



Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in the Context of National Education Policy 2020: Implications for Transforming Indian Education

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Abstract

The National Education Policy 2020 describes the changes in the guiding vision and structural framework of the education system of India, which emphasize the significance of 'inclusivity,' 'equity,' and 'integration of cultural diversity' into the learning and teaching process. In the context of a culturally diverse society, it helps students that the learning and teaching approaches in the education system recognize and respect the different socio-cultural backgrounds of the learners. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is an instructional method that seeks to bridge the gap between the students' cultural experiences and the pedagogy of learning. The present research aims to examine the significance of culturally responsive pedagogy in the context of the National Education Policy 2020 and its implications for the transformation of the education system of India. The research design of the study is descriptive in nature and is based on secondary research materials such as policies, research articles, and reports related to culturally responsive pedagogy and education reform in the context of India. The research analysis is mainly based on the major recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020, such as multilingual education, the inclusion of Indian knowledge systems, and the promotion of learning through experiences and culturally rooted curricula. The research findings show that the principles of culturally responsive pedagogy have strong similarities with the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 and have the potential to transform the education system of India to a great extent by giving it more inclusive and culturally responsive.

Keywords: Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, National Education Policy 2020, Multilingual Education, Indian Knowledge System, Inclusive Pedagogy

1. Introduction

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims for a transformative education system that is inclusive, equitable, and rooted in the country's cultural diversity. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), which incorporates the student's culture, language, and life experiences into the instruction for increased student engagement and achievement, is perfectly compatible with the vision of India's 2020 National Education Policy. The 2020 policy replaces rote learning with a 5+3+3+4 structure that promotes multilingualism through the use of the mother tongue for the first five years, and a learner-centric, holistic, and inclusive education system that values local knowledge and traditions. This aligns well with the values of CRP, such as cultural competence and making learning relevant by relating it to the student's life world, such as the use of folk stories for literature or tribal designs for math. The 2020 policy promotes equity for all groups, including tribal and rural populations, making it possible for CRP to address issues of equity for diverse groups of students, which is a challenge for educators in multilingual, multicultural India. The implementation of CRP will likely result in increased student engagement through techniques such as code-switching for multilingual societies, thereby promoting a greater feeling of belonging and increased critical thinking. The 2020 policy's emphasis on teacher development provides



opportunities for the widespread implementation of CRP. The vision of a diverse student culture promoting empowered, relevant, and meaningful learning aligns well with the 2020 policy's vision for India as a "global knowledge superpower." This study situates culturally responsive pedagogy as a critical lens to interpret and operationalize the inclusive vision of NEP 2020 within the complex socio-cultural fabric of Indian classrooms.

2. Objective of the study

1. To examine the Relevance of culturally responsive pedagogy in education.
2. To analyse how culturally responsive pedagogy aligns with the goals and vision of NEP 2020.
3. To identify challenges and gaps in integrating culturally responsive pedagogy within the current Indian education system.
4. To suggest strategies for effective incorporation of culturally responsive practices in line with NEP 2020.

3. Research Methodology

The study is based on the descriptive to explore the relationship between culturally responsive pedagogy and the provisions of the National Education Policy 2020. The study is of a conceptual and review-based nature, and the research is conducted through the analysis of existing literature and frameworks. The study is conducted through secondary data, and the data is collected from the National Education Policy 2020 document, research articles, books, and reports related to culturally responsive pedagogy and educational reforms in India. A qualitative and interpretative method has been applied to analyze the data, and the themes and issues related to the study are identified. However, the study is limited to secondary data, and the research is not conducted through field investigation.

