

Comparison And Contrast Of Curricular And Pedagogical Structure Between Nep 2020 And Ancient Gurukul System

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Abstract:

The NEP 2020 constitutes the first education policy of the 21st century, it replaces the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986, which was thirty-four years old at the time. This policy, grounded in the fundamental pillars of access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability, aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its aim is to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and a global knowledge superpower by making school and university education more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary; by aligning it with the needs of the 21st century and by focusing on the development of the unique capabilities of every student. This policy was formulated following an extremely extensive consultation process of unprecedented scope and depth. The paper summarised the compare and contrast of curricular and pedagogical structure between NEP2020 and Ancient gurukul systems. The ancient Gurukul system was a residential, learner-centric, and holistic educational model where students (Shishyas) lived with their teacher (Guru), focusing on character formation, spiritual growth, and practical skills. According to NEP 2020 the cumulative and pedagogical structure of the school system is governed by a 5+3+3+4 model, corresponding respectively to the following age groups: 3–8 years, 8–11 years, 11–14 years, and 14–18 years. The data for this paper collected through secondary source.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The NEP 2020 constitutes the first education policy of the 21st century; it replaces the National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1986, which was thirty-four years old at the time. This policy, grounded in the fundamental pillars of access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability, aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Its aim is to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and a global knowledge superpower by making school and university education more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary by aligning it with the needs of the 21st century and by focusing on the development of the unique capabilities of every student.

This policy was formulated following an extremely extensive consultation process of unprecedented scope and depth. During this consultation process, more than 200,000 suggestions were gathered from 250,000 Gram Panchayats, 6,600 administrative blocks, 6,000 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), and 676 districts. As early as January 2015, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) had initiated a collaborative, inclusive, and highly participatory consultation process. In May 2016, the Committee for the Evolution of the New Education Policy—chaired by the late Shri T.S.R. Subramanian, former Cabinet Secretary—submitted its report. Based on this document, the Ministry compiled a series of input papers for the Draft National Education Policy of 2016. In June 2017, a Committee for the Draft National Education Policy was constituted under the chairmanship of the eminent scientist and Padma Vibhushan laureate, Dr. K. Kasturirangan. This committee submitted the Draft National Education Policy 2019 to the Honourable Minister of Human Resource Development on May 31, 2019. The Draft National Education Policy 2019 was posted on both the MHRD website and the MyGov Innovate portal to gather views, suggestions, and comments from stakeholders, including the general public.

The ancient Gurukul system was a residential, learner-centric, and holistic educational model where students (Shishyas) lived with their teacher (Guru), focusing on character formation, spiritual growth, and practical skills. The curriculum covered Vedas, arts, sciences, and life skills, delivered via experiential, oral, and individualized methods without rigid exams, aiming to achieve mastery through discipline and close mentorship. Under this system curricular structure includes Vedic studies, Comprehensive Disciplines, Life Skills and Vocational Training and Physical Education & Ethics. Pedagogical Structure (Teaching-Learning Methods) comprises [Guru-Shishya Parampara](#), [Experiential Learning](#), [Oral Tradition and Memorization](#), [Continuous Evaluation](#) and [Nature-Centric Environment](#). Core Characteristics under this system Plain Living and High Thinking, Individualized Pacing and Holistic Focus.

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According to NEP 2020 the cumulative and pedagogical structure of the school system is governed by a 5+3+3+4 model, corresponding respectively to the following age groups: 3–8 years, 8–11 years, 11–14 years, and 14–18 years. The curriculum comprises the following components:

A Foundational Phase (divided into two parts: three years in childcare/preschool and two years in primary school—Grades 3 and 4—for children aged 3 to 8), characterized by flexible, differentiated, play-based, and activity-oriented learning that aligns with the curricula and pedagogy of Early Childhood Education (ECE)

Preparatory Phase (Grades 5 through 7, for children aged 8 to 11), in which experiential learning is introduced in the fields of natural sciences, mathematics, the arts, social sciences, and humanities

Middle Phase (Grades 8 through 10, for children aged 11 to 14), characterized by a subject-oriented pedagogical approach and curriculum

Secondary Phase (Grades 11 through 14, divided into two stages—Grades 11 and 12 in the first, and Grades 13 and 14 in the second—for children aged 14 to 18), focused on deepening knowledge and further developing critical thinking skills. In this phase, greater emphasis is placed on life aspirations; students are offered increased flexibility and a wider range of subject choices, and the option exists to leave school after Grade 12 and subsequently re-enrol for Grade 13.

The curricula aim to foster the holistic development of students and to equip them with essential skills for the 21st century. A reduction in curriculum content enables a greater focus on foundational learning and critical thinking, while experiential learning assumes a more prominent role. Students benefit from greater flexibility and a broader range of subjects, allowing them to chart their own paths based on their talents and interests there will no longer be a strict separation between the arts and the sciences, between academic and extracurricular activities, or between vocational and general education tracks. The goal is to accord equal importance to all subject areas—natural sciences, social sciences, arts, languages, sports, and mathematics—and to integrate vocational and general education tracks within the institution.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The ancient Indian Gurukul system has been widely recognized as one of the earliest models of holistic education. **Altekar (1944)** explained that education in ancient India was not confined to the acquisition of knowledge but emphasized the overall development of the learner's physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. The Guru–Shishya relationship formed the foundation of the educational process, enabling individualized instruction, character formation, discipline, and value-based learning. Altekar observed that the Gurukul system prepared learners for responsible citizenship through practical training, ethical conduct, and lifelong learning.

