

# **TRANSFORMATIVE BREAKTHROUGH IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP 2020) THROUGH KARMA YOGA**

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## **Abstract**

National Education Policy stresses on the core values and principle that the education must develop social and emotional skills, can be referred collectively as Soft Skills. This paper will focus defining the Soft skills specifically Emotional Intelligence and provide suggestions to develop soft skills through various practices of Yoga in different stages i.e Foundation, Preparatory, Middle, Secondary stages classified in NEP 2020. The focus will be on Foundation & Preparatory Stage.

**Keywords:** Soft Skill- Emotional Intelligence, Yoga, Karma Yoga

## **INTRODUCTION**

**“Present Education is giving me Information of the world, but not teaching me How to Live?”**

The very first education policy was delivered in the Year 1968 by Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and there were small amendments done in later and in 1986 the Second Education Policy was formulated which was amended in years 1992. The 34 years old Policy was not serving today's challenges and hence there was a need for New Education Policy with entire new framework. With this view the entire New Education Policy in today's perspective with the current challenges are kept in mind to formulate this New Policy which is henceforth referred in this paper as NEP.

With all the years after independence and before formulation of the Education Policies ever, the Indian system of Education was lost due to so many attacks. Indian Education system which is broadly called as Gurukul system was based on the overall wellbeing of humans and his relation with the surroundings and the nature.

It is very encouraging to note that the NEP taking some precedents from the very old system of Indian Education system and intend to focus on the overall well being of human. The Climatic Challenges are also considered in NEP, which is appreciable and encouraging for the future of Planet and Human development.

As per the Ministry of Human Resource Development “The NEP is founded on the five guiding pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. It will prepare youth to meet the diverse national and global challenges of the present and the future.”

In school education, the National Education Policy 2020 stresses on the core values and principle that education must develop **social and emotional skills - also referred to as ‘soft skills’** -including cultural awareness and empathy, emotional intelligence, perseverance and grit, teamwork, leadership, communication, and not just focus on the Fundamental Skills of Literacy & Numeracy. [5]

“The NEP understood the importance of health and well-being of individuals and hence kept health of individual as a key aspect. It further emphasizes that for success in all other aspects of life, health is priority. And more stress is therefore given upon the Physical Education, Arts and Yoga for the holistic development of the individual.”

The issues of Climate changes are also mentioned in the NEP which is very novice concept as far as any other previous Education Policies are considered. Environmental restoration and regeneration is also the subject matter of NEP, which commendable.

World is facing the mental health issues and nobody can ignore how vulnerable we are in restoring our mental health, glad that the NEP has considered the Health, Well being and the climate changes in designing the curriculum as per the current World's condition.

For the practicality of the curriculum, the implementation part is of prime importance. NEP proudly raised the Health, wellbeing, which is the need of the hour and while reaching the goal these aspects are very important at the Foundation level.

### **National Education Policy**

In summary, NEP outlines the framework for the elementary education system. The NEP 2023 replaces the National Policy on Education of 1986 and spells out a significant shift in terms of many aspects, affecting some historical changes. The most important among them is the transition from a 10 + 2 structure to a 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 system.

At the heart of National Education Policy 2023 lies the objective to realize an innovative, student-centric structure that segments student education into four stages: Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary. The stages are considered crucial and in a natural order where students progress from one stage to another mentally, shaping and broadening the thought process in a holistic manner.

### **New National Education Policy Focus**

The new education policy focuses on transforming the Indian education system by providing equitable and quality education to all children aged 3-18 years.

### **NEP Goals to develop basic key skills**

The goals are to develop creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication skills, and vocational skills, and promote lifelong learning.

## **KEY AREAS WHERE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AND SHIFTS HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDED IN NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY**

### **NEP – Literacy Goal**

To achieve 100% youth and adult literacy by 2030.

