GANDHIAN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND NEP 2020 : A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Prerna Mehta, Mr.Ashokkumar Baldevbhai Prajapati

[1]* Department of Biotechnology,
GD Rungta College of Science & Technology Bhilai-490024, Chhattisgarh, India
Email : prernamehta326@gmail.com,
ORC ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-1300-588X

[2]* Assistant Professor, Soorajba College of Education,Kadi
Dist: Mahesana, Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya-Gandhinagar,Gujarat (India)
Email : ashok221086@gmail.com,
ORC ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5670-5798

Abstract

This article investigates the connections between Gandhian educational principles and the contemporary National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 while analyzing their foundational values within the Indian education system. Through his vision Gandhiji created a learning model based on the principles of truth and non-violence and self-reliance by promoting integral education which combines personality growth with academic advancement. Through Nai Talim (New Education) he put forward experiential learning together with local knowledge and vocational training because he believed this model could create complete development alongside personal empowerment for meaningful societal contributions. The NEP 2020 provides a complete guide to transform India's educational structure which matches today's century requirements. The educational system focuses on adaptable teaching methods alongside multipart education approaches while fully integrating modern technology tools which support worldwide standardized teaching practices. The policy places emphasis on both core reading and math proficiency beginners need plus develops essential competencies to improve employment prospects. An evaluation shows that Gandhian philosophy alongside NEP 2020 place equal weight on experiential learning and skill education because education should create social change. The educational philosophy of Gandhian thought emphasizes moral training and social involvement toward educating an inclusive system but NEP 2020 leans toward innovative approaches that aid in developing a more accessible inclusive education system.

Keywords: *NEP 2020, Gandhian Educational Philosophy, Nai Talim, Vocational Education, Value based Education*

1. INTRODUCTION

Overview of Gandhian Educational philosophy
Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy, known as Nai Talim or Basic Education, is rooted in the principles of holistic learning, self-reliance, moral values, and experiential education (Rao, 2018). He believed that education should not merely be about acquiring literacy but should focus on developing the head, heart, and hands—intellectual growth, ethical development, and practical skills. Gandhi emphasized learning by doing, where education was closely integrated with productive manual work like spinning, weaving, and agriculture, ensuring that students became self-sufficient while learning (Rossi & Russo, 2016). He strongly advocated mother tongue-based education, arguing that learning in one's native language enhances comprehension and cultural identity. His vision for education was deeply linked to character building and moral development, promoting values such as truth, non-violence (Ahimsa), and social responsibility. Gandhi also saw education as a tool for rural development, aiming to uplift villages by integrating locally relevant skills and knowledge into the curriculum. He opposed a centralized and colonial-style education system, advocating for decentralized, community-based learning, where education was tailored to local needs. Inclusivity was another key aspect of his philosophy, as he believed education should be accessible to all, regardless of caste, gender, or economic status. Gandhi also emphasized teacher-student relationships, viewing teachers as role models who inspire ethical and intellectual growth. (Kumari & Rao, 2023). By integrating craft, ethics, and self-reliance, Gandhian education aimed to create responsible, self-sufficient, and morally upright citizens who contribute meaningfully to society. His ideas remain relevant in today's education system, influencing contemporary policies that seek to balance traditional wisdom with modern knowledge for a sustainable and equitable future.

Brief introduction to NEP 2020
The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** is a transformative framework designed to revamp India's education system by making it **holistic, multidisciplinary, and future-ready** while ensuring **equity, accessibility, and inclusivity**. It replaces the **1986 policy** and introduces a **5+3+3+4** curricular structure that

aligns with global educational standards, focusing on **foundational learning, conceptual understanding, and skill development** rather than rote memorization . A significant shift is the emphasis on **mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction** in the early years, fostering better cognitive development. NEP 2020 also prioritizes **experiential and competency-based learning**, integrating **vocational education from Grade 6** through internships to bridge the gap between education and employability. The policy highlights **teacher empowerment** through better training, autonomy, and merit-based career progression. Higher education is restructured to be **flexible and multidisciplinary**, allowing multiple entry-exit options and promoting **research, innovation, and global collaborations**. The introduction of the **National Assessment Centre – PARAKH** ensures standardized and holistic student evaluation. (Binoy, 2023). Rooted in **Indian Knowledge Systems**, it aims to integrate **ethics, values, and cultural heritage** into modern education. With a focus on **universal foundational literacy and numeracy, teacher education reforms, and inclusive policies for marginalized communities**, NEP 2020 envisions a **learner-centric, globally competitive education system** that fosters **critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning**. By leveraging **technology, innovation, and flexibility**, it aspires to **transform India into a knowledge economy**, ensuring **sustainable development** while preserving the country's rich intellectual traditions. If implemented effectively, NEP 2020 has the potential to bridge gaps in the current system, making education more **relevant, dynamic, and responsive** to 21st-century challenges.

Importance of comparative analysis
A comparative analysis of Gandhian Educational Philosophy and NEP 2020 is essential to understand how traditional Indian educational values align with modern reforms and how Gandhi's vision continues to influence contemporary education. (Boman, 2022). Gandhi's Nai Talim advocated learning by doing, where practical work, including agriculture and handicrafts, was integrated into education to foster self-sufficiency and dignity of labor. Similarly, NEP 2020 promotes vocational education from an early stage, focusing on internships, skill development, and employability. Both emphasize the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, recognizing that learning in one's native language enhances comprehension, cognitive growth, and cultural preservation. (Gundawar et al., 2024). Additionally, both emphasize decentralization—Gandhi envisioned community-driven education tailored to local needs, whereas NEP 2020 grants flexibility to states, schools, and higher education institutions in curriculum design and assessment. However, a key difference lies in their approach to technology; Gandhi favored simplicity and human-centered education, whereas NEP 2020 actively promotes digital learning, AI, and EduTech integration (C, 2024). A comparative study helps highlight the synergies and gaps between the two, offering insights into how traditional educational wisdom can complement modern advancements. It also sheds light on the challenges of implementation, such as balancing practical learning with academic rigor and ensuring that technological interventions do not overshadow ethical and experiential aspects of education. By drawing from Gandhian ideals, NEP 2020 can strengthen its focus on self-reliance, sustainability, and community engagement, ensuring that education remains rooted in Indian values while being globally relevant. This comparative analysis is crucial for educators, policymakers, and researchers to design an education system that blends the best of both worlds, fostering intellectual growth, skill development, and moral integrity in students. Understanding these parallels and contrasts allows for a more balanced and contextually relevant educational framework, ensuring that education serves as a means of individual empowerment and national progress, much like how Gandhi envisioned it. Thus, bridging Gandhian thought with NEP 2020 can create a sustainable, inclusive, and transformative educational landscape for the future.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF GANDHIAN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

Nai Talim (Basic Education)
Mahatma Gandhi's **Nai Talim**, or **Basic Education**, is a revolutionary educational philosophy that integrates **intellectual, moral, and manual training**, emphasizing **self-sufficiency and holistic development**. Introduced in the **Wardha Scheme of Education (1937)**, Nai Talim means **"New Education"**, focusing on **learning through productive work** rather than rote memorization. Gandhi believed that **education should be rooted in life experiences**, making students self-reliant while instilling values of **dignity of labor and community service**. (Patil & Ravi, 2021). This method ensured that children not only gained academic knowledge but also developed **practical life skills** that contributed to their economic independence. Another critical feature of Nai Talim was **mother tongue-based education**, as Gandhi believed that learning in one's native language enhances **comprehension, creativity, and critical thinking** (Holzwarth, 2016). The system also promoted **decentralization of education**, encouraging local communities to take responsibility for their schools and tailor education to their specific socio-economic needs. Moreover, Nai Talim emphasized **social equality** by eliminating discrimination based on caste, class, and gender, ensuring that education was accessible to all. Unlike conventional education, which often alienates students from rural realities, Nai Talim sought to bridge this gap by making learning **contextual and relevant to everyday life**. Today, the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** echoes some of these principles, particularly in its emphasis on **skill-based**

education, experiential learning, and vocational training. While modern education relies heavily on technology and structured curriculum, **Gandhian principles remind us that education should remain life-oriented, community-driven, and morally enriching**. Revisiting and integrating Nai Talim's **philosophy into contemporary education policies** can help create a **balanced system that nurtures both intellect and practical wisdom**, ultimately leading to **sustainable and inclusive development**.

