



## Challenges and Opportunities in Teaching Literature under NEP 2020

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### Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, introduced by the Government of India, seeks to transform the country's education system by making it holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary and aligned with the needs of the 21st century. While the policy has been widely discussed in the context of science, technology and skill-based learning, its implications for the teaching of literature remain significant but underexplored. Literature, as a discipline, not only provides linguistic competence but also nurtures cultural sensitivity, critical thinking, empathy and creativity. This paper explores both the challenges and opportunities that emerge in teaching literature under NEP 2020. It analyzes how the policy's emphasis on multilingualism, holistic learning, integration of technology and skill orientation can reshape literary pedagogy while also identifying difficulties such as curriculum restructuring, resource gaps, assessment reforms and teacher preparedness. The discussion concludes by suggesting pathways to harness the opportunities while addressing the challenges for effective implementation.

### Introduction:

The teaching of literature has historically occupied a central place in the Indian educational system. Literature is not merely a study of texts but a gateway to understanding culture, history, identity and the human condition. In India, with its multilingual and multicultural landscape, literature functions as a bridge between traditions and modernity, local identities and global perspectives.

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a paradigm shift in the educational landscape of India. Its focus on holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary education directly influences the study of literature, which has traditionally been compartmentalized within rigid disciplinary



boundaries. NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of critical thinking, creativity, cultural rootedness and ethical values all qualities that literature inherently fosters.

At the same time, the new policy presents significant challenges for literature teaching. These range from reconceptualizing curricula in line with multidisciplinary frameworks to addressing the difficulties of integrating technology and multilingualism into pedagogy. Thus, the teaching of literature under NEP 2020 can be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity a moment to rethink the role of humanities in shaping future generations.

### **Opportunities in Teaching Literature under NEP 2020:**

#### **1. Multilingualism and Cultural Inclusivity**

One of the major features of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on multilingual education. Literature provides the most natural avenue for promoting this vision. By incorporating texts from diverse Indian languages alongside world literature, students can engage with plural cultural narratives. This creates opportunities for:

- **Cross-cultural understanding:** Literature becomes a tool for celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity.
- **Strengthening Indian identity:** Classical and regional texts can be studied in comparison with global works, reinforcing rootedness in Indian culture while maintaining openness to the world.
- **Translation studies and comparative literature:** The policy indirectly encourages literary translation, allowing students to access texts across linguistic barriers.

#### **2. Integration of Technology in Literary Pedagogy**

NEP 2020 stresses the role of digital learning and technological integration. For literature, this offers new opportunities:

- **Digital archives and e-resources:** Students can access rare manuscripts, digital libraries, and multimedia adaptations of literary works.
- **Interactive teaching methods:** Audio-visual aids, online performances of plays and digital storytelling enrich literary experiences.
- **Blended learning environments:** Virtual classrooms and MOOCs open avenues for literature teaching beyond physical boundaries.



### 3. Holistic and Multidisciplinary Learning

Literature under NEP 2020 can be positioned as an interdisciplinary field that connects with philosophy, psychology, history, sociology and media studies. This offers opportunities such as:

- **Contextual learning:** Students can analyze literary works in relation to social and historical contexts.
- **Skill integration:** Critical thinking, communication and creativity are developed, aligning literature with employability and life skills.
- **Cross-disciplinary projects:** For example, studying climate change through eco-criticism or technology through science fiction enables literature to converse with contemporary issues.

### 4. Critical Thinking and Creativity

The NEP highlights the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Literature naturally cultivates these competencies by:

- Encouraging multiple interpretations of texts.
- Promoting debates on social, cultural and ethical issues.
- Inspiring creative writing, theatre and storytelling.

### 5. Indian Knowledge Systems and Local Narratives

NEP 2020 places strong emphasis on reviving Indian knowledge systems. Literature teaching can play a crucial role in this by:

- Integrating epics, folk traditions, Bhakti and Sufi poetry and regional literatures into curricula.
- Highlighting indigenous philosophies and oral traditions.
- Enabling students to critically engage with cultural heritage in contemporary contexts.

### Challenges in Teaching Literature under NEP 2020:

#### 1. Curriculum Restructuring and Implementation Gaps

While the policy envisions flexibility and multidisciplinary learning the restructuring of literature syllabi presents challenges:

- **Balancing tradition and modernity:** Deciding the proportion of Indian texts versus world literature can be contentious.



- **Overcrowding of curricula:** Efforts to integrate multiple disciplines may dilute literary depth.
- **Regional disparities:** Universities and schools across India may interpret and implement NEP differently, leading to inconsistency.

## 2. Teacher Preparedness and Training

The shift envisioned by NEP requires a major transformation in pedagogy:

- **Need for digital literacy:** Many literature teachers may not be adequately trained to use technology in classrooms.
- **Pedagogical adaptation:** Moving from rote learning to critical and creative approaches requires new teaching strategies.
- **Capacity building:** Continuous professional development is essential but often inadequately supported.

## 3. Language Hierarchies and Accessibility

While multilingualism is an opportunity, it also creates challenges:

- **Dominance of English:** In higher education, English often overshadows regional languages, creating imbalance.
- **Resource availability:** Quality translations and teaching materials in multiple languages are scarce.
- **Equity issues:** Students from rural or marginalized backgrounds may struggle to access resources equally.

## 4. Assessment and Evaluation Systems

Traditional examination patterns focused on memory-based evaluation are inadequate for NEP's vision:

- **Difficulty in evaluating creativity and interpretation:** Literature requires subjective assessment, which does not align easily with standardized evaluation models.
- **Need for continuous assessment:** Implementing project-based and portfolio evaluation demands systemic readiness.
- **Risk of superficiality:** Without clear rubrics, assessments may fail to measure deeper engagement with texts.



## 5. Resource and Infrastructure Gaps

- **Digital divide:** In rural or underfunded institutions, access to digital resources remains a significant barrier.
- **Library and archival limitations:** Many universities lack updated collections of world and regional literatures.
- **Financial constraints:** Implementing the reforms requires heavy investment in training, resources and technology.

### **Balancing Challenges and Opportunities:**

The NEP 2020 creates a transformative framework, but the real outcome will depend on how effectively challenges are addressed. Some strategies to balance both dimensions include:

- Designing **flexible syllabi** that include core Indian texts, global perspectives and contemporary issues.
- Establishing **teacher training programs** focused on digital pedagogy, interdisciplinary teaching, and inclusive methods.
- Developing **translation projects** and open-access digital libraries to overcome resource limitations.
- Creating **inclusive classrooms** by balancing the teaching of English, Hindi and regional literatures.
- Reforming **assessment models** to emphasize creativity, interpretation and application over rote memorization.

### **Conclusion:**

The NEP 2020 provides a historic opportunity to reimagine literature teaching in India. It offers possibilities to make literary education more inclusive, technology-driven, multidisciplinary and skill-oriented while also reinforcing cultural rootedness. However, the transition is fraught with challenges related to curriculum restructuring, teacher preparedness, resource gaps and assessment reforms.

The effectiveness of NEP 2020 in transforming literature teaching will depend on sustained investment in infrastructure, teacher development and resource creation, as well as a sensitive balance between local traditions and global perspectives. Literature has the power to shape empathetic, critical and culturally aware citizens qualities that align deeply with the policy's



vision of holistic education. Therefore, the challenges must be seen not as obstacles but as opportunities to innovate and strengthen the role of literature in India's educational future.

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