### **Fundamental Structural Change with NEP**

National Education Policy calls for replacing the 10 + 2 structure with a 5+3+3+4 model, recommended to attain foundational literacy and numeracy among students by Grade 3.

### **NEP Highlights**

The transition of the model will be implemented by reclassifying the education stages as the following:

- **Foundational Stage:** The fundamental stage of laying the foundation that is further stratified into two substages: 3 years of preschool or Anganwadi, followed by classes 1 and 2 in primary school. This stage covers children between 3 and 8 years. The focus will be on activity-based learning.
- **Preparatory Stage:** Students of class 3-5 will be covered under this stage with the age bracket of 8–10 years. Students will be steadily exposed to the fundamental learning aspects of speaking, reading, writing, physical education, art, science, languages, and mathematics.
- **Middle Stage:** This stage covers students of classes 6 to 8, in the age group of 11-13 years. It will introduce students to more abstract concepts in mathematics, sciences, social sciences, arts, and humanities.
- **Secondary Stage:** Classes 9 to 12, covering the ages of 14–18 years. It is subclassified into two parts: classes 9 and 10, covering the first phase, while classes 11 and 12, covering the second phase. These 4 years of study is intended to inculcate multidisciplinary learning, driven by depth and critical thinking. This provides for multiple options of subjects.

**In the broader sense** there are changes made in the examination system, the examinations will be conducted at the end of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> standard. Thereby reducing the academic burden. NEP also encourages “Inter-disciplinary and Multi-

Lingual curriculum. And importance of Mother tongue promotion has also been considered in New NEP. Transformation is the Mantra that drives the New Education Policy.

Mother tongue learning is meant to enhance students' comprehension and enable the flow of more effective communication with teachers, building stronger bonds, and staying well-connected to one's cultural roots and background. Through this encouragement, the NEP intends to enhance language proficiency and clear the cultural chasms encountered by this generation of students."

#### **Health Focus**

The National Education Policy 2023 extends the mid-day meal scheme to include breakfast, with the addition of counselors and social workers to prioritize students' health and mental well-being.

## **NEW NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY – HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 1986**

A significant departure is visible in many areas of the New National Education Policy 2023, in comparison with the older one. Let us broadly analyze some of the key differences between National Education Policy 2023 and National Education Policy 1986:

#### **Holistic approach with a broader focus**

Strong emphasis on the overall growth of the students is clearly visible, mind development & career clarity, soft skill development were never talked subject in the earlier Education Policies, wherein the focus was on clearing the exams, merits, degrees only.

#### **Stress on language**

The latest NEP displays high regards for Indian languages and identifies the cruciality of teaching in the mother tongue. The older policy did not touch down on this.

Besides above, Education from early stages, importance to technology, vocational education, experimental learning are given importance which is beyond the scope of this paper.[6]

## **DEFINITION**

#### **Soft Skills:**

The term "soft skills" was created by the U.S. Army in the late 1960s [7]

#### **Dictionary meaning**

Oxford dictionary defines soft skills as "personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people".

According to Psychology, "Soft skills are behavioral and interpersonal skills that relate to how effectively people interact with others and handle situations."

"Psychologists use the term "soft skills" to describe someone's emotional intelligence quotient (EQ) as opposed to intelligence quotient (IQ)."

According to André Iland, "this is a 'package' of skills related to personality development that including social skills, communication and language skills, interpersonal habits, assertiveness, friendliness and optimism that demonstrate the relationship with the other".

Will Kenton is an expert on the economy and investing laws and regulations writes "Emotional intelligence is soft skill".

**Emotional Intelligence** involves the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions. Emotional intelligence is about finding best solutions social situations and building strong relationships.

According to McKinsey, the demand for emotional skills with grow by 26% from 2016 to 2030.

