

Skill Development and NEP 2020: Shaping a progressive India

Dr. Jasdeep Kaur*

Abstract

India's ambition to evolve into a developed nation under the "Viksit Bharat" vision requires a strong educational framework that can cultivate a proficient workforce. The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020 emerges as a transformative tool in this endeavor, emphasizing the pivotal role of skill development in driving socioeconomic progress. In light of NEP 2020, this article assesses the function of skill development programs, attempting to clarify their significance, difficulties, and possibilities for promoting inclusive growth. The findings emphasize the importance of skill development in aligning education with industry demands and highlight implementation challenges like curriculum alignment and infrastructure constraints. The study offers suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of skill development programs, supporting India's vision for a prosperous and empowered society.

Keywords: New Education Policy, NEP 2020, Skill development, Viksit Bharat, Digital literacy

Introduction

India is on a transformative journey towards achieving the vision of a developed India, known as "Viksit Bharat." This vision seeks to push the country toward socioeconomic success, technological innovation, and inclusive growth, and it is motivated by the aspirations of its people (Jain, 2024). The National Education Policy (NEP) of 2020, which provides a reformative

framework, is crucial to this ambition. With the aim of revamping the system to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century and foster a culture of innovation, creativity, and lifelong learning, the NEP 2020 represents a dramatic change in India's educational environment. At the core of India's path to development lies the critical need for skill enhancement. In a swiftly changing global economy marked by technological advancements and shifts in employment trends, acquiring pertinent skills is essential (Basu, 2024). Skill development enhances employability, stimulates entrepreneurship, fosters innovation, and drives economic progress. The NEP 2020 emphasizes integrating skill training and vocational education into the regular school system, recognizing its role in nation-building. This approach aims to equip learners with the skills needed to thrive in a dynamic, competitive environment. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding the evaluation of the skill development courses promoted by NEP 2020. This research seeks to assess the effectiveness and challenges of these initiatives, providing policymakers and educators with insights to improve implementation and shape India's education and skill development agenda.

NEP 2020: A framework for skill development

India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a comprehensive framework designed to modernize the educational system in order to address the demands of the twenty-first century. It emphasizes skill development

*Assistant Professor, S.G.T.B. Khalsa College, University of Delhi, jasdeep1609@gmail.com

heavily because it understands how important it is for promoting innovation, improving employability, and accelerating economic growth. The NEP 2020’s main provisions pertaining to skill development are listed below:

- 1) **Holistic Education:** NEP 2020 aims to provide a holistic education that goes beyond rote learning. It emphasizes on critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, marking a dramatic transition in the Indian educational system towards a skills-centric approach (Seth et al., n.d.).
- 2) **Vocational Education:** Vocational education holds undeniable importance in preparing individuals for the workforce by imparting practical skills and knowledge essential across diverse industries. It serves as a potent tool for enhancing youth employability, effectively bridging the skills gap prevalent in the job market, and promoting long-term sustainability. NEP 2020 recognizes the critical role that vocational education plays and emphasizes the importance of incorporating it into the larger educational framework in order to better match educational pursuits with the ever-changing needs of the modern world (Parvanda, 2022).
- 3) **Digital Learning** - Digital literacy is crucial for better academic performance, increased interest in learning, and readiness to tackle future challenges in the digital era (Murtadho et al., 2023). The NEP is committed to using digital learning technology as a tool to advance inclusive education practices, as

evidenced by its emphasis on digital learning. The policy paves the way for a more technologically advanced and inclusive educational environment by acknowledging the contribution of ICT in raising educational standards and providing equitable access to learning opportunities (Binoy et al., 2023).

- 4) **Experiential Learning** - NEP 2020 highlights the importance of experiential learning and inquiry-based methods in education to nurture critical thinking and practical competencies. By involving students in active participation comprising exploration, reflection, and application, experiential learning enhances communication aptitude, self-assurance, and critical thinking prowess, thereby fostering practical insights and experiences (Sachdeva & Latesh, 2023).
- 5) **Business-academia collaboration-** With an emphasis on business-academia collaboration to suit industrial objectives, the New Education Policy advocates for a substantial overhaul of education. India’s aspiration to succeed internationally depends on this teamwork (‘Industry-Academia Collaboration; the Catalyst for India’s Education Revolution’, 2023). NEP contributes to the economic prosperity of India by improving skill development and graduate employability through the integration of real-world perspectives.