Learning by Doing (Craft-Centered Education)

One of the most distinctive aspects of **Gandhian educational philosophy** is the principle of **learning by doing**, which emphasizes **craft-centered education** as a fundamental part of the curriculum. Gandhi firmly believed that **education should be experiential, practical, and skill-based**, rather than relying on rote learning and textbook knowledge. In his vision, schools should incorporate **productive manual work**, such as **spinning, weaving, pottery, and agriculture**, to ensure that students develop **practical skills alongside intellectual growth**. This approach not only made education **more engaging and meaningful** but also fostered **self-reliance and economic independence** among students, preparing them for real-world challenges (Everest et al., 2024). Unlike traditional education, which often focuses on abstract theories, **Gandhi's craft-based education encouraged students to understand concepts through hands-on experiences**, making learning more effective and **contextually relevant**. It also instilled **dignity of labor**, breaking the societal stigma against manual work and promoting **equality between intellectual and physical labor**. Moreover, this method nurtured **problem-solving abilities, creativity, and innovation**, as students learned through practical engagement rather than passive listening. Gandhi also saw **craft-centered education as a means of economic empowerment**, especially for rural communities, where education could be directly linked to local industries, thus fostering **self-sufficiency and economic sustainability**. Additionally, **this method encouraged teamwork, discipline, and perseverance**, as students worked collaboratively on practical tasks. In the modern context, **NEP 2020 echoes Gandhian ideas** by promoting **experiential and skill-based learning**, integrating **vocational education from an early stage** to make students job-ready (Kaur, 2024). However, contemporary education often prioritizes technology and academics over hands-on learning, making it crucial to **reintegrate craft-based approaches to ensure holistic education**. Gandhi's vision reminds us that **education should be both knowledge-driven and skill-oriented**, preparing students not just for employment but also for **self-reliant and sustainable living**. By incorporating **learning by doing** into modern pedagogical practices, we can **bridge the gap between theory and practice**, making education **more meaningful, inclusive, and impactful** for future generations.

Character Building and Moral Education

For Mahatma Gandhi, **education was not merely about literacy or acquiring knowledge**; rather, it was a **means to build character, instill moral values, and develop responsible citizens**. He believed that the **ultimate goal of education** should be to create individuals who are **truthful, compassionate, self-disciplined, and service-oriented**. In Gandhian philosophy, **moral and ethical education** was as important as intellectual learning, and schools had a **duty to cultivate virtues** such as **honesty, non-violence (Ahimsa), self-control, and respect for all living beings**. Gandhi emphasized that **education should be value-driven**, where students learn not just academic subjects but also **life lessons that shape their character** (Sinabutar et al., 2023). He was a strong advocate of **truth and non-violence**, believing that education should nurture a sense of **social justice, empathy, and selflessness** in students. He also emphasized **self-discipline and simple living**, encouraging students to lead lives of **humility, service, and self-restraint**. Gandhi viewed **education as a transformative process** that should **shape moral character rather than just train the mind**. He encouraged teachers to **lead by example**, as he believed that **moral values are best taught through practice, not just instruction**. This focus on character development also extended to **communal harmony and social service**, as Gandhi wanted students to **work for the upliftment of society** rather than pursue self-interest alone. Modern education systems, including **NEP 2020**, recognize the **importance of value-based education**, incorporating **ethical reasoning, Indian cultural traditions, and civic responsibility** into the curriculum. However, in today's **fast-paced, competition-driven world**, moral education is often sidelined in favor of **academic achievement and technical skills**. Gandhi's philosophy reminds us that **education without character is incomplete**, and a truly successful education system should balance **knowledge acquisition with moral and ethical growth**. By integrating **character education into modern curricula**, we can **nurture responsible, ethical, and socially conscious individuals** who contribute meaningfully to society. The relevance of **Gandhian principles in contemporary education** cannot be overstated, as they offer a **timeless foundation for building a more compassionate, just, and sustainable world**.

KEY FEATURES OF NEP 2020

Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education

One of the most transformative aspects of **NEP 2020** is its strong emphasis on **holistic and multidisciplinary education**, aimed at developing **well-rounded individuals** with diverse skills and knowledge. Unlike the

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traditional education system, which often promotes **specialization at an early stage**, NEP 2020 encourages **flexibility in learning**, allowing students to explore multiple disciplines across **science, humanities, arts, and vocational subjects**. This approach aligns with global educational practices, where **interdisciplinary learning fosters creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities**. The **5+3+3+4 curricular structure** introduced in NEP 2020 ensures a **gradual and developmental learning process**, integrating foundational, preparatory, middle, and secondary stages, making education more **child-centric and age-appropriate**. At the higher education level, the policy promotes **multidisciplinary institutions** and introduces the **multiple entry-exit system**, allowing students to earn **certificates, diplomas, or degrees based on their learning duration**, making education more flexible and accessible. The policy also encourages **liberal education**, where students can study **diverse subjects like music, philosophy, artificial intelligence, and entrepreneurship** alongside their major disciplines (Hu, 2021). This holistic approach ensures that students are **not just job-ready but also life-ready**, equipped with **analytical, emotional, and ethical intelligence**. Another key aspect is the **integration of arts and sports in academics**, breaking the rigid divide between curricular and extracurricular activities. This shift promotes **mental well-being, innovation, and self-expression**, preparing students for a **rapidly evolving world**. The focus on **multidisciplinary education** aligns with Gandhian principles of **integrated learning**, ensuring that students develop into **responsible, self-reliant, and socially aware citizens**. NEP 2020 envisions a **transformative educational model**, where learning goes beyond textbooks, fostering a **holistic, inclusive, and globally competent** workforce. If implemented effectively, this approach will not only **enhance employability** but also contribute to **nation-building and sustainable development**.

Emphasis on Skill-Based Learning

NEP 2020 marks a significant shift in India's education system by prioritizing **skill-based learning** over rote memorization. Traditional education has often focused on **theoretical knowledge**, leaving graduates **ill-prepared for real-world challenges**. In contrast, NEP 2020 emphasizes **practical, hands-on learning**, equipping students with **21st-century skills** such as **critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, communication, and digital literacy**. One of the key features of this approach is the introduction of **vocational education from Grade 6 onwards**, ensuring that students acquire practical skills through **internships, apprenticeships, and industry collaborations**. (Mutohhari et al., 2021). The policy also integrates **coding, artificial intelligence, data science, and financial literacy** into the curriculum, recognizing the growing demand for **technology-driven careers**. Furthermore, skill-based learning extends beyond technical skills to include **life skills, emotional intelligence, and adaptability**, ensuring that students can navigate **both professional and personal challenges** effectively. Another major reform is the **shift in assessment patterns**, moving from **memory-based exams to competency-based evaluations** that test **practical application and conceptual understanding**. The establishment of **National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)** ensures that skill-based education is standardized and aligned with industry needs, enhancing employability. Additionally, the policy encourages **entrepreneurial education**, promoting **start-up culture and self-employment** (Crayford et al., 2012). This focus on skills ensures that education is not just **degree-oriented but capability-driven**, preparing students for **a dynamic job market**. The **integration of experiential and skill-based learning in NEP 2020** holds the potential to **bridge the gap between education and employment**, making India's workforce **globally competitive and future-ready**. However, successful implementation requires **strong industry-academia partnerships, teacher training, and infrastructural support** to ensure that skill-based learning **benefits students across socio-economic backgrounds**.