According to Will Kenton "A major part of emotional intelligence is self-awareness. This means being aware of your emotions, strengths, and weaknesses, and understanding how they affect others. By recognizing your emotional triggers, you can control your reactions more effectively, avoiding hasty decisions or misunderstandings. Self-aware people are also better at receiving feedback and making personal improvements because they can objectively assess their behavior and attitudes."

He further adds, Empathy is another important aspect of emotional intelligence. It's the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, which helps you connect with others on a deeper level.

According to Mayer et al. (2004), emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to regulate emotions reflectively to promote emotional and intellectual growth. He established this model, according to this model, emotional intelligence is conceived of as an ability that can be measured using objective, ability-based measures.

World is rapidly changing and all the required information is available on Internet, in this scenario, it is now less relevant how much IQ you possess! You will be successful in today's world only if you possess the quality of how emotionally well you can handle yourself and others around you. And hence the Emotional Intelligence needs to be developed in the individual, not only to the young adults to succeed in career but to the children so that the next coming generations will be benefitted. Studies have proved that the Emotional Intelligence can be developed and with the proper training mind develops the feeling of Empathy towards others, the co-operation to the fellow members increases. And what Better way than Yoga to develop this quality, which will serve the nation, the society and individual in long run.

### **What is Soft Skills Development?**

Dr. Rohidas Nitonde, Coordinator, IQAC, Shri Shivaji College, Parbhani, writes,

"Soft skills development is a process of the development of body and mind. Sometimes, it is referred to as personality development. In sociology, sociologists name it as the process of socialization. In this psychophysical process a person becomes more social and acceptable to the society."

A book by David Eagleman, **The brain**, describes that the human brain is born remarkably unfinished and it allows itself to be shaped by the details of life experiences. By the age two, a child has over one hundred trillion synapses (space between two nerve cells through which impulses pass), double the number an adult has. If these developing brains are not given proper, "expected" environment, the brain will struggle to develop normally. Throughout our childhood, our local environments refine our brain, taking the jungle of possibilities and shaping it back to correspond to what we are exposed to. Our brain forms fewer but stronger connections in childhood. And without an environment with emotional care and cognitive stimulation, the human brain cannot develop normally.

## **YOGA**

The term "yoga" and the English word "yoke" are derived from Sanskrit root "yuj" which means union. Yoga is one of the six foundations of Indian philosophy and has been used for millennia to study, explain, and experience the complexities of the mind and human existence (Feuerstein, 1998).

Yoga is a psycho-somatic-spiritual discipline for achieving union & harmony between our mind, body and soul and the ultimate union of our individual consciousness with the Universal consciousness (Madanmohan, 2008).

Maharshi Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras, defined yoga as a technique used to still the mental fluctuations of the mind to reach the central reality of the true self (Iyengar, 1966).

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras outline a skillful way of conducting life that fosters moderation and harmony (Becker, 2000).

Yoga is broadly classified in four different categories, and the practitioner can choose any of the ways to reach the ultimate goal of Yoga i.e. Samadhi, Patanjali in Patanjali Yoga Sutra calls it Kaivalya.

**Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Gyan Yoga, Raja Yoga.**

The word karma comes from the Sanskrit root kri, which means doing, actions or activity and includes all the actions that a person performs whether they are of the body, speech, or mind.

Karma Yoga is defined as, "a technique for intelligently performing actions" or "a technique for performing actions in a manner that the soul is not bound by the effects of the action" which means the same thing (Tilak, 1915/2000).

Mulla and Krishnan (2006) analyzed the types of activities prescribed to reach the ideal state that is Liberation. Mentions five types of activities that are described in the Shrimad Bhagwad Gita: devotion to god or seeing god in all beings; performing actions without attachment; meditation or focusing on the soul; **being neutral to opposites**, or **keeping senses under control**; and **doing one's duty in society**.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020 OF INDIA: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS**

This research paper critically examines the need and challenges of the New Education Policy which is formulated after 34 years, it states the facts that there was this urgent need for the New Education Policy as the old versions of the Education Policies are no more relevant. And after 34 years this New National Education Policy came.

