solve problems, and construct their knowledge through their own experience.

Nep 2020 seeks to bring significant changes in the field of curriculum, assessment, and teaching methods. It emphasizes foundational learning, multilingual education, the use of technology, vocational education, learning through experience, and overall development of learners. These transforms aim to make education more meaningful, practical, and connected to the needs and demands of a changing society. However, these ideas converting into action and implementation in the Indian educational context is not easy. Because the Indian education perspective changes widely. Effective implementation requires well-prepared teachers, adequate learning resources, institutional support, and suitable assessment techniques.

Literature Review

- (1) [Tarun Pratap Singh, Prof. N. P. S. Chandel, and Dr. T. K. Rao \(2025\)](#) studied "Experiential learning (innovative pedagogy under NEP 2020): "Transform educational system towards learner-centered education" discusses experiential learning, where learners actively participate in learning processes to learn problem-solving skills, group learning, critical thinking, and scientific inquiry. He has given 4 stages of the experiential learning model of David Kolb (1984). Where every domain is discussed, but cognitive domains are having more importance. CBSE changes the Indian education system towards experiential learning, where students connect the learning to the real-world environment.
- (2) [Dr. Tattwamasi Paltasingh and Prakash Bhue \(2021\)](#) studied "Child-Centered Education in Indian Schools: Policies and the Practices," which examines how child-centered education has been given special place in the NEP 1986 in the formal school system. Most of the schools also place emphasis on a child-centered approach. The national education policy 2020 has targeted 5 years to develop the FLN of the children through restructuring pedagogy and teacher education.
- (3) [Suzana Brinkmann \(2015\)](#) investigated "learner-centered education reforms in India." The missing piece of teacher beliefs" discusses how many developing countries, like India, have been attempting to bring a transformation from teacher-centered to learner-centered classrooms for years. Particularly annual in-service training, yet most of the Indian classroom is dominated by rote learning because Indian pedagogy is deeply rooted in cultural values and resistance to change. But there has been some rare research to identify this concept.
- (4) [Suzana Blinkmann \(2019\)](#) studied "Teacher's beliefs and educational reforms in India: from learner-centered to learning-centered education". She discussed the challenges of implementing learner-centered education in India, particularly the reason behind teachers' culturally shaped beliefs and practices. This study has been conducted by taking 60 govt. Primary school teachers use mixed methods. It shows that Indian constitutional values and educational reform movements support learner-centered principles, but many teachers continuously use traditional beliefs and practices of teaching. Simply, this article argues that the pre-designed Western model of learner-centered education may not be effective in the Indian scenario.
- (5) [Niradhar Dey \(2022\)](#) studied the national education policy NEP (2020) on transforming education. "A critical analysis of recommendations on school teacher and higher education" discusses different educational structures and pedagogical changes in ECCE school education and teacher education as well as higher education. This article also gives importance to the history of educational development in India and its major recommendations in NEP 2020 on different aspects. The article discusses the vision of transforming education by implementing NEP 2020 in the major three areas of its recommendations, such as school, teacher, and higher education.
- (6) [Mayank Bhardwaj, Ashish Ranjan, and Jyoti Sharma \(2024\)](#) studied "Curriculum and NEP 2020: Perspectives and Interconnections." This study discusses how NEP 2020 promotes the adoption of learner-centric education, which develops critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, and reduced rote memorization methods. This policy argues an effective education policy relies on strong curricular foundations for optimum results. This article also explains NEP 2020 views curriculum as a combination of Indian knowledge and modern educational thinking.
- (7) [T. Ashok Kumar, T. Russel Raj, A. Rajadurai, A. H. Abishini, and A. H. Anchani](#) studied "Analyzing the Impact of the New Educational Policy 2020: A Comprehensive Review of India's Educational Reforms," which discusses NEP 2020, which aims to transform the country's educational landscape. The policy emphasizes competency-based progression and potential impact on student learning outcomes, teacher training, and educational infrastructure. This policy also promotes equity, quality, and innovation in Indian education and prepares students for the demands of the 21st century.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the concept of pedagogical transformation in Indian education
2. To examine the learner-centered perspective of the NEP 2020
3. To identify the major pedagogical reforms proposed in NEP 2020
4. To analyze the opportunities and challenges associated with implementing learner-centered pedagogy.
5. To suggest strategies for strengthening learner-centered pedagogical practices in India

Methodology

In the present study, the researchers used only qualitative and secondary sources of data, such as books, article, newspapers, and the websites. All the data are qualitative and secondary so, the researcher analyzed the data using thematic analysis, content analysis and document analysis.