4. Review of Related literature

1. **Maheshwari (2020)** conducted a research on the paradigm shift in Indian education through the introduction of National Education Policy 2020, focusing on innovative pedagogy, AI, and promoting Indian knowledge systems. The research aimed to bring to light how NEP 2020 has envisioned a paradigm shift in traditional education by promoting learner-centered education, being flexible and multidisciplinary in nature, and incorporating technology, particularly AI, to improve the teaching-learning process to face future challenges. The research also highlighted the importance of promoting indigenous knowledge systems to make education culturally relevant and rooted in Indian tradition. The research findings revealed how NEP 2020 has envisioned promoting creativity, critical thinking, and holistic development through modern and traditional integration. The research suggested that for a successful implementation of NEP 2020, teachers should be prepared to handle such a paradigm shift, and a balanced approach should be adopted in promoting technology and cultural values in education.
2. **Jadon, Saxena, and Jadon (2020)** has explored the Indian education system's transformation from traditional Gurukul to modern global education in terms of National Education Policy 2020. The research was specifically focused on how Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) could be included in modern education to bring a balance between traditional knowledge and modern education. The researcher found that the traditional Indian education system's focus on holistic education, moral values, learning experiences, and teacher-student relationships is again being revived in NEP 2020. The research concluded that NEP 2020 focuses on traditional education in terms of culture while also ensuring it is in line with modern global education standards. Moreover, it encourages critical thinking, creativity, and learning in multiple disciplines. The researcher also found that traditional education is relevant in terms of inculcating identity, sustainability, and ethics in students. This could be an important addition to modern education to make it more inclusive, value-based, and context-specific in a globalized world.
3. **Kumar and Kishor (2020)** explored the role of National Education Policy 2020 in integrating traditional wisdom in India's education system in terms of promoting Indian Knowledge System (IKS). The focus was on how National Education Policy 2020 stresses the inclusion of indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, and traditional practices in education. The significance of traditional Indian knowledge in terms of its foundation in philosophy, science, art, and ethics was also explored in terms of its role in developing a holistic education system

in India. The significance of traditional Indian knowledge was also explored in terms of its role in developing value education in India. The findings revealed how National Education Policy 2020 promotes a multi-disciplinary approach to education in terms of bridging traditional Indian wisdom with modern education in India.

4. **Rajput, Singh, Joshi, and Chari (2020)** carried out a survey-based research to examine the concept of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) with reference to the National Education Policy 2020. The research attempted to examine the level of awareness, perception, and acceptability of the IKS by students, teachers, and academic circles. The research primarily examined the role of the National Education Policy 2020 in promoting the concept of indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, and inter-disciplinary learning. The research concluded that while there is an increased recognition of the need to promote traditional knowledge within the context of modern education, the level of awareness is limited. The research suggested that the National Education Policy is an excellent guideline for incorporating the IKS, and increased awareness would definitely improve the integration of IKS, thereby making education relevant from the cultural, holistic, and identity perspectives.
5. **Abrol (2018)** Examined the framework of value-based education in Indian schools and its importance in the present era. The focus was on the need to incorporate moral, ethical, and social values in the teaching-learning process so that students develop in an integral manner. The need was also emphasized to look beyond academic achievement in education and focus on character building, good citizenship, and emotional development in students. The findings were that value-based education is very important in tackling problems in the present era, including moral degeneration, lack of empathy, and social disintegration in society. The role of teachers was also emphasized as role models in inculcating values in students through formal curriculum and hidden curriculum strategies in schools. The importance was also noted in incorporating value-based education in alignment with National Education Policy 2020 so that it becomes culturally responsive and ethically sound education. The conclusion was that there is an urgent need to look at a value-oriented approach in developing a balanced education system in society.
6. **Vageeshan and Kamalakar (2020)** examined the integration of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in the education sector by implementing various government reforms, focusing specifically on the 'National Education Policy 2020.' The study was conducted to analyse the various ways in which the government policies have promoted the integration of indigenous knowledge, cultural heritage, and traditional practices in the education system. The study concluded that the latest government reforms have attempted to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern education by focusing on the multidisciplinary and holistic learning process. The research study concluded that the 'National Education Policy 2020' plays a vital role in the integration of the Indian Knowledge System in the education sector by restructuring the curriculum, promoting research, and incorporating regional languages. The research study also concluded that the lack of awareness and the need for trained educators are the challenges faced in the integration of the Indian Knowledge System in the education sector.