Literature Review

The literature review has been presented in this section in a tabular format for better clarity and readability:

Author(s) & Year	Key Focus/Findings	Relevance to Skill Development
P.S. Aithal & Shubhrajyotana Aithal (2020)	Comparative analysis of NEP 2020 with previous policies, focusing on higher education reforms.	Highlights policy changes in higher education to enhance skill development.
P. Kalyani (2020)	Examined NEP 2020’s effects on stakeholders and emphasized future awareness of its impact.	Stresses the importance of preparing stakeholders for skill-based education.
Panditrao MM (2020)	Addressed NEP 2020’s principles, objectives, challenges, and solutions with emphasis on higher education.	Highlights higher education’s role in preparing students for 21st-century skills.

Wankhade (2021)	Studied higher education's role in economic and social mobility, with emphasis on inclusivity.	Advocates for inclusive skill development across diverse socioeconomic groups.
S.G. Sontakke et al. (2022)	Discussed NEP 2020's focus on preparing youth to face global challenges effectively.	Aligns with the policy's vision to equip learners with global skills
S. Yenugu (2022)	Critiqued NEP 2020, noting many ideas are already in practice and emphasized the need for academic, logistical, and financial commitments.	Suggests better implementation for fostering skill-based education
Chatterjee, Das, & Nandi (2022)	Studied student knowledge of NEP 2020 implementation in higher education.	Revealed gaps in awareness and the need for better dissemination of skill-based education policies.
Dwivedi, V., & Joshi, M. (2023).	Explored internationalization of higher education under NEP 2020.	Highlights the global relevance of skills promoted by NEP 2020.
Patil, D. (2024)	Evaluates NEP 2020's impact on skill education, job readiness, and economic growth. Highlights vocational training, experiential learning, and lifelong adaptability for a dynamic job market.	Emphasizes NEP 2020's role in aligning education with industry needs and preparing a workforce for the 21st-century economy.

Objectives of the Study

1. To contemplate the role of NEP 2020 in fostering skill development and its contribution to India's socioeconomic progress.
2. To assess the significance of skill development programs in aligning education with industry demands through secondary research.
3. To provide suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of skill development programs under NEP 2020.

Importance of the Study

This study emphasizes how NEP 2020 integrates education with industry demands to improve employability and propel economic success, underscoring the significance of skill development as a pillar of India's "Viksit Bharat" goal. It highlights

how skill development may overcome socioeconomic gaps and provide equal opportunities, hence supporting inclusive growth. The paper also highlights important implementation issues, like curriculum misalignment and insufficient infrastructure, and offers practical suggestions to improve the efficacy of skill-development initiatives. This study supports the transformative potential of NEP 2020 in creating a workforce capable of fulfilling the needs of a dynamic global economy by bridging the gap between education and industry, hence helping India's long-term development aspirations.

Empowerment through skill development

In shaping "Viksit Bharat@2047," Prime Minister Narendra Modi charts India's journey towards a 30 trillion-dollar economy by the time the country celebrates its 100 years of independence. To address the evolving needs of the sector and acknowledge the vital contribution of blue-collar workers, the objective

is to provide essential skills training to more than 400 million individuals by 2030 and the partnership between new technology, especially artificial intelligence (AI), and the blue-collar workers is essential to this ambition. With this blend of technical innovation and human expertise, India hopes to bridge the skills gap and optimize workforce contributions. With skilled labor and AI integration, this concentrated endeavor aims to position India as a powerful global economic force by 2047 (Krishna, 2024) and to this end, skill development courses play a crucial role. These courses give students hands-on training that is customized to the demands of the industry, giving them the skills, they need to succeed in their positions. India can make sure that its workforce is flexible and competitive in a world that is constantly changing by providing training programs that are both current and easily accessible. People can stay up to date with new developments in technology and market trends by participating in upskilling and continuous learning programs, which will increase their economic contributions.