Concept of pedagogical transformation: -

Pedagogical transformation refers to bringing significant changes in the process of teaching learning takes place. It involves traditional teaching practices transform into that approach where learners actively participate, making learning more meaningful, flexible, interesting, practical and inclusive.

Traditionally, the teaching learning practice were focused on the teacher, textbooks, memorization and examination perspective. It is reduced the opportunity of students to actively involve in teaching practices, to explore ideas, express their thoughts and connect what they learned in day to day life activities. Therefore, pedagogical transformation aims to overcome these limitations by focusing more on Lerner's needs, interest, abilities, active involvement and experiences in the learning process.

Key dimensions of pedagogical transformation

Pedagogical transformation leads to learners actively involved rather than as passive listeners.

(1) Teacher-centered into learner-centered:

In the process of teaching and learning, the teacher not only transmits bookish knowledge but also facilitates, guides, and motivates the students in the right direction, where learners actively participate in the teaching-learning context.

(2) Rote learning into understanding and application:

Traditionally the educational context focused on only rote memorization of a concept, but now that will transform into the comprehensive application of the learning of a concept.

(3) passive learning into active learning:

Learners actively involved in discussions, different activities, project work, experiments, and collaborative tasks. At that time the learner's learning process becomes meaningful and enthusiastic.

(4) content-based competency-based learning:

In a traditional teaching context, teachers only focused on providing bookish knowledge and completing the syllabus, but in a modern context, that will shift into different competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and problem solving.

(5) uniform teaching into responsive teaching:

As we know, in the classroom different types of learners are there in terms of their abilities, interests, mental functions, and understanding of a concept. But in the traditional system, every student was provided the same ways of

teaching techniques, but that has shifted in modern techniques into learners giving importance to their diverse perspectives.

(6) Examination oriented into holistic assessment:

Before, teaching was based on examination-oriented but, in 2020, gives a diverse perspective and focuses only on holistic assessment, where assessment increasingly focuses on learners' understanding, skills, competencies, and overall development.

(7) Classroom-only learning into experiential learning:

Traditionally, teaching learning processes were connected only to classroom activities, but they have shifted into learners' environments, communities, practical experiences, and real-life contexts, which take learning into modern teaching platforms.

Concept of learner-centered pedagogy

In Odisha, tribal communities generally speak Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, or Indo-Aryan languages. However, as many of these languages were not traditionally written, oral traditions and ritual practices have played a pivotal role in preserving their history, culture, and identity since time immemorial. Generally, the Santhals speak Santali, . Gonds commonly speak Gondi, The Konds speak Kui and Kuvi, which are important tribal languages of southern Odisha The Soara community speaks the Sora language (Sora), and Munda speaks Mundari language. Various forms of folklore, for instance, Dhimsa, Dalkhai, Ghumura, and Sajana, constitute living repositories of communal reminiscence. According to the 2011 Census Report, the tribals of Odisha speak as many as 72 dialects, classified into 38 languages, demonstrating Odisha's rich tribal linguistic heritage.

Learner-centered pedagogy focuses on the active participation of learners in the teaching-learning process. This pedagogy is important for understanding learners' participation, interests, experiences, and learning needs. It also focuses on learners being different in their mental ability, interest, and experiences, so, according to their levels and perspectives, teachers should be provided knowledge to them. In this approach, students not only acquire information but also are encouraged to participate in discussions, raise questions, work collaboratively, engage in activities and projects, solve problems, and relate classroom learning to situations in everyday life. Therefore, learning becomes more active, engaging, and meaningful. Learner-centered pedagogy also creates a significant change in teachers' roles. The teacher transforms his traditional classroom teaching and bookish knowledge into a role of facilitator, motivator, and guide. The teacher creates a suitable learning atmosphere where learners learn according to their needs. At the same time, students gradually develop responsibility, independence, and ownership of their learning.