It explains why there was a need to change the Pre-Education Policy and emphasizes that with the new Economic scenario it is impossible for India to meet the global challenges. New Education policy will enhance the quality of



education and will promote innovation and research programs. It will prepare youth to face the current and future challenges.

Physical Education and promotion of Yoga, Art, Horticulture is also mentioned and emphasized.

Paper further explains the challenges that will come in implementation of the policy practically such as cooperation from the states, expensive education, and Sanskritisation of the education, lack of trained human resources etc. [1]

### **EFFECT OF YOGA PRACTICES ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND HEALTHY LIFE STYLE HABITS**

The research conducted on 100 random samples to study the effect of yoga practices (asanas, pranayama & meditation including theories and practical) on emotional intelligence and healthy lifestyle habits. Self-constructed questionnaires were used to measure emotional intelligence and healthy life style habits. It was found that practitioners who were regular yoga practitioners scored more on emotional intelligence as well as healthy life style habits than practitioners who were rarely practicing yoga.

The best part of Yoga is, it can be started at any age and there is no restrictions. Also, not only physical benefits are served but it works well with mental challenges and hence aids in total personality building. Yoga is psychology, Philosophy and a science and there are many limbs of Yoga which can be incorporated in curriculum for the human health and well-being.[2]

### **KARMA-YOGA: CONSTRUCT VALIDATION USING VALUE SYSTEMS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

The Objective of this study was to validate the construct of Karma Yoga by using value system and Emotional Intelligence. Already validated Scales for Beliefs in Indian Philosophy, karma Yoga and Emotional Intelligence were used. Karma Yoga teaches individuals a higher sense of duty and obligation towards other. The individuals who consider Karma Yoga Higher showed a sense of interconnectedness, empathy, and higher Emotional Intelligence. The study concludes with the remarks that "Karma-Yoga is significantly correlated with emotional intelligence and specific value system. The study suggests that individuals who practice Karma-Yoga are likely to be empathetic, responsible, and duty-oriented, making them suitable for leadership and service roles." [3]

### **CHALLENGES**

1. The first and foremost challenge the NEP will face is the skillful human resource, as the policy talks about the counselor and social worker appointment.
2. Stress on mother tongue, will raise political pressures from across the country.
3. The experimental learning is more expensive in nature, how will Govt address this is the biggest question.
4. Private partnership will make the education more expensive, then how the 100% literacy rate will be achieved.
5. The focus clearly seen is on adding the Indian Culture in the system, since India is secular, it will be very difficult task to have one common curriculum across the country.
6. Yoga is still connected to Hinduism, there will be opposition from several states in teaching Yoga in school.
7. Without family support the following goal of policy will be difficult to achieve. How will family be trained and involved in such a big scale will be challenge to implementation.

### **DISCUSSION**

Dr. Timothy McCall, author of Yoga as Medicine and medical editor at Yoga Journal told the Huffington Post that habits are stubborn, and though people may know they need to change their diets and start exercising, for instance, it's difficult to actually succeed. Yoga helps rewire the brain, he says, to help replace negative patterns with positive ones.

"What we do with yoga is we start a practice," McCall says, "and we repeat it, ideally every day. More we repeat this positive pattern, the deeper those new neural networks become and the more they can eventually out-compete some of our older habits, habits that can tax our health and lead to stress, disease, and dysfunction."

It is proven by several studies how Yoga helps in building the overall personality including the Soft Skills specifically if we are talking about the Emotional Intelligence. By incorporating Yoga in the earlier stages, i.e. the Foundation Stage, the challenge of building a less aggressive and more poised personality can be easily achieved. And through Yoga brain will be wired by repeating the positive patterns.

The Karma-Yoga construct has already been validated in the behavioral domain (Mulla and Krishnan, 2006).