Integration of Indian Knowledge Systems

One of the most **progressive and culturally enriching** aspects of **NEP 2020** is the emphasis on **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)**, aimed at **reviving and integrating India's rich intellectual heritage into modern education** (Usha et al., 2024). For decades, the Indian education system has followed a **Western-centric model**, often neglecting India's **vast repository of indigenous knowledge** in fields like **philosophy, science, mathematics, medicine, arts, and environmental sustainability**. NEP 2020 acknowledges this gap and promotes **the inclusion of ancient wisdom, traditional sciences, and ethical values** within the curriculum. Subjects such as **Ayurveda, Yoga, Sanskrit, Vedic mathematics, Indian philosophy, and classical arts** are being reintroduced to ensure students develop a **strong cultural identity and national pride**. The policy also emphasizes **regional languages and mother tongue-based education**, ensuring that knowledge is **accessible and relatable** to learners from diverse backgrounds. Another key initiative is the **establishment of research centers for IKS**, allowing scholars to explore and validate traditional knowledge in a **scientific and interdisciplinary manner**. Additionally, NEP 2020 promotes **environmental sustainability** through **traditional ecological practices**, recognizing the importance of **coexistence with nature**, a principle deeply embedded in Indian philosophy. The integration of **Indian ethical values** alongside modern knowledge systems ensures that students not only **develop intellectual capabilities but also strong moral foundations**. The **National Institute of Indian Knowledge Systems (NIKS)** has been set up to facilitate research, documentation, and integration of these knowledge systems into formal education. This aligns with

Gandhian thought, which emphasized **education rooted in indigenous traditions and self-reliance**. However, while integrating IKS, it is crucial to maintain a **scientific and rational approach**, ensuring that traditional knowledge complements **modern advancements** rather than replacing them. NEP 2020's focus on IKS is a **significant step toward decolonizing education**, fostering **cultural preservation, academic innovation, and global competitiveness**. By **blending ancient wisdom with modern education**, India can create an **education system that is both forward-thinking and deeply rooted in its intellectual heritage**, ensuring holistic growth for future generations.

THE ROLE OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Gandhi's Emphasis on Hands-On Learning
Mahatma Gandhi strongly believed that **education should be experiential, practical, and rooted in real-life activities**, rather than relying on rote memorization and passive learning. His **Nai Talim (Basic Education)** philosophy was built on the idea that **learning by doing** is the most effective way to develop intellectual, moral, and practical skills. Gandhi emphasized that education should include **productive manual work**, such as **spinning, weaving, carpentry, and agriculture**, which would help students not only acquire knowledge but also develop **self-reliance and dignity of labor**. He argued that traditional education often separated knowledge from practical application, creating **graduates who were educated but lacked life skills**. By integrating **craft-based learning** into the curriculum, Gandhi sought to **break the artificial divide between mental and physical labor**, ensuring that students developed both **intellectual and practical competencies**. He also believed that **true education is character-based**, and hands-on learning naturally fosters **discipline, teamwork, patience, and perseverance**. Moreover, Gandhi saw experiential learning as a means of **economic empowerment**, particularly for rural communities. He envisioned a system where **education would make students self-sufficient**, reducing dependence on government jobs and fostering **local entrepreneurship**. Gandhi also emphasized that **learning should be rooted in real-world experiences**, allowing students to develop a **deep connection with their communities and environment**. His approach aligns with **modern theories of experiential learning**, which argue that **people learn best when they engage in direct experiences rather than passive instruction**. However, in the current education system, hands-on learning is often side lined in favour of **textbook-based assessments and standardized testing**. Gandhi's emphasis on **learning through experience remains highly relevant today**, especially in an era where **practical skills, creativity, and innovation** are more valuable than mere theoretical knowledge. NEP 2020's focus on **vocational education and internships** reflects Gandhi's vision, reinforcing the idea that education should prepare students for **real-world challenges rather than just academic success** (Iwacewicz-Orłowska,2022). By reviving **Gandhian principles of hands-on learning**, education can become more **engaging, meaningful, and effective**, ensuring that students are **not just educated but also skilled and self-sufficient**.

NEP 2020's Focus on Vocational Education and Internships
One of the most progressive aspects of **NEP 2020** is its **strong emphasis on vocational education and internships**, ensuring that students acquire **practical, industry-relevant skills** alongside academic knowledge. Recognizing the limitations of a **purely theoretical education system**, NEP 2020 integrates **hands-on learning, real-world experiences, and workplace exposure** from an early stage. It mandates the introduction of **vocational training from Grade 6 onwards**, ensuring that students develop **technical, entrepreneurial, and problem-solving skills** early in their academic journey. The policy also emphasizes **internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing opportunities**, enabling students to gain **real-world industry exposure** before entering the workforce. This marks a significant shift from traditional education, where students **graduate with degrees but lack employable skills**. The introduction of **multi-disciplinary learning pathways** allows students to **blend vocational training with mainstream education**, reducing the stigma around **skilled trades and practical careers**. NEP 2020 also encourages partnerships between **schools, higher education institutions, and industries**, creating a system where **education and employment needs are aligned**. Additionally, the policy supports the **establishment of vocational hubs, community colleges, and skilling centres**, particularly in rural areas, ensuring that students across all socio-economic backgrounds **gain access to hands-on learning opportunities**. NEP 2020 also promotes **internships in emerging fields** like **AI, robotics, data science, and green technology**, making vocational education **future-ready and industry-relevant** (Singh & Gunasekaran, 2024). This **experiential approach to learning** ensures that students are not just **memorizing concepts but applying them in real-world scenarios**, making education **more engaging and meaningful**. Furthermore, the shift from **rote-based assessments to competency-based evaluations** ensures that students are judged on **skills and abilities rather than just theoretical knowledge**. NEP 2020's focus on **vocational education aligns with Gandhian thought**, reinforcing the belief that **education should equip students with the ability to earn a livelihood and contribute to society**. While the implementation of vocational training is still in its early stages, its **success will depend on strong industry-academia collaborations, quality infrastructure, and teacher training**. If executed effectively, NEP 2020's **experiential learning model can bridge the education-**

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employment gap, ensuring that students **graduate with both knowledge and practical skills**, making India's workforce **globally competitive and future-ready**.

MOTHER TONGUE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Gandhi's Views on Education in the Mother Tongue
Mahatma Gandhi strongly advocated for **education in the mother tongue**, believing that children learn best when taught in a language they naturally speak and understand. He argued that **imposing a foreign language as the medium of instruction** not only created a disconnect between students and their learning but also **hindered their cognitive and emotional development**. According to Gandhi, **language is not just a medium of instruction but also a tool for cultural preservation, self-expression, and national identity**. He criticized the British colonial education system, which prioritized **English over Indian languages**, alienating students from their roots and making education **elitist and inaccessible** to the masses. Gandhi believed that **learning in one's mother tongue fosters better comprehension, critical thinking, and creativity**, as students can grasp complex concepts more naturally when taught in a familiar language. He also saw **mother tongue-based education as a means of social empowerment**, ensuring that education was **inclusive and accessible** to all, especially rural and marginalized communities. Gandhi emphasized that **vernacular education** would **strengthen national unity**, as people would take pride in their own languages rather than being forced to conform to a foreign linguistic standard. Additionally, he linked **language with economic independence**, advocating for the use of Indian languages in **business, governance, and intellectual discourse**. However, Gandhi was not against learning foreign languages; he believed that **multilingualism was beneficial**, but the foundation of education must be in the **mother tongue** to ensure deep understanding (Pathak, 2011). His vision aligns with **modern linguistic research**, which shows that **children learn faster and retain knowledge better when taught in their first language**. Despite his advocacy, post-independence India largely continued with **English-dominated education**, which contributed to **linguistic hierarchies and socio-economic disparities**. Today, with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizing **mother tongue-based learning**, Gandhi's ideas on language and education have regained significance. His belief that **language is integral to intellectual and cultural development** serves as a guiding principle for India's current educational reforms, ensuring that students receive an education that is both **linguistically and culturally meaningful**.