NEP 2020 and the shift towards learner-centered education:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 creates a magnificent change in the way of education. This policy strongly criticizes rote memorization, textbook-based teaching, and examination performance. And transform into an approach that focuses on understanding, skills, competencies, and overall development of the learners. Where learners become the centred point.

NEP 2020 also greater importance on experiential learning, inquiry-driven, discussion-based, and flexible and enjoyable learning. Students were encouraged to learn from different activities like critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, experiments, projects, and real-life experiences. It emphasizes the active involvement of the learner rather than receiving information only.

The policy has a special emphasis on individual differences among learners. According to the diverse perspective of learners, teachers teach the lesson. Flexibility in curriculum means students choose different subjects according to their needs, interests, and aspirations. The multidisciplinary course (MDC) has been given a special place in NEP 2020. Where students choose courses or subjects from different disciplines in diverse curriculum boundaries.

This policy places a significant position on a teacher. where the teacher is not only a transmitter of knowledge and information but also creates a suitable learning atmosphere where students ask questions, create knowledge, and learn through their own experiences. And, in the teacher role, as a facilitator, motivator, mentor, and guide.

NEP 2020 also changes the assessment practice of the learners. Instead of focusing only on memorization and marks, it also focuses on conceptual understanding, skills, competencies, abilities, and overall development. This supports the assessment tool focusing on improving learning rather than simply judging performance.

Key pedagogical shifts under NEP 2020:

The national education policy significantly describes the following pedagogical transformation:

(1) From teacher as the main source of knowledge to teacher as facilitator and mentor:

Traditionally, the teacher is the primary source of information in the teaching-learning process. But, due to the rapid changes of time, the role of the teachers' functions becomes transformed. The teacher will make a suitable learning atmosphere where students learn different activities, and the teacher will also be a facilitator and mentor for students.

(2) From passive learning to active participation:

In the conventional teaching-learning process, students' roles were as passive listeners, who collected notes and reproduced information, but in the 21st century, students are actively involved in teaching-learning activities such as problem-solving activities, discussions, experiments, and project work, which can make students active learners. Teachers only provide a learning atmosphere, but students themselves create knowledge.

(3) From rote memorization to conceptual understanding:

In the traditional approach, special importance is placed on only remembering and reproducing information, but in the new education policy, that specialization should be emphasized, and understanding and application should be given. Means, students not only memorize any concepts but also understand their actual meaning and apply them in real-life contexts.

(4) From textbook-centered to experiential and activity-based learning:

Learning through the textbook becomes the major source of classroom learning. But NEP 2020 says what we learn from anywhere that should be connected with experiences, activities, and real-life contexts. So, students get accurate knowledge through their real-life experiences.

(5) From examination oriented to competency and holistic assessment:

Examination is the most important part of the teaching-learning process. Because it decides the achievement of the students. According to the traditional approach, examination is the only way to the performance of the students. But, in modern educational perspectives, assessment should be done, and different activities include project work, observations, portfolios, self-assessments, peer assessments, examining understanding, competencies, skills, and overall development.

(6) From fixed learning pathways to greater flexibility and choice:

In the traditional approach students are limited to fixed subject combinations and learning pathways. But NEP 2020 also provided greater opportunities to choose different disciplines and subjects according to their interests, abilities, and aspirations. Multi-disciplinary courses should be given special importance where allowed, as students connect knowledge and subjects from different areas of discipline.

(7) From individual competition to collaboration and peer learning:

As we know, academic success may be strongly associated with individual performance in the traditional approach. But, in modern perspectives, collaborative learning, group activities, and peer learning should be given importance. It allows students to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

In the conventional approach, learners only reproduce the information that the knowledge provided by the teacher in the textbook. In the NEP 2020 perspective, learners are encouraged to understand the meaning, apply that meaningful idea, and construct knowledge in their own experience.