By 2027, India will have the world's largest workforce with a median age of 28.1 years, underscoring the need for targeted skilling efforts to drive economic growth. Currently, a significant skills gap leads to underemployment and unemployment, which can be mitigated by effective skill interventions. Skill development boosts productivity and efficiency by equipping workers with industry-specific knowledge. It also fosters entrepreneurship, turning individuals into job creators and enhancing regional economies. Additionally, skilled labor is crucial for India's global competitiveness, ensuring the production of goods and services that meet international standards. Prioritizing skill-building programs can unlock the potential of India's labor force and promote long-term economic growth.

The Global Skills Gap Report highlights that the highest skills gap after Brazil are reported in Indian workforce indicating the need for skill development to boost labor productivity and economic growth (Chaturvedi,

2022). India faces issues relating to skills shortage but increased access to opportunities for skill development can help close the widening skills gap in the workforce and employment possibilities and adopting the New Education Policy will make it possible to provide vocation-based training, which will support skill development and vocational education.

NEP 2020 aims to provide high-quality education and skill development opportunities, enabling individuals to pursue diverse career paths, including entrepreneurship. Skill development reduces reliance on traditional job channels, instills confidence, and enhances socioeconomic status. As individuals leverage their skills to drive innovation and progress, they become agents of change, contributing to national resilience and sustainability. NEP 2020's skill development program promotes economic growth, encourages creativity and entrepreneurship, and equips youth to independently contribute to a prosperous India.

In India, empowering young people with skills is essential to establishing self-reliance. NEP 2020 aims to provide high-quality education and skill development opportunities, enabling individuals to pursue diverse career paths, including entrepreneurship. Skill development reduces reliance on traditional job channels, instills confidence, and enhances socioeconomic status as individuals leverage their skills to drive innovation and progress, they become agents of change, contributing to national resilience and sustainability.

Transforming education landscape

NEP 2020's guidelines are expected to greatly increase exposure to vocational education in schools and higher education systems by 2025. The collaborative efforts involving secondary schools, ITIs, polytechnics, and local industry are expected to bring about this shift. Through these collaborations, vocational education will be smoothly incorporated into secondary education, providing students with real-world experience and knowledge pertinent to the business. Moreover,

the framework proposed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) aims to align general education with vocational and skill education. This framework serves as a vital tool for identifying skills gaps, mapping local opportunities, and recognizing prior learning experiences. Consequently, it is anticipated that students' job chances will significantly improve. Additionally, the newly implemented credit-based system will make it easier for students to transition between general and vocational education and because of this flexibility, students can easily move between several educational paths and develop a wide range of skills. As a result, students will be more equipped to handle the demands of the dynamic labor market and make a significant contribution to the workforce and economic development of India.

Below are examples of kind of skill development courses introduced under NEP:

- 1) Information Technology (IT) and Computer Science: These courses encompass programming, web development, data analysis, and other sought-after tech skills.
- 2) Entrepreneurship Training: Designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for initiating and managing their own ventures.
- 3) Vocational Training in Various Disciplines: This includes carpentry, mechanics, agriculture, healthcare, among others, providing students with practical skills relevant to specific trades.
- 4) Soft Skills Enhancement Programs: Focusing on communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, vital for success across diverse career paths.

Importance of skill development

Skill development is at the very heart of Viksit Bharat's forward-thinking strategy for India's all-encompassing advancement. With a clear aim to position India as a frontrunner in the global economic arena through

its demographic advantage, the importance of skill enhancement cannot be underestimated and the following points indicates why:

1. It enhances employability:

A person's ability to secure employment and progress in their career is contingent upon having pertinent skills in the highly competitive job market of today. People can succeed in a variety of professional fields by developing their technical, cognitive, and interpersonal skills. Through the alignment of educational curricula with the demands of the labor market, skill development efforts serve to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ultimately improving the employability of job seekers and graduates.