NEP 2020's Policy on Multilingual Education
NEP 2020 recognizes the **importance of multilingual education**, particularly emphasizing **the use of the mother tongue as the primary medium of instruction at least until Grade 5, and preferably till Grade 8**. This policy shift is based on extensive research indicating that **children learn best in their first language**, as it allows them to **think more clearly, develop cognitive skills effectively, and retain knowledge for longer**. By prioritizing **regional languages in early education**, NEP 2020 aims to **bridge the learning gap** often created when students are forced to study in an unfamiliar language. The policy aligns with **Gandhi's vision**, ensuring that students are not disconnected from their **cultural and linguistic roots**. Additionally, NEP 2020 promotes a **three-language formula**, which encourages students to learn **two regional or Indian languages along with one foreign language**, ensuring a **balance between linguistic diversity and global competitiveness**. Unlike previous language policies, which often led to conflicts over Hindi versus regional languages, NEP 2020 takes a **flexible and inclusive approach**, allowing states and schools to decide which languages to prioritize based on their regional context. Moreover, the policy acknowledges that while **mother tongue-based education is ideal**, students must also be exposed to **English and other global languages** to ensure their adaptability in the **international job market**. NEP 2020 also emphasizes the **digitization and standardization of learning materials in regional languages**, ensuring that students studying in their mother tongue do not face a lack of **high-quality textbooks, digital content, or academic resources**. The government has initiated projects such as **e-learning platforms, AI-based translation tools, and multilingual digital libraries** to support this transition. Furthermore, the policy encourages the **training of teachers in multilingual education**, ensuring they are equipped to teach effectively in local languages. While NEP 2020's multilingual education policy is a step in the right direction, **its success will depend on effective implementation**, especially in a country as linguistically diverse as India. Critics argue that **regional disparities, lack of standardized materials, and insufficient trained teachers** could pose challenges. However, if executed well, this policy could make education more **inclusive, equitable, and effective**, ensuring that students across India **benefit from a strong foundation in their mother tongue while also gaining proficiency in multiple languages**. By embracing **linguistic diversity**, NEP 2020 reinforces India's **cultural heritage while preparing students for a globally connected world**, making it a **progressive step toward holistic and accessible education**.

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VALUE-BASED EDUCATION

Moral and Ethical Education in Gandhian Philosophy

Mahatma Gandhi placed significant emphasis on **moral and ethical education** as a core component of the learning process. For Gandhi, education was not just about **intellectual development** but about shaping individuals into **principled, compassionate, and responsible citizens**. He believed that **moral values** such as **truth, non-violence (ahimsa), simplicity, humility, and respect for all life** should form the foundation of educational practices. Gandhi's vision of education was deeply rooted in **ethical and spiritual values**, seeing them as essential for personal growth and societal harmony. He argued that an education system should **nurture the moral conscience** of students, empowering them to **serve society** rather than focusing solely on materialistic goals. Gandhi felt that **character building** was as important as academic learning, and therefore, **ethical education** should be integrated into every aspect of school life, both inside and outside the classroom. He believed that the best way to impart moral education was through **personal example**—teachers should serve as **models of the values they wished to impart**. One of the most crucial aspects of Gandhi's approach to moral education was the integration of **self-discipline, empathy, and social responsibility**, teaching students not only to excel in knowledge but to be **aware of their duties toward society**. This is reflected in his idea of **"Nai Talim,"** which encouraged **hands-on learning** and social service, enabling students to contribute to their communities while learning. Gandhi believed that **true education leads to the inner transformation of individuals**, instilling in them the understanding that **learning is a tool for service**. In a practical sense, his concept of education was intertwined with **daily life and societal welfare**, aiming to create a society where moral and ethical education was as essential as academic achievement (Kholidah, 2022).

Integration of Values in NEP 2020 Curriculum

NEP 2020 introduces a transformative shift in India's education system, advocating for the **integration of values in the curriculum** to build students' **moral, emotional, and social intelligence** alongside academic proficiency. The policy recognizes that **holistic education** is not just about knowledge acquisition but about shaping individuals who are ethically grounded, socially responsible, and globally competent. NEP 2020 aims to **integrate values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, empathy, and sustainability** into every aspect of the learning experience, including the **teaching of core subjects** and the **design of school activities**. The curriculum in NEP 2020 is structured to ensure that students develop **emotional intelligence** and an understanding of the importance of **dignity, respect, and inclusion**, alongside intellectual growth. A significant component of the policy is the **focus on life skills education**, which encourages students to develop competencies in areas such as **conflict resolution, communication, decision-making, and teamwork**— skills that are critical for both personal and professional success. Moreover, **environmental education**, which emphasizes **sustainability, climate change, and environmental conservation**, has been embedded into the curriculum as an integral part of value-based education. This mirrors the Gandhian principle of **coexistence with nature** and the need for **responsible stewardship** of the earth's resources. NEP 2020 also promotes the **principles of equity, social justice, and inclusivity**, ensuring that education serves as a tool for **social empowerment**. The policy advocates for **curricular and co-curricular activities** that foster values such as **gender equality, respect for diversity, and social cohesion**, empowering students to challenge social biases and work toward a more just society. (Maya & Suseno, 2022). Teachers are expected to be **role models** who impart values through their teaching practices and personal conduct. NEP 2020 also emphasizes **community service** and **social outreach programs**, ensuring that students engage with their communities and gain practical experience in applying values to solve real-life problems. By focusing on values as an integral part of education, NEP 2020 aims to produce individuals who are not only academically accomplished but also **morally conscious and socially responsible** citizens, a vision that aligns closely with **Gandhi's philosophy of education**. This focus on **value-based education** in NEP 2020 will help students develop a **well-rounded personality**, ensuring that they are prepared to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world while adhering to ethical principles and societal responsibilities.

EDUCATION FOR SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Gandhi's Concept of Education for Self-Reliance

Mahatma Gandhi's vision for **education was deeply connected to the concept of self-reliance**—not only at an individual level but also at the societal level. Gandhi believed that **education should empower individuals to stand on their own feet**, both intellectually and economically. His idea of **self-sufficiency** was rooted in the concept of **"Swadeshi"**, or local self-reliance, which emphasized the use of local resources, skills, and labor. Gandhi's educational philosophy of **Nai Talim** (Basic Education) was a direct reflection of this principle, as it encouraged students to engage in **manual, productive work** such as spinning, weaving, and agriculture, alongside academic learning. For Gandhi, **learning practical skills** was not only a way to ensure **economic independence** but also a means of cultivating **self-respect** and **dignity of labor**. He believed that students should not just be consumers of knowledge but **producers** as well, learning to create value and contribute to the community. Gandhi was critical of the British colonial education system, which he saw as **alienating** and

designed to create a class of **clerks and bureaucrats** who were dependent on the colonial government for employment. In contrast, he emphasized **education that was rooted in the local context**, where children would acquire **skills that were relevant to their environment and community needs**, thereby fostering **economic self-sufficiency** at the grassroots level. Gandhi's idea of self-reliance also extended to **personal values**, encouraging students to develop **inner strength**, self-discipline, and a strong sense of **social responsibility**. By promoting education that focused on **practical knowledge, moral development, and social contribution**, Gandhi aimed to create a society where individuals were not dependent on external systems but were **empowered to create their own livelihoods**. His concept of self-reliance has far-reaching implications even today, as it highlights the need for education systems that equip students with **skills for independent living** and encourage them to contribute positively to **their communities and the nation**.