Transformation of teacher and learner roles under NEP 2020:

NEP 2020 brings a significant change in the roles of teachers and learners by shifting education from a traditional approach to a modern or learner-centered approach. In the traditional approach, the teacher role was the center, where the teacher only transmitted the bookish knowledge, while learners were also passive recipients who only listened, memorized, and reproduced the information.

But, in NEP 2020, the total teaching approach was modified in learners' perspectives.

Here the teacher's role becomes that of a facilitator, guide, mentor, and learning designer who creates meaningful learning experiences and supports students according to the diversity of the learners. Teachers always encourage and motivate learners to use experiential, activity-based, critical thinking, problem-solving, creative skills, and collaborative learning in their study. At this moment learners' roles become active, where they actively participate and construct their own knowledge. Students are encouraged to explore ideas, ask questions, participate in discussion, learn from real-life experience, and collaborate with peers.

Thus, changing roles of teachers and learners under NEP 2020 represents a fundamental pedagogical transformation where teachers facilitate learning and learners are actively involved in the teaching-learning process.

Curriculum and assessment transformation towards learner-centered education under NEP 2020:

Assessment is intended to measure not only what learners remember but also what they understand, apply, analyze, and create. NEP 2020 has brought significant changes in the process of assessment of the learners. The heavy content and textbook-oriented curriculum translate into a holistic-based approach that focuses on critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity.

NEP 2020 also transforms the assessment from an examination-oriented and rote-based system into a regular, formative, competency-based, and holistic process. Thus, the transformation of curriculum and assessment under NEP 2020 aims to place learners at the center point of making the curriculum and assessment system, which should be based on a holistic approach.

Technology-enabled, multilingual, and inclusive pedagogy under NEP 2020:

NEP 2020 brings significant changes in the teaching and learning practices by integrating technology, multilingualism, and inclusive pedagogy. Technology is an important tool where learners acquire knowledge by utilizing technological instruments. Which makes teaching and learning active, interesting, and interactive. Digital learning helps learners to learn so many things from diverse materials according to their own pace. Another significant contribution is multilingualism, meaning students learn their mother tongue and local language at their foundational stage. This approach makes learning understandable and meaningful as a concept.

This policy also emphasizes inclusive education, where diverse learners' needs, abilities, and backgrounds have been given priority. In this education, different types of disadvantaged and underrepresented groups have been included.

Thus, the combination of technology, multilingualism, and inclusion contributes to a more accessible, flexible, equitable, and learner-focused approach, which is reflected in the broader pedagogical transformation under NEP 2020.

(1) Teacher preparation and training:

There is very much necessary for teachers to have adequate training and continuous professional development to implement learner-centered, experiential, and competency-based learning effectively.

(2) Large class size:

To provide individual attention, conduct group activities, and address the diverse needs of students is very difficult for teachers to teach a large number of students. It is a very hard task for a teacher.

(3) inadequate infrastructure and resources:

It has created obstacles for innovative pedagogical approaches due to limited classrooms, teaching-learning materials, laboratories, and libraries. Limited resources are obstacles to achieving success in the teaching-learning process.

(4) Digital divide:

There are different learners who have less access to smartphones, computers, the internet, and digital learning platforms, which creates barriers to taking benefits of technology-supported education.

(5) Difficulty in adopting new pedagogies:

It will be very difficult for those learners who have been involved in lecture-based teaching, memorization, and fixed classroom practices. Moving away from traditional to learner-centered is a very difficult activity for conventional teaching methods following learners.

(6) Dominance of examination pressure:

The teacher who always focuses on only examinations and marks then only practices will be given on completion of syllabus and memorization rather than developing creativity, critical thinking, and practical understanding.

(7) Complexities in curriculum implementation:

Nep 2020 emphasizes multidisciplinary learning, experiential activities, and flexibility, which requires proper planning, adequate teaching-learning materials, and institutional support.