2. It boosts economic growth

The advancement of society and the economy are directly impacted by investments in skill development. In addition to being more productive, a trained workforce raises levels of savings, consumption, and revenue creation. The skill development also encourages social inclusion, lowers poverty, and supports equitable development across regions by providing marginalized and disadvantaged populations with marketable skills.

3. It fosters entrepreneurship and innovation

Creativity, problem-solving skills, and business acumen are developed through skill development, which promotes an entrepreneurial culture. Viksit Bharat promotes the development of an entrepreneurial mindset, enabling would-be business owners to launch profitable projects, provide employment, and support economic expansion. The policy drives India's progress towards becoming a global innovation hub by encouraging innovation and technology adoption, which in turn catalyzes the development of cutting-edge solutions, products, and services.

4. *It promoting social inclusion and equality*

In order to increase social inclusion and lessen gaps in opportunity access, skill development is essential. The significance of imparting skill training to disadvantaged and marginalized populations, like women, youth, people with disabilities, and rural communities, is emphasized by Viksit Bharat.

5. *It helps in adjusting to technological disruptions*

The nature of employment is always changing at a time of rapid technology growth and digital transformation. While new occupations requiring specific abilities are emerging, traditional work functions are being increasingly automated. A person's ability to adjust to these changes is greatly aided by skill development, which promotes lifelong learning, digital literacy, and technological competency.

To put it simply, skill development is essential to Viksit Bharat's larger goal of transforming India, not merely a means to an end. The policy lays the foundation for a prosperous, empowered, and globally competitive India by making investments in the development of human capital and encouraging a culture of lifelong learning and skill building.

Impact of skill development courses on various stakeholders

Students:

Students who take skill development courses benefit greatly from having real-world, industry-relevant abilities that improve their employability and career prospects. Students receive practical instruction and opportunities for experience learning, which help them solve problems, become more confident in their skills, and gain important insights into the disciplines they have chosen. Additionally, skill development programs frequently offer opportunities for both professional and personal development, giving students a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy. Graduates of skill development programs are therefore more equipped

to launch their businesses, pursue further education, or enter the workforce, all of which contribute to their socioeconomic advancement.

Educational institutions:

For educational institutions, skill development courses present an opportunity to diversify their offerings, attract a broader range of students, and strengthen their ties with industry partners. Institutions can improve their relevance and responsiveness to market demands and guarantee that their graduates are ready for the workforce by incorporating skill development into their curricula. The collaborations with companies and industry associations can also give educational institutions important insights into new developments in technology, skill requirements, and emerging trends. This helps them to successfully modify their programs to meet the demands of both the present and the future.

Employers:

Through access to a pool of competent and skilled applicants who can contribute to their organization's success, employers stand to gain a great deal from skill development efforts. Employers can lessen the difficulty of hiring new employees, cut down on training expenses, and speed up the onboarding process by hiring graduates of skill development programs. Additionally, proficient workers are more likely to be creative, flexible, and productive, all of which improve a company's ability to compete and survive. The relationship between academia and business can help address specific skill gaps within industries, and influence curriculum design through skill development collaborations with educational institutions.

Economy:

The courses in skill development are essential for stimulating economic expansion, encouraging creativity, and lowering unemployment. Technological developments across sectors, investor attraction, and productivity enhancement all depend on having a trained workforce. Furthermore, by coordinating skill

development programs with national development priorities, governments may boost entrepreneurship, generate new job opportunities, and improve the economy's overall competitiveness. In addition, a proficient labor force empowers economies to adjust to evolving market conditions, seize new prospects, and handle worldwide obstacles with greater efficiency, all of which support enduring sustainable growth.