Summary:

Recent research suggests that the National Education Policy 2020 places importance on a more personalized, diverse, and culturally embedded education approach by incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems and morals-based teaching. These studies emphasize the significance of overall growth, moral principles, and the reintroduction of traditional wisdom in combination with modern educational methods. They also show the increasing value of culturally appropriate education in fostering inclusivity and individual identity. However, there are gaps such as limited awareness, inadequate teacher training, and a lack of emphasis on practical classroom application. The studies are mainly theoretical and lack specific strategies for incorporating culturally responsive teaching in real educational settings. Therefore, this current research expands on these findings by exploring how culturally responsive teaching can be effectively integrated with NEP 2020 and put into practice in classrooms to improve inclusivity, fairness, and educational results.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Cultural Diversity in Indian Classrooms: The Need for Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

The classrooms in India witness a huge cultural, linguistic and socio-economic diversity, the analysis reveals. Students hail from diverse origins and speak different languages, possess varied customs, and price systems. Even so, traditional pedagogy employs largely the same and one-size-fits-all teaching approach which does not take these into account. When students' lived experiences outside the classroom aren't reflected in the teaching in classrooms, it causes a disconnect in learning. Culturally responsive pedagogy refers to an approach that recognizes, affirms, and values students' cultural identity and background. It advocates for the integration of diverse cultural experiences of learners into teaching practice so that it becomes more relevant. The findings point out that implementing culturally responsive pedagogy has the potential for better learning environments, student participation, and student achievement.

5.2. National Education Policy 2020 as a Framework for Inclusive Education

An important finding of the study is that NEP 2020 provides a comprehensive framework for fostering inclusive and equitable education. The policy states that we must depart from rigid, uniform, and mechanistic approaches and adopt flexible, learning-centered pedagogies. It acknowledges the value of cultural plurality and endorses a system of education that is global yet rooted in Indian ethos. The idea of the National Education Policy focussing on cognitive, emotional and ethical development is in line with culturally responsive pedagogy. NEP 2020 aims to make education more inclusive, equitable and accessible to address existing inequalities in the education framework that affect the learners' capacity to learn.

5.3. Multilingual Education and the Preservation of Learner Identity

One of the key provisions in the NEP 2020 is the prioritisation of multilingual education. In which mother tongue or regional language has been chosen as the medium of instruction in foundational years. The result shows that this approach is significant in protecting learners' linguistic and cultural identities. Language is the carrier and identity-holder of culture, values and community. Students find it easier to relate to and engage with lessons taught in their mother tongue. Subsequently, their rate of understanding improves. Culturally responsive pedagogy, we have seen, is aligned with the use of students' linguistic resources as assets. Moreover, multilingual education helps reduce barriers to learning, leading to better inclusion of disadvantaged students.

5.4. Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems and Experiential Learning

According to the paper, it is strongly suggested in NEP 2020 that Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) be incorporated into the curriculum. This includes utilisation of their traditional knowledge and local practices in teaching learning. Integrating indigenous knowledge into the curriculum enhances association between indigenous students and their peers with their cultural heritage. Moreover, the policy emphasizes learning through experiences and activities, promoting hands-on engagement for effective learning outcomes. The learning process is contextualised and made relevant to students everyday lives through these techniques, which is in accordance with culturally responsive pedagogy. The practices studied in the paper link academic knowledge to cultural and social contexts and help enhance student engagement.