NEP 2020's Emphasis on Entrepreneurship and Skill Development

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** places a significant emphasis on **entrepreneurship** and **skill development** to ensure that education prepares students for **self-sufficiency and active participation in the economy**. Recognizing the fast-paced changes in the global workforce and the demand for **practical, hands-on skills**, NEP 2020 aims to bridge the gap between traditional academic education and the **skills needed for employment and entrepreneurship**. The policy stresses the importance of **vocational education and training** from an early stage, starting from **Grade 6 onwards**, enabling students to acquire skills that are **relevant to local and global markets**. By integrating **skill development with academic education**, NEP 2020 hopes to create **well-rounded individuals** who not only excel academically but are also **prepared to innovate and thrive in the job market**. The policy also promotes the creation of **vocational hubs and skilling centers** to provide **hands-on experience**, enabling students to develop a practical understanding of various trades, technologies, and professions. Additionally, the **emphasis on entrepreneurship** is reflected in NEP 2020's call for the inclusion of **entrepreneurship education** in the curriculum at all levels, encouraging students to **develop the mindset and skills necessary to create and manage their own ventures**. This aspect of the policy aims to foster an environment where students are encouraged to think creatively, solve real-world problems, and become **job creators rather than job seekers**. Furthermore, NEP 2020 promotes the development of **21st-century skills** such as **critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy**, which are crucial for **entrepreneurial success**. The policy also recognizes the importance of **collaborations with industries, local communities, and international organizations**, providing students with opportunities for **internships, apprenticeships, and real-world exposure**. This focus on **skill-based learning** is designed to make India's youth **self-sufficient** and ready to contribute to the economy, ensuring that education is not just a means of acquiring degrees but also a pathway to **economic independence and self-reliance** (Hynie et al., 2011). In essence, NEP 2020 aligns with Gandhi's vision of **education for self-reliance**, aiming to create an education system that equips students with **practical skills, entrepreneurial abilities, and the confidence** to succeed in an ever-changing global economy.

INTEGRATION OF INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Gandhi's Respect for Traditional Indian Education

Mahatma Gandhi held **traditional Indian education systems in high regard**, considering them essential for the **preservation and promotion of cultural values**. Unlike the Western-style education system introduced during colonial rule, Gandhi believed that **traditional Indian educational practices** were deeply connected to **spiritual, social, and cultural development**, making them holistic and well-suited to the needs of the Indian society. He placed a high value on **Vedic learning**, **local wisdom**, and **indigenous knowledge systems**, which, according to him, emphasized **moral education**, **simplicity**, and the development of a sense of **duty toward society and nature**. Gandhi often criticized the colonial education system for being disconnected from the **Indian ethos**, focusing primarily on **bookish knowledge** that often alienated students from their roots and their surroundings. He admired the traditional system's focus on **practical learning**, where children were engaged in **productive work** alongside their academic lessons, a system that encouraged **self-reliance** and **community service**. The **gurukul system**, which Gandhi revered, was characterized by **one-on-one learning**, where **teachers were seen as moral guides**, and students gained knowledge not only from books but through **daily life experiences** and **hands-on skills**. Gandhi believed that the traditional education system also promoted **unity with nature**, with **spiritual learning** intertwined with **physical activities**. He saw Indian traditional education as a **counterbalance to the alienating effect** of Western-style schooling, which he believed focused too much on the intellect while neglecting the **emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects** of a person (Malviya, 2015). Gandhi's vision of **education for self-reliance** aligned with the **indigenous values** of the Indian education system, which he felt promoted **unity, interconnectedness, and a deep respect for nature and humanity**. His **respect for traditional knowledge systems** is a call for India to reconnect with its roots while adapting to modern needs. Gandhi's emphasis on traditional education remains a foundation for understanding the deep wisdom embedded in India's ancient learning systems, which he believed offered a **more complete, holistic approach to education**.

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NEP 2020's Revival of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** outlines a vision for the **revival and integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)** in modern education. Recognizing that traditional Indian education systems are rich in **holistic and culturally grounded knowledge**, NEP 2020 aims to incorporate this knowledge into the **current curriculum** to strengthen the connection between **India's heritage and contemporary education**. The policy acknowledges that IKS encompasses a diverse range of **subjects and practices**, including **philosophy, arts, literature, mathematics, architecture, medicine, and environmental knowledge**, which are integral to India's cultural identity and intellectual legacy. NEP 2020 advocates for the **inclusion of IKS in school curricula**, ensuring that students are exposed to traditional knowledge alongside modern disciplines. The policy encourages the **development of curricula that reflect India's rich heritage**, promoting subjects such as **Vedic literature**, **classical Indian music**, **yoga**, **Sanskrit**, and **Ayurveda**, which offer valuable insights into **human well-being, spirituality, and sustainability**. NEP 2020 also proposes the **reconstruction of textbooks** to reflect the depth of IKS, with an emphasis on content that explores **ancient Indian contributions to science and technology**, **environmental stewardship**, and **social harmony**. By integrating IKS into the learning process, NEP 2020 seeks to create a **more culturally relevant and inclusive education system** that resonates with the values and traditions of India (De F Afonso Nhalevilo, 2013). Moreover, the policy emphasizes **multidisciplinary education**, where students can **explore IKS alongside modern knowledge systems**, allowing for a more **balanced and comprehensive approach to learning**. The revival of IKS also aims to promote **interdisciplinary dialogue**, where students can learn to **connect the past and present** and understand how traditional knowledge can contribute to solving modern-day challenges, particularly in the areas of **sustainability**, **healthcare**, and **environmental conservation**. The inclusion of IKS in the curriculum also has the potential to **revive traditional craftsmanship, art forms, and local languages**, ensuring that **cultural preservation and innovation go hand in hand**. Through this revival, NEP 2020 hopes to **empower students to become more socially and culturally aware**, giving them a sense of **pride in their heritage** while also preparing them for the demands of the globalized world. This approach aims to combine the **best of both worlds**—honoring India's traditional knowledge systems while fostering **modern skills and global citizenship**. By doing so, NEP 2020 aligns with Gandhi's vision of **education that roots students in their cultural heritage while preparing them for the future**.

TEACHER'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

Gandhian Vision of an Ideal Teacher

Mahatma Gandhi's vision of an ideal teacher went far beyond the transmission of knowledge. For him, a teacher was not just an educator but a moral guide, a mentor, and a role model who played a pivotal role in shaping the character, values, and intellectual development of students. Gandhi believed that the teacher-student relationship should be based on mutual respect, empathy, and trust, with the teacher serving as an example of moral integrity, humility, and simplicity. An ideal teacher, according to Gandhi, should possess a strong sense of duty and service to society, nurturing the holistic development of students, encompassing both academic and ethical growth. The teacher was expected to instill in students the values of truth, non-violence (ahimsa), self-discipline, and compassion, guiding them toward becoming responsible and conscientious citizens. Gandhi emphasized the importance of personal example in teaching, advocating that a teacher should practice what they preach. He felt that moral character was as essential as intellectual capability for teachers, as students would often imitate their teachers' behaviour, attitudes, and values. Moreover, Gandhi argued that the teacher should create an environment that fosters self-reliance and independence, encouraging students to think critically, be creative, and engage in hands-on learning. In his concept of Nai Talim (Basic Education), the teacher was viewed as someone who helped students connect their academic learning with practical, everyday activities. Gandhi also believed that teachers should be lifelong learners, continually improving their own knowledge and ethical understanding. He argued that teaching was not just a profession but a calling—a vocation centered around the service of humanity (Devji,2020). Thus, the Gandhian ideal of a teacher emphasized a combination of academic wisdom, moral integrity, and commitment to social upliftment, inspiring students to develop both knowledge and character.