Challenges and barriers

Despite the numerous benefits of skill development courses, several challenges and barriers hinder their effective implementation:

- ◆ **Lack of Awareness:** Many individuals, especially in marginalized communities, may lack awareness of available skill development opportunities or may perceive them as less prestigious than traditional academic pathways.
- ◆ **Quality Assurance:** Ensuring the quality and relevance of skill development programs remains a significant challenge, particularly in rapidly evolving industries where skill requirements change frequently.
- ◆ **Infrastructure and Resources:** Limited access to adequate infrastructure, equipment, and qualified instructors can impede the delivery of high-quality skill development training, especially in remote and underserved areas.
- ◆ **Industry Alignment:** Maintaining close alignment between skill development curricula and industry needs is crucial but challenging, as industries evolve rapidly, and educational institutions may struggle to keep pace with changing requirements.
- ◆ **Funding and Sustainability:** Skill development initiatives often require substantial financial resources to sustainably operate and scale. Securing funding and ensuring long-term sustainability can be challenging, particularly for non-profit or government-led programs.
- ◆ **Social Stigma:** There may be a social stigma associated with vocational education and skill-based careers, leading to perceptions of inferiority or limited social mobility compared to traditional academic pathways.

Many of these challenges will be addressed through the NEP 2020, which highlights the importance of vocational education and skill development. By integrating skill development into mainstream schooling, many of the obstacles encountered previously can be overcome.

Effective strategies for improvement

- ◆ **Linking Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to Skill India Movement:** Incentives for CSR contributions towards sector-specific skilling projects can be used to encourage corporate sector engagement in the Skill India movement. Companies can meet their social responsibility duties and help to generate a skilled workforce by coordinating their CSR efforts with national skill development initiatives.
- ◆ **Ensure Policy Frameworks Are Attractive:** To encourage educational institutions to work directly with industry partners to equip people in key sectors, create frameworks for appealing policies. This could include subsidies, tax incentives, and recognition programs for educational institutions that actively participate in industry-led skill development initiatives.
- ◆ **Support for educational institutions:** Financial assistance and incentives should be given to educational institutions in order to encourage them to start or grow skill development courses and training programs. Grants, low-interest loans, or subsidies could be made available to help with infrastructure construction, faculty training, and operating costs.
- ◆ **Facilitate Industry Collaboration:** The government ought to encourage more corporate and industry involvement in the development of course curricula for skill-based programs. Set up procedures for

collaborations between industry and academia to co-create and validate course materials, guaranteeing compliance with industry standards and expectations.

- ◆ **Market Trends and Opportunities:** Promote research projects that pinpoint market trends and opportunities in important industries that are skill development-focused. For example, research funding in the field of information technology may be given to investigate how machine learning and artificial intelligence applications in cybersecurity could be used to counter new and emerging cyber threats.
- ◆ **Government Funding for Innovation:** To encourage innovation in the fields of skill development, the government should offer financial support as well as incentives. Create innovation grants, for instance, to encourage the creation of innovative teaching strategies, technological advancements in education, and learning materials suited to the requirements of business.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy and a renewed emphasis on skill development are driving initiatives which put India on the verge of a revolutionary journey to restore its historical role as a hub of knowledge and innovation. India has long been known for its vast intellectual capability and rich knowledge legacy. The NEP 2020 aims to capitalize on this natural ability by supporting millions of students in both secondary and higher education nationwide. India hopes to improve the quality and accessibility of education by incorporating technology through programs like online degree programs and digital resources, giving students the information and abilities, they need to succeed in the digital age.

To sum, the skill development programs outlined in NEP 2020 play a vital role in achieving the vision of an empowered and prosperous India, leading the world in innovation and knowledge generation.

As India continues its journey towards educational transformation, it is imperative to prioritize skill development as a strategic imperative, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to unlock their full potential and contribute to the nation's growth and development in the 21st century and beyond.