5.5. Role of Teachers in Implementing Culturally Responsive Pedagogy

According to the findings, teachers play an important role in the successful implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy. The NEP teacher training, as per 2020, emphasizes the importance of professional training of the teacher to develop the capacity of the teachers. Teachers are supposed to use flexible ways in their teaching, classroom and examples that are culturally relevant in instruction. But, this research pointed out that many teachers are not sufficiently trained and not aware enough. Consequently, professional development, curriculum reform, and institutional support are required for teachers to implement professionals' culturally responsive practices effectively.

5.6. Challenges and Implications for Educational Transformation

While NEP 2020 and culturally responsive teaching are well-aligned, a study points out various hurdles to its execution. These obstacles include resource shortages, inadequate teacher training, inflexible curriculum frameworks, and limited institutional backing. Moreover, differences in regional settings might hinder the consistent application of policy guidelines. Nevertheless, the research indicates that effectively addressing these challenges could revolutionize India's education system

by integrating culturally responsive teaching into NEP 2020. This integration could foster an inclusive, fair, and culturally appropriate education system that meets the varied requirements of students and fosters comprehensive growth.

While the policy vision of the National Education Policy 2020 is progressive and inclusive, its successful realization depends on addressing deep-rooted structural challenges such as teacher preparedness, institutional capacity, and socio-economic disparities. Without systematic implementation mechanisms, there remains a risk of a gap between policy intent and classroom reality.

6. Findings

In India, classrooms are known for their diverse cultures and languages, requiring teaching methods that consider these differences. A key finding is that teaching that respects various cultures facilitate learner's engagement and achievement to learn better by relating academic subjects to their own backgrounds and experiences. The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes cultural inclusivity through features like multilingual education, student-focused teaching, and all-round development. Using a student's native language in teaching helps them maintain their identity and understand better. Including Indian Knowledge Systems and encouraging hands-on learning leads to education that is culturally appropriate and based on real-life situations. Successful implementation of these methods relies on teachers being ready, institutions offering support, and curricula being adaptable. In summary, the study indicates that NEP 2020 offers a solid foundation for promoting culturally sensitive teaching and has the potential to create more inclusive, fair, and practical education that meets the diverse needs of students.

7. Limitation and research gaps

- The study is based on secondary data, including the analysis of the National Education Policy 2020 and existing literature, which limits the scope of primary or field-based insights.
- The absence of empirical data restricts understanding of actual classroom practices and ground-level implementation in India.
- The findings are interpretative in nature and depend on the availability and scope of existing documents and research.
- There is a lack of empirical studies examining the implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy in Indian educational settings.
- Limited research is available on teachers' preparedness, awareness, and competencies in adopting culturally responsive teaching practices.
- There is insufficient evidence on the effectiveness of NEP 2020 provisions such as multilingual education and integration of Indian Knowledge Systems.
- Practical challenges, including institutional constraints and resource limitations, remain underexplored in existing research.
- Further research is needed through field-based studies, case studies, and comparative analysis to assess the real-world impact of these approaches.

8. Conclusion

The study reveals a strong connection between culturally responsive teaching and the National Education Policy 2020 in India. The research reveals that NEP 2020 represents a positive shift towards a fair, inclusive, and student-focused education system that values the diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of learners. Through promoting multilingual education, incorporating Indian Knowledge Systems, and encouraging hands-on learning, the policy sets a solid groundwork for embracing culturally responsive teaching methods. These methods are vital in creating a meaningful educational experience by linking classroom lessons with students' cultural heritage and real-life encounters. The study suggests that effectively applying these strategies can enhance student involvement, boost academic performance, and nurture a sense of belonging and identity among learners. However, achieving these goals hinges on factors like teacher readiness, institutional backing, and adaptable curriculum planning. Overcoming these obstacles is crucial for translating policy recommendations into practice. By integrating culturally responsive teaching into the framework of NEP 2020, we

can significantly enhance the education system, making it more inclusive, culturally aware, and tailored to meet the diverse needs of students.

Thus, the integration of culturally responsive pedagogy should not be viewed merely as a pedagogical choice but as a transformative necessity for achieving equity and social justice in education.

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