Swami Vivekananda quotes "The very essence of Education is Concentration of Mind." He said, "We want education that can build the character, mind is strengthened, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on his own feet"

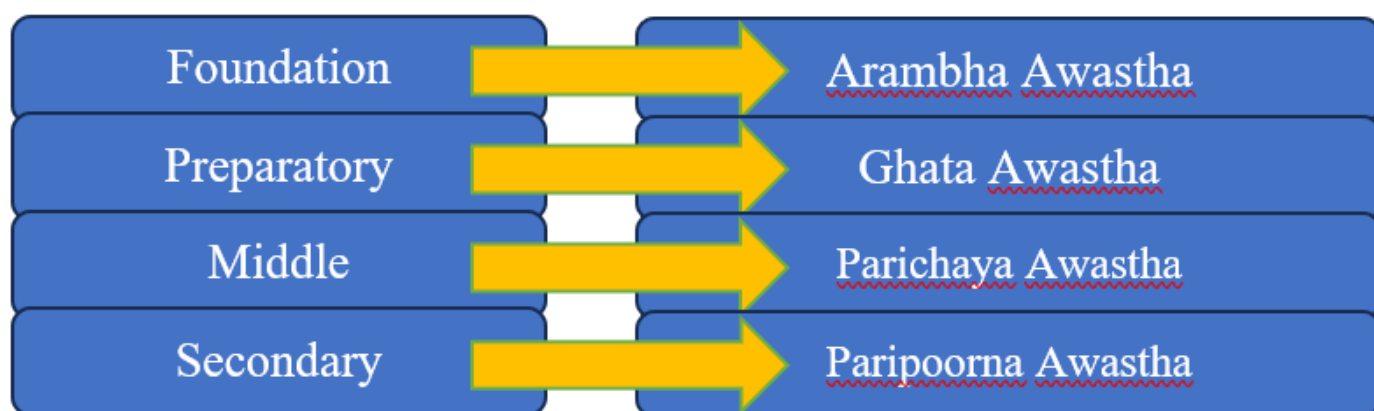
## SUGGESTIONS

*In building the good personality of the young generation, some vital suggestions are given to be adapted and implemented in the NEP with an immediate effect.*

1. Renaming the four stages according to Yogic Philosophy

- Foundational Stage - **Arambha Awastha.**
- Preparatory Stage – **Ghata Awastha.**
- Middle Stage – **Parichaya Awastha.**
- Secondary Stage – **Paripoorna Awastha.**

### RE-NAMING SUGGESTIONS FOR THE STAGES OF NEP 2020



2. Appointment of Yoga teachers & Counsels (as suggested in previous papers) rather than Anganwadi teachers

3. Focus on:

**Bhakti Yoga in first stage in the form of mantra chanting or learning Sanskrit.**

Albert Einstein Says, If you want your children to be smart, tell them stories, you want them to be really smart, tell them more stories. And If you want your children to be brilliant, tell them more and more stories.

The Initial stages of Bhakti Yoga start with telling the stories about our idol and hence the imaginative power among the Children is enhanced, they visualize the idol and the process continues. With that a sense of love and respect is engrossed in the children.

The same can be done by telling stories about the nature, the plants, the river and they should be encouraged to come up with their own stories.

**Karma Yoga – Second Stage – working as a team in nature**

Karma-Yoga fundamentals are sense of duty or obligation towards others, absence of desire for rewards, and a sense of equanimity towards opposites.

Karma Yoga induces a sense of connectivity with the other individuals and with nature. As a result of which the individual who is involved in Karma Yoga perceives the feelings and need of other people easily and are therefore likely more Emotionally Intelligent.