NEP 2020's Emphasis on Teacher Training and Capacity Building

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 underscores the critical importance of teacher training and capacity building as a foundational pillar for the transformation of India's education system. Recognizing that teachers are the key to improving the quality of education, NEP 2020 stresses the need for continuous professional development and a comprehensive approach to enhancing teacher competencies. The policy envisions a multi-dimensional model for teacher training, focusing not only on subject knowledge but also on pedagogical skills, classroom management, technology integration, and the social-emotional aspects of teaching. NEP 2020 advocates for rigorous and structured pre-service teacher education, with standards and accreditation to ensure that teachers enter the profession with the necessary expertise and ethical grounding. Additionally, the policy emphasizes the importance of in-service training to equip teachers with the tools and resources required to adapt to evolving pedagogical trends and the integration of new technologies in the classroom. NEP 2020

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also highlights the need for teacher autonomy, encouraging teachers to experiment with different teaching methods and fostering a culture of innovation and creativity in the classroom. The policy calls for the establishment of teacher learning communities where educators can collaborate, share experiences, and learn from one another. Moreover, NEP 2020 stresses the importance of digital literacy for teachers, ensuring they are proficient in using technology for online teaching, digital assessments, and interactive learning environments. The policy envisions the creation of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) to provide clear guidelines on the competencies expected from teachers at various stages of their careers. NEP 2020 also addresses the need for improving the status and dignity of the teaching profession, advocating for competitive salaries and incentives to attract the best candidates into teaching (Abraham et al., 2022). Overall, NEP 2020's emphasis on teacher training and capacity building seeks to ensure that teachers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and support to provide high-quality education that meets the diverse needs of students in a rapidly changing world. By focusing on teacher empowerment, the policy aims to create a dynamic and responsive education system, where teachers are not only facilitators of knowledge but also agents of social change and role models for students.

INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION

Gandhi's Thoughts on Education for All

Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch advocate for education for all, deeply committed to the idea that every individual, regardless of caste, creed, gender, or social status, should have access to education. For Gandhi, education was not just a tool for intellectual growth but also a means of social transformation. He believed that a truly just society could only be achieved when every child had the opportunity to learn, grow, and contribute to the community. Gandhi's vision of inclusive education was rooted in the concept of "Sarvodaya" (the welfare of all), which emphasized that education should serve the welfare and empowerment of the entire society, particularly marginalized communities. He saw the exclusion of any group from education as a form of social injustice that perpetuated inequality. In Gandhi's view, the traditional caste-based educational system was deeply flawed because it excluded large sections of the population from access to learning (Damyanov, 2024). Gandhi argued for breaking the barriers of caste discrimination in education, advocating for a system that included the untouchables, whom he referred to as the "Harijans" or children of God. Gandhi's philosophy was centered around non-discrimination, and he advocated for the provision of education to girls and women, whom he believed should be empowered through knowledge and skills to become equal partners in the socio-economic development of society. His idea of Nai Talim (Basic Education) was also designed to be inclusive, as it combined academic learning with practical work, making education accessible to children from all walks of life, particularly those from rural or economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Gandhi's emphasis on non-violence and respect for all living beings reinforced his commitment to ensuring that education was accessible to all children, regardless of their socio-economic status, ensuring equality in education for a more harmonious society. His inclusive vision for education thus sought to promote a society where every person had the right to dignity, self-respect, and opportunity, recognizing that the empowerment of individuals was essential for the collective progress of the nation.

NEP 2020's Approach to Inclusive Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places a strong emphasis on inclusive and equitable education, seeking to ensure that no child is left behind in the educational journey. One of the core tenets of NEP 2020 is to address the learning needs of all students, particularly those from disadvantaged and marginalized groups, such as children from socio-economically weaker sections, scheduled castes and tribes, girls, and children with disabilities. The policy aims to create an education system that is responsive to diverse learning needs, ensuring that every student, regardless of background or ability, has the opportunity to succeed. NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for universal access to education at all levels, with a specific focus on the early years, particularly early childhood education (ages 3-6), which the policy identifies as critical for laying a strong foundation for future learning. The policy highlights the importance of ensuring that children with disabilities are fully included in the educational system through inclusive practices and specialized support services such as resource teachers, assistive technology, and accessible learning materials (K, 2025). The NEP calls for the strengthening of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, expanding its scope to cover all children from 3 to 18 years of age and ensuring equitable access to education in remote areas through initiatives such as the establishment of more schools in rural areas, mobile schools, and online learning platforms. NEP 2020 also promotes gender equality in education by addressing issues such as gender-based violence, biases, and discrimination, ensuring that girls and gender minorities have equal opportunities to learn and grow. Moreover, the policy promotes multilingual education, recognizing that language barriers are often a significant hurdle for marginalized groups. By advocating for mother-tongue-based education, NEP 2020 seeks to preserve and promote cultural diversity while also ensuring that children are not disadvantaged by language differences. The policy also proposes scholarships, financial support, and community-based initiatives to ensure that students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are able to access education without financial hindrances. Through

these measures, NEP 2020 strives to create an education system that is not only inclusive but also equitable, ensuring that all students, irrespective of their circumstances, can achieve their full potential. By addressing the barriers to education that various marginalized groups face, NEP 2020 aligns with Gandhi's vision of creating an education system that is truly accessible, equitable, and focused on the empowerment of all individuals.

EDUCATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Gandhi's Focus on Rural Education and Village Upliftment
Mahatma Gandhi's vision for rural education was deeply intertwined with his broader goal of village upliftment and national self-reliance. Gandhi believed that the true strength of India lay in its villages, and he envisioned a society where education played a central role in the social, economic, and cultural rejuvenation of rural India. For him, the rural population, particularly the poor and marginalized sections, needed to be empowered through education that was relevant to their lives and surroundings. Gandhi's Nai Talim (Basic Education) model emphasized the importance of practical learning, linking education to manual work and self-sufficiency. This system aimed to equip students with skills that were directly applicable to rural life, such as farming, weaving, carpentry, and other crafts. By integrating practical skills into the curriculum, Gandhi sought to make education in rural areas not just about literacy, but about creating self-reliant communities that were capable of improving their own standards of living. Gandhi argued that education in the villages should reflect the real needs of the rural population, which included economic independence and community-oriented living. He believed that children should be taught not only in academic subjects but also in ways that contributed to the overall welfare of their communities, thus fostering a spirit of collective progress. (Neumann et al., 2022). Furthermore, he emphasized that education should be free from external influences, and should remain rooted in local culture, traditions, and languages. The integration of handicrafts into education was also a key aspect of his vision, as these skills could generate income for rural families and foster a sense of pride in their work. Gandhi's model aimed to provide rural children with the skills, values, and social awareness that would enable them to thrive and contribute meaningfully to their local communities, all while remaining connected to their cultural heritage and natural environment.

NEP 2020's Initiatives for Rural and Tribal Education
The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 addresses the critical need for the inclusive development of rural and tribal communities in India, recognizing that rural areas face unique educational challenges, including lack of infrastructure, limited access to quality teaching resources, and socio-economic barriers. To bridge these gaps, NEP 2020 proposes a comprehensive approach to rural and tribal education, with an emphasis on access, equity, and quality. One of the key initiatives in NEP 2020 is the promotion of early childhood care and education (ECCE), particularly in rural areas, ensuring that children in these regions receive foundational education by the age of 5. This is vital for addressing the low enrollment rates and learning outcomes in rural and tribal communities. Additionally, the policy promotes the establishment of new schools in remote and underserved regions, particularly tribal areas, and advocates for the upgrading of existing schools to ensure that they meet modern educational standards. To address the language barriers often faced by rural students, NEP 2020 stresses the importance of mother-tongue-based education for early learning, ensuring that children are taught in a language they are familiar with, which will help improve understanding, retention, and overall learning outcomes. NEP 2020 also highlights the need for flexible and inclusive curricula that reflect the local context and community needs. This includes integrating local knowledge systems, vocational education, and practical skills into the curriculum, which is essential for economic development and self-sufficiency in rural areas. The policy also proposes the use of technology and digital learning platforms to extend the reach of quality education to rural and tribal regions, which can help bridge the gap in educational resources. Moreover, NEP 2020 advocates for the empowerment of teachers in rural areas by providing continuous professional development, ensuring that educators in these regions are equipped with the skills and tools necessary to engage and teach students effectively. A key feature of the policy is also its focus on inclusive education for tribal communities, with specific strategies to address cultural sensitivities and tribal languages to ensure that tribal children feel represented in the education system. The policy proposes tribal-specific schools, scholarships, and educational support to ensure that tribal students are not left behind in the mainstream education system. Through these targeted initiatives, NEP 2020 seeks to transform the educational landscape of rural and tribal India, ensuring that children from these communities have access to quality education that is both relevant to their needs and empowering for their futures.

DECENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION

Gandhi's Vision of Community-Based Education
Mahatma Gandhi's vision of education was profoundly community-centric, rooted in the belief that education should reflect and serve the needs of the local community. For Gandhi, education was not just about individual intellectual growth but also about fostering a sense of social responsibility, community participation, and

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service to society. He argued that true education should aim to build individuals who could contribute to their communities, promote social welfare, and actively participate in the nation-building process. Gandhi's emphasis on community-based education was an extension of his larger philosophy of self-reliance and empowerment. He believed that local communities should play a key role in shaping the educational experiences of their children. In Gandhi's view, education should not be a top-down process imposed by the state or external authorities but rather a collaborative effort that involved local participation in curriculum development, teaching methods, and decision-making. This is where his concept of Nai Talim (Basic Education) comes into play, where practical learning and vocational training were integrated into the curriculum, reflecting the local economic activities and cultural traditions. Gandhi's community-based approach to education was built on the idea that each village should become an educational hub that serves its own unique needs. He believed that education should be rooted in local languages, local crafts, and local customs, making the learning process relevant and meaningful for children in rural areas. Furthermore, Gandhi promoted the idea that villagers should not only be the recipients of education but also the producers and shapers of it, ensuring that local knowledge systems, skills, and values were passed down to the next generation. By decentralizing the control over education, Gandhi aimed to create a more democratic and empowered educational system, where local communities took ownership of their educational future. He argued that through community-based education, villages could foster self-sufficiency, equality, and social justice, laying the foundation for an inclusive and equitable society. Gandhi's vision of education was thus intrinsically linked to local development, community cohesion, and the broader social transformation of rural India.

NEP 2020's Flexibility in Curriculum Design and Assessment

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces a flexible approach to curriculum design and assessment, reflecting a move towards decentralization and local customization in education. One of the core objectives of NEP 2020 is to create an education system that is responsive to the diverse needs of students, while also ensuring standardization and quality across the nation (Rani et al., 2024). The policy encourages a holistic, flexible, and interdisciplinary curriculum that allows students to explore subjects across disciplines, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. This flexibility in curriculum design ensures that students are not confined to a rigid, one-size-fits-all model of education but instead have the opportunity to choose subjects that align with their interests, aptitudes, and career aspirations. NEP 2020 promotes the idea that students should have agency over their educational journey, allowing them to tailor their learning experiences to their specific needs, whether through vocational education, arts, or STEM disciplines (- & -, 2024). This adaptability not only enhances student engagement but also allows for the inclusion of local knowledge systems and regional languages, ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to the cultural context of the students. Regarding assessment, NEP 2020 advocates for a shift from the traditional high-stakes exams to more formative assessments, which focus on continuous learning and overall development. This shift in assessment practices ensures that students are evaluated on a broader set of skills, including problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity, rather than just rote memorization. Furthermore, the policy stresses the importance of competency-based assessments, which assess students' ability to apply their knowledge in real-life contexts. To foster greater flexibility, NEP 2020 also promotes the use of technology and digital tools for assessment, providing a more inclusive and accessible way to evaluate students in remote and underserved areas. The policy encourages the decentralization of decision-making, where local educational authorities and teachers have the autonomy to adapt the curriculum and assessment methods to meet the unique needs of their students. By enabling greater local control over curriculum design and assessment (Oo et al., 2021), NEP 2020 not only promotes customization but also ensures that education is more relevant, inclusive, and aligned with the evolving demands of society and the economy. This emphasis on flexibility and local adaptation reflects a move toward creating an education system that is more democratic, inclusive, and student-centered, empowering teachers, schools, and communities to shape the educational experience in a way that best serves their learners.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION

Gandhi's Simplicity vs. NEP 2020's Focus on Digital Learning

Mahatma Gandhi's educational philosophy was grounded in the principles of simplicity, self-reliance, and practicality, reflecting his broader belief in leading a life of minimalism and self-sufficiency. He championed an education system that focused on hands-on learning, manual work, and human connection, rather than the heavy reliance on modern technology. Gandhi's Nai Talim (Basic Education) emphasized a curriculum deeply rooted in the natural environment, community life, and practical skills, which were not dependent on advanced technologies. He believed that true education was a spiritual and moral process that fostered the development of character, self-awareness, and inner discipline, values that he felt could not be replaced by machines or technological tools. Gandhi also viewed technology with a degree of skepticism, believing that the overuse of technology could alienate individuals from nature, human labor, and the collective well-being of communities. He promoted an educational approach that was intimately connected with the earth, the community, and the

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work of hands—values that were essential in his vision of sustainable and localized living. His educational model sought to empower individuals through direct experience and a deep understanding of their environment, focusing on moral and ethical development rather than on the acquisition of technological skills or material wealth. In contrast, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 embraces the use of digital learning as a central component of India's educational future. NEP 2020 recognizes that technology can play a transformative role in democratizing access to education, particularly in remote areas, by bridging the digital divide and providing students with access to quality educational resources, learning platforms, and global knowledge networks. The policy's emphasis on digital education, through platforms such as SWAYAM, DIKSHA, and other online tools, aims to create a blended learning environment that combines face-to-face teaching with virtual learning opportunities. While Gandhi might have seen this as a distraction from the core mission of education, NEP 2020 views it as a vital tool to enhance learning outcomes, facilitate personalized learning, and prepare students for the 21st-century workforce (Kalita, 2024). Thus, the key contrast between Gandhi's simplicity and NEP 2020's focus on digital learning lies in their approach to technology's role in education: Gandhi's skepticism toward the reliance on external tools versus NEP 2020's belief in technology's potential to empower and transform education.