(8) Linguistic diversity in classrooms:

The different language-speaking children teach very difficult tasks for a teacher who becomes unprepared for multilingual teaching.

(9) Challenges in ensuing inclusion:

In a classroom, different learners are situated according to their abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, and educational experiences. And to meet these diverse requirements and to provide appropriate teaching is a very difficult task for a teacher.

(10) Gap between policy and practices:

The successful implementation of NEP 2020 varies from school to school because of differences in infrastructure, teacher availability, training opportunities, financial resources, and institutional capacity. Consequently, the policy vision may not always be reflected and applicable in actual classroom situations.

Suggestions for effective implementation of NEP 2020 in classroom practice:

To translate the vision of NEP 2020 into effective classroom practice, it is very much necessary to address the challenges faced by the teachers and students at the implementation level. The following suggestion can help for strengthening learner-centered pedagogy and bridging the gap between policy activities and classroom realities.

(1) Strengthen teacher education and professional development:

Learner-centered, experiential learning, competency-based, inclusive, and technology-enabled pedagogies require regular training, workshops, and continuous professional development. Through these activities we can strengthen the teacher education as well as professional development.

(2) promote learner-centered teaching practices:

The teaching-learning process gradually moves from teacher-centered to learner-centered methods. The teacher applies different learner-centered practices like activity-based learning, project work, collaborative learning, inquiry, discussion, and problem solving.

(3) Improve school infrastructure and learning resources:

To implement innovative pedagogical practices effectively, it should be necessary to adopt sufficient classrooms, libraries, laboratories, teaching-learning materials, and digital facilities. Improvement of school infrastructure and learning resources makes teaching successful.

(4) Bridge the digital divide:

To provide equal opportunity of Internet connectivity, digital devices, and quality digital learning resources to rural and disadvantaged sections of learners.

(5) Create a supportive environment for change :-

Schools should encourage teachers and learners to adopt new pedagogical practices through institutional support, proper guidance, mentoring, and innovative teaching practices.

(6) Reduce excessive examination pressure:

Classroom teaching practices focus on understanding, application, creativity, and critical thinking rather than examination, marks, and memorization.

(7) Ensure effective curriculum implementation:

Teachers should take adequate time, suitable resources, and institutional support to implement multidisciplinary, flexible, and experiential curriculum practices meaningfully.

(8) strengthen multilingual pedagogy:

Teachers should be encouraged to use required languages. While necessary to use local language that time the teacher can use.

(9) Promote inclusive classroom:

Schools should adopt suitable teaching strategies and multiple materials that can be touched upon by learners with diverse abilities and backgrounds.

(10) strengthen the policy-practice link:

To implement the vision of NEP 2020 into an actual classroom situation, it is necessary to coordinate among policymakers, educational institutions, school leaders, and teachers.

Conclusion:

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a transformative phase in Indian education by promoting teacher-centered and content-driven practices towards a more learner-centered, flexible, experiential, and competency-based system. These emphases on active learning, holistic development, and meaningful engagement have redefined the role of both teachers and students. Teachers are positioned as facilitators, mentors, and guides, while learners are encouraged to participate actively, think critically, explore ideas, and construct knowledge through thinking practices. The transforming reforms in learner-centered pedagogy with technology-enabled learning, multilingual approaches, and inclusive pedagogies have the potential to make education more meaningful, relevant, and accessible to learners' diverse needs.

However, achieving this change in actual classrooms, which addresses several challenges, including variations in teacher preparation and training, large classroom size, inadequate infrastructure, the digital divide, difficulty in adopting new pedagogies, dominance of new examination pressure, the gap between policy and practices, strong institutional support, and effective coordination among teachers, school leaders, educational institutions, and policymakers, is equally important.

Ultimately, NEP 2020 aims to bring meaningful changes in teaching and learning by connecting educational policy with actual classroom practices. If the policy is implemented properly by considering the needs and situations of different learners and schools, it can help create an education system that is focused on learners. This can make learning more meaningful and help students develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for their future.

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