REFERENCES

- Aithal, P. S., & Aithal, S. (2020). Analysis of the Indian national education policy 2020 towards achieving its objectives. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3676074>
- Basu, S. (2024, April 16). There is a critical need for upskilling initiatives in India, says Pearson executive. *The Economic Times*. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/jobs/mid-career/there-is-a-critical-need-for-upskilling-initiatives-in-india-says-pearson-executive/articleshow/109335928.cms?from=mdr>
- Binoy, S. K., Shaji, S., & Babu, Jobi. (2023). Inclusive education and digital learning: From the NEP perspective. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management*, 7(7). <https://ijsrem.com/download/inclusive-education-and-digital-learning-from-the-nep-perspective/>
- Chatterjee, A., Das, T., & Nandi, A. (2023). Students' knowledge on national education policy 2020 at higher education level. *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*, 184–196. <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra14062>
- Chaturvedi, S. (2022, August 9). Explained: Here's why skill development is a key to inclusive growth. *India Today*. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/explained-here-s-why-skill-development-is-a-key-to-inclusive-growth-1985778-2022-08-09>
- Dwivedi, V., & Joshi, M. (2023). Impact of India's National Education Policy (NEP) on internationalization in higher education. *Journal of International Education and Research*, 12(4), 89-104.
- Industry-academia collaboration; the catalyst for India's education revolution. (2023, December 29). *Financial Express*. <https://www.financialexpress.com/jobs-career/education-industry-academia-collaboration-the-catalyst-for-indias-education-revolution-3350384/>
- Jain, A. (2024, March 4). *Explained | What is 'Viksit Bharat 2047' and what does it aim to achieve?* Deccan Herald. <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/explained-what-is-viksit-bharat-2047-and-what-does-it-aim-to-achieve-2920441>
- Krishna, M. (2024, April 29). *Building viksit bharat: Preparing the workforce for vision 2047 - Forbes India blogs*. Forbes India. <https://www.forbesindia.com/blog/technology/building-viksit-bharat-preparing-the-workforce-for-vision-2047/>

- Murtadho, M. I., Rohmah, R. Y., Jamilah, Z., & Furqon, M. (2023). The role of digital literacy in improving students' competence in digital era. *AL-WIJDĀN Journal of Islamic Education Studies*, 8(2), 253–260. <https://doi.org/10.58788/alwijdn.v8i2.2328>
- Naveen, H. M. (2022). NEP, 2020: General education embedded with skill and vocational education. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Science, Engineering and Technology*, 9(01), 65-75.
- Panditrao, M. M., & Panditrao, M. M. (2020). National Education Policy 2020: What is in it for a student, a parent, a teacher, or us, as a Higher Education Institution/University? *Adesh University Journal of Medical Sciences & Research*, 2, 70–79. https://doi.org/10.25259/AUJMSR_32_2020
- Patil, D. (2024). *Skill Education under NEP 2020: A Pathway to Enhanced Employability and Economic Growth*. *International Journal of Scientific Research In Engineering And Management*, 08(008), 1–3.
- Pawan, K. (2020). *An empirical study on nep 2020 [national education policy] with special reference to the future of indian education system and its effects on the stakeholders*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.4159546>
- Parvanda, K. (2022). Vocational education and nep 2020. *Learning Community: An International Journal on Educational and Social Development*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.30954/2231-458X.01.2022.3>
- Sachdeva, Dr. V., & Latesh, Dr. (2023). NEP 2020: Emphasizing experiential learning and inquiry-based approaches in higher education. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 9(6), 179–184. <https://doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2023.v9.i6c.10938>
- Skill education under nep 2020: A pathway to enhanced employability and economic growth – ijsrem*. (n.d.). Retrieved January 16, 2025, from <https://ijsrem.com/download/skill-education-under-nep-2020-a-pathway-to-enhanced-employability-and-economic-growth/>
- Sontakke, S. G., Kadam, D. B., & Vartale, S. P. (2022). National education policy (Nep) 2020: India's new and strong higher education program. *SUMEDHA Journal of Management*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.46454/SUMEDHA/11.3.2022.433>
- Seth, S., Lowe, D., & Galhotra, B. (n.d.). NEP 2020: Transitioning Towards a Skill-Centric Education System. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, 4(9), 1708–1710.
- The importance of skilling people in india for economic growth and development*. (n.d.). Retrieved 23 April 2024, from <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/importance-skilling-people-india-economic-growth-roshan-narayanadasan-7bp9c>
- Wankhade, R. S. (2021). Higher Education and NEP-2020. *International Journal of Researches in Social Science and Information Studies*, 8(1), 51-56.
- Yenugu, S. (2022). The new National Education Policy (Nep) of India: Will it be a paradigm shift in Indian higher education? *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 26(4), 121–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603108.2022.2078901>