Balancing Technology with Holistic Education
While technology offers a wealth of opportunities for enhancing education, there remains an ongoing challenge in balancing digital tools with the principles of holistic education—an approach that emphasizes not just academic achievement, but also the development of emotional intelligence, social responsibility, moral values, and physical well-being. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recognizes this balance and aims to integrate technology into a comprehensive educational framework that fosters well-rounded development for students. On the one hand, technology can greatly enrich learning experiences by providing interactive learning platforms, personalized educational tools, and access to global knowledge. It allows for the customization of learning paths, enables real-time assessments, and offers innovative methods of teaching that can engage students in new ways. For instance, digital classrooms can facilitate remote learning, online discussions, and interactive simulations that might not be possible in traditional settings. However, the NEP 2020 also emphasizes the importance of keeping technology aligned with the values of holistic education, ensuring that it enhances rather than distracts from the overall development of the student. The policy stresses the need for blended learning, which combines digital and physical learning environments to create a more interactive, inclusive, and person-centered educational experience. Holistic education, as envisioned by NEP 2020, focuses on nurturing critical thinking, empathy, creativity, and problem-solving skills, alongside academic competencies. To achieve this balance, the policy advocates for responsible and mindful use of technology in classrooms, ensuring that it is used to support rather than replace essential aspects of traditional education, such as face-to-face interactions, peer collaboration, and mentorship. Mindfulness, physical activity, social skills, and emotional well-being are considered as important as academic excellence in the holistic development of a child (- & -, 2024). Moreover, the policy calls for teacher training that helps educators integrate technology effectively while preserving the values of human connection and community-building. A key aspect of this balanced approach is the creation of educational environments that combine technology with human empathy and emotional intelligence, ensuring that students are equipped with the skills to thrive in both the digital and real worlds. Therefore, while technology plays a pivotal role in modern education, NEP 2020 places a strong emphasis on ensuring that it is used in ways that enhance the holistic development of students, fostering not just knowledge acquisition, but also character building, emotional maturity, and social engagement.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Practical Challenges in Adopting Gandhian Principles Today
While Gandhian principles offer a visionary approach to education, their practical implementation in the modern world presents several challenges. Gandhi's emphasis on manual labor, self-reliance, and community-based education requires a shift from conventional formal education systems, which often prioritize academic achievement over practical skill development. One of the major obstacles is the traditional mindset within the education system, where there is a strong focus on bookish knowledge and examination-oriented learning rather than experiential education. Gandhi's concept of Nai Talim (Basic Education), which integrates craftsmanship with education, is difficult to scale in the current context of urbanization and technological advancement, where most children are distanced from hands-on learning rooted in traditional crafts or rural activities. The lack of resources, training, and infrastructure to implement such a craft-centered curriculum in schools further complicates the widespread adoption of Gandhian principles. Many schools, especially in urban and semi-urban areas, lack the facilities for such vocational training, and there is a shortage of trained educators who can impart practical skills alongside academic subjects. Additionally, Gandhi's emphasis on moral and character education may conflict with the growing emphasis on competitive academic standards, where students and teachers alike are often driven by external benchmarks like grades, rankings, and

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standardized testing (Chi-Kin Lee et al., 2021). Financial constraints also hinder the adoption of Gandhian principles, as providing free education for all children, especially in rural areas, requires significant funding for infrastructure, materials, and skilled instructors. Furthermore, cultural barriers exist, especially in communities that still cling to traditional and hierarchical educational models, where the emphasis is placed on achieving academic excellence rather than fostering emotional intelligence, social responsibility, and physical labor skills. Finally, modern societal demands for technical skills and global competitiveness may pose a challenge to Gandhi's simple education model, which seeks to prioritize local, community-based learning over globalized educational practices. Thus, while Gandhian principles are deeply relevant for creating an inclusive, sustainable, and human-centered education system, their implementation today faces multiple obstacles in terms of resources, attitudes, and global priorities.

Implementation Hurdles of NEP 2020

While the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers a comprehensive framework for transforming the Indian education system, its implementation is not without significant challenges. One of the key hurdles is the lack of adequate infrastructure, particularly in rural areas and remote regions, which is essential for the successful rollout of the policy's ambitious objectives. NEP 2020 envisions universal access to quality education, but many schools, especially in rural and tribal areas, lack the basic amenities like proper classrooms, digital tools, and qualified teachers to implement such a wide-reaching vision. The digital divide is another significant challenge, as technology integration is one of the central tenets of NEP 2020. The policy's emphasis on online learning platforms, digital classrooms, and smart classrooms faces a roadblock in the form of poor internet connectivity, lack of devices, and inadequate digital literacy among both students and teachers in remote areas. Another challenge is the capacity of the teachers to adapt to the new pedagogical approaches prescribed by the NEP. While the policy advocates for new curricula, competency-based assessments, and critical thinking, many teachers are still accustomed to traditional rote learning and exam-centric approaches. There is a significant need for continuous teacher training and professional development to help educators transition to these student-centered and holistic educational practices. Funding constraints also pose a serious obstacle to NEP 2020's implementation. The policy outlines extensive plans to improve infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum redesign, but these initiatives require substantial financial investments that may not be feasible in the current economic context (Kydyrbayeva, 2021). Furthermore, the implementation of multilingual education, as proposed by the policy, faces practical issues related to teacher training and the development of regional language resources, especially in states with linguistic diversity (Ziegler, 2013). The decentralized approach of NEP 2020, which grants more autonomy to states and local bodies in curriculum design and implementation, may also result in inconsistent application across different regions, particularly when state governments face challenges in policy coordination and resource allocation (Luo, 2024). Lastly, the policy's focus on inclusion requires systematic changes in the institutional mindset to ensure equitable access to education for marginalized groups, including rural students, tribal communities, and students with disabilities. Ensuring that these groups are not left behind while implementing NEP 2020 will require a massive overhaul of existing systems and strong commitment from all stakeholders involved (-, 2024). Therefore, while NEP 2020 offers transformative potential, its effective implementation will depend on addressing these fundamental challenges, including infrastructure, teacher training, financial resources, and policy coordination.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

The comparison between Gandhian educational philosophy and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reveals both shared ideals and contrasting approaches in the vision for India's education system. Gandhi's education philosophy, rooted in simplicity, self-reliance, and community-based learning, focuses on the holistic development of the child, emphasizing manual labor, practical skills, and moral education. His vision was to make education relevant to local communities, integrating traditional crafts and self-sufficiency as core components of the learning process. In contrast, NEP 2020 envisions a more globalized, technology-driven education system with a focus on digital learning, multidisciplinary education, and skill development to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. The policy aims for inclusive education by focusing on accessibility, teacher training, vocational skills, and competency-based assessments, reflecting a shift towards preparing students for a global economy. Despite the differences, both Gandhian philosophy and NEP 2020 emphasize the need for moral and ethical education, inclusive access, and the importance of developing a sense of social responsibility among students. Gandhi's approach may seem idealistic in the context of the modern technological age, but its emphasis on community and self-reliance resonates with the NEP 2020's emphasis on local context and personalized learning. Both visions underline the necessity of values-based education and active student engagement, recognizing that a strong educational foundation should not just focus on academic excellence but on building responsible, compassionate citizens. In terms of implementation, while Gandhi's approach faces practical challenges due to the evolution of society and technology, NEP 2020 offers a comprehensive framework with a focus on flexibility, equity, and integration of technology. However, the

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success of both models lies in balancing traditional wisdom with modern educational needs, ensuring that learning remains rooted in values, while embracing innovative methodologies.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR EDUCATION IN INDIA

As India moves forward in the 21st century, the future direction of education should seek to synthesize the best of both traditional and modern educational models to create an inclusive, equitable, and holistic system. Drawing inspiration from Gandhian principles of simplicity, self-reliance, and local relevance, and combining them with the innovative approach outlined in NEP 2020, India's education system must evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities of a globalized world. The first step should be a focus on value-based education that includes moral, ethical, and spiritual development, ensuring that students are not just academically competent, but also compassionate, socially responsible, and capable of contributing meaningfully to society. In line with NEP 2020's emphasis on holistic education, future educational frameworks must integrate the development of life skills, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills into the curriculum. Technological integration is inevitable, and future directions should prioritize blended learning models, where digital tools enhance the learning experience without replacing human interaction and community-based learning. The use of artificial intelligence (AI), virtual classrooms, and personalized learning can transform the education landscape, but this must be done while maintaining a human-centered approach to teaching and learning. Teacher training will be at the heart of future educational reforms, with a need for educators to not only embrace technology but also to be equipped with the skills to facilitate critical thinking, empathy, and collaborative learning. Moreover, the future of education must ensure equitable access for all children, especially those in rural, marginalized, and tribal communities, by leveraging technology and innovative teaching methods. This would require significant investments in infrastructure, digital literacy, and policy implementation at the grassroots level. Ultimately, the future direction of education in India must strike a balance between local knowledge and global demands, traditional wisdom and modern innovation, creating a system that is not only academically proficient but also socially responsible, inclusive, and spiritually aware. By adopting this balanced approach, India can forge an education system that prepares students to thrive in a rapidly changing world while maintaining a strong connection to its roots.

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