**Ashtanga Yoga – Third Stage (practical Yoga) Asana Practice**

**Philosophy of Yoga - fourth stage – optional.**

4. The technology and use of gadgets are of prime importance in today's world and its importance cannot be denied, but if we are talking about the foundation stage, we have many researched papers which conclude with mental health

challenges in early stages of childhood. The use of gadgets and its addictions showed very devastating results to the children between 8-14 years and now the age is further reducing. This paper highly recommends restrictions of gadgets at Foundation and to some extent Preparatory stage. More emphasis should be given on recitations, story telling by the children, which includes the stories from Folks, mythology etc. Listening to stories enhances the imaginative power of the children.

This will help children to explore the nature more and learn to be in sync with the nature.

Team building will be learnt the Preparatory stages by Karma Yoga, that is learning Selfless service to the school and community.

#### **KARMA YOGA MODEL for FOUNDATION (Arambha Awastha) & PREPARATORY (Ghata Awastha) PHASE:**

Taking the precedent of the Paper published by Mulla, Z. R., & Krishnan, V. R. (2007). *Karma-Yoga: Construct validation using value systems and emotional intelligence*.

**Being neutral to opposites,**

**Keeping senses under control;**

**Doing one's duty in society without expecting rewards.**

#### **FOUNDATION Phase (Arambha Awastha) :**

1. Daily loud recitation of four shloka from Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta in first class which emphasizes on Karma Yoga. Some suggestive shlokas are mentioned here, the incorporation should be such that proper meaning of the shloka should be delivered by the teachers to the students so that it is not connected to any particular religion.

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः।  
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः॥७॥

Meaning : For one who has conquered the mind, the Super soul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.[8]

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत्।  
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः॥५॥

Meaning : One must deliver himself with the help of his mind, and not degrade himself. The mind is the friend of the conditioned soul, and his enemy as well.[8]

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु।  
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा॥१७॥

Meaning: He who is regulated in his habits of eating, sleeping, recreation and work can mitigate all material pains by practicing the yoga system[8]

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जया।  
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते॥४८॥

Meaning: Established in Yoga, do actions by abandoning attachment (and) remaining equable in (the middle of) success and failure, oh winner of wealth. (Such an) equanimity is known as Yoga.[8]

2. Daily touching the feet of teachers and elderly in house with boost confidence and children will be more flexible in approach. There increases respect for the people around them and the whole society will benefit.

#### **PREPARATORY Phase (Ghata Awastha)**

1. Planting two or three samplings by children of primary class and taking care should be incorporated in daily activities of children.

2. Class cleaning activities in groups without any rewards to them, once in a month.

3. Once in a week, group activity of openly sharing the feeling about each other and grievances, and apologies in front of the class with enhance the care and respect for each other and it will help building a good community.

4. Once in a month a farm trip and asking to help the farmers in their field, will give them a knowledge of how the grains are grown and value system will be come automatically in students.

Once the foundation is built strong, the practice of Ashtanga Yoga at the third level is suggested so that with the strong but flexible mind the body also becomes strong and able to deal with the future problems happily. Daily Asana and Breathing practices are recommended but should assign a Qualified Yoga Teachers.

## CONCLUSION

NEP is seen as a bright light at the end of tunnel. The Expectation will be met only if it will be practically implemented, without any conflicts. Also Govt need to act fast to implement it as we are already facing problems with one whole generation. Moreover, our economic growth is measured by the GDP growth and this concept should be changed immediately. The growth of country should be measured on how less we spend on maintaining the health of society! Especially mental health. Also, being intelligent is not good enough to survive, but how well you can coordinate with others and the surrounding will matter most in days to come. For that we need to come back to our roots of chanting, spending time in nature and doing a good amount of service to the society, collectively called as Karma Yoga. The GDP should be calculated on how well we have conserved our people and the nature around us and not how we have destroyed the nature and Humanity in this process. Karma Yoga might be one of the best methods through which all the goals of NEP can be achieved as it focuses on the Soft Skill development. Moreover, without family support and good Yoga teachers or Counsellors it is a bit difficult to achieve the goal so Govt should invest more in recruiting Good Yoga teachers and counsellors for the best results.

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