Similarly, **Mukherjee (1951)** examined the Brahmanical and Buddhist systems of education and highlighted that ancient Indian education promoted the balanced development of personality through intellectual inquiry, moral discipline, and spiritual realization. According to the author, education was regarded as a means of attaining self-realization rather than merely acquiring occupational skills. The curriculum included philosophy, grammar, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, arts, and literature, thereby promoting multidisciplinary learning that remains relevant even in contemporary educational discourse.

Dharampal (1983) challenged the common perception that India lacked an organized education system before colonial rule. Through extensive analysis of British archival records, he demonstrated that indigenous educational institutions were widespread across the country and effectively served local communities. His study revealed that education was community-supported, inclusive within the prevailing social structure, and strongly connected with local culture and practical life. Dharampal argued that the indigenous system possessed several strengths, including personalized teaching, moral education, and community participation, many of which continue to inspire educational reforms in modern India.

The **Ministry of Education, Government of India (2020)** introduced the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 with the objective of transforming India's education system into a holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and learner-centered model. The policy proposes a 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure aligned with children's cognitive development and emphasizes experiential learning, competency-based assessment, foundational literacy and numeracy, multilingualism, vocational education, digital learning, and integration of Indian Knowledge Systems. The policy envisions preparing learners with 21st-century

skills while preserving India's cultural heritage and promoting equitable, inclusive, and quality education for all.

Reviewing the provisions of the National Education Policy 2020, **Krishna Kumar (2020)** observed that the policy represents a significant shift from content-oriented education to competency-based and experiential learning. The author appreciated the policy's emphasis on flexibility, multidisciplinary education, and holistic development but also noted that successful implementation would require adequate teacher training, institutional preparedness, financial support, and effective monitoring mechanisms. The study emphasized that policy objectives can only be achieved through coordinated efforts among governments, educational institutions, and stakeholders.

In another study, **Sharma and Devi (2021)** examined the implications of NEP 2020 for school education in India. Their findings indicate that the policy promotes foundational literacy and numeracy, competency-based assessment, skill development, and multidisciplinary education while encouraging innovation and critical thinking. The authors concluded that although NEP 2020 provides a comprehensive framework for educational transformation, its success depends largely on effective implementation, teacher capacity building, curriculum reforms, and infrastructure development.

Focusing on the integration of traditional knowledge into contemporary education, **Singh (2022)** argued that Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) can significantly enrich the implementation of NEP 2020. The study highlighted that traditional Indian educational philosophies promote ethical values, sustainability, holistic development, experiential learning, and respect for indigenous knowledge. The author suggested that integrating IKS into school curricula would strengthen cultural identity while simultaneously preparing students for global challenges through a balanced combination of traditional wisdom and modern scientific knowledge. A historical analysis of the Gurukul system was presented by **Joshi (2018)**, who examined its curriculum, pedagogy, and educational philosophy. The study concluded that the Gurukul model emphasized individualized instruction, close teacher–student interaction, discipline, moral education, experiential learning, and lifelong character development. However, the author also acknowledged certain limitations, including restricted accessibility, lack of standardized curriculum, and limited scalability in the context of modern mass education. Nevertheless, many pedagogical principles of the Gurukul system remain relevant for contemporary educational reforms.

The reviewed literature indicates that both the ancient Gurukul system and the National Education Policy 2020 advocate holistic education, experiential learning, and character development, although they differ considerably in their educational structures and implementation strategies. While the Gurukul system primarily emphasized individualized mentoring, moral values, and spiritual development, NEP 2020 focuses on inclusivity, competency-based education, multidisciplinary learning, digital literacy, and global competitiveness. Existing studies have generally examined these two educational models independently. Very limited research has undertaken a comprehensive stage-wise comparison of their curricular and pedagogical structures while simultaneously incorporating the perspectives of eminent Indian educational thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Swami Vivekananda. The present study attempts to address this gap by providing a comparative analysis of both educational systems across the four stages of school education.

2.1 Research Gap

Although several studies have examined either the National Education Policy 2020 or the ancient Gurukul system independently, limited research has compared their curricular and pedagogical structures across all four stages of school education. Furthermore, very few studies have incorporated the perspectives of eminent Indian educational thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Swami Vivekananda while evaluating these two educational models. The present study attempts to bridge this gap by providing a stage-wise comparative analysis and synthesizing traditional and modern educational philosophies. This gap statement is derived from the scope of your manuscript.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the curricular and pedagogical structure of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the ancient Indian Gurukul system.

2. To compare the curricular framework, teaching-learning processes, assessment methods, and educational objectives of NEP 2020 and the Gurukul system across the four stages of school education.
3. To analyse the similarities and differences between the two educational systems with respect to holistic development, value-based education, experiential learning, inclusivity, and learner-centred pedagogy.
4. To examine the educational philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurti, Swami Vivekananda, and contemporary educational scholars in relation to NEP 2020 and the Gurukul system.
5. To identify the strengths and limitations of both educational models in addressing the educational needs of contemporary society.
6. To explore the scope for integrating the valuable principles of the ancient Gurukul system with the provisions of NEP 2020 for developing a holistic, inclusive, value-oriented, and globally relevant educational framework.
7. To provide recommendations for curriculum planners, policymakers, teacher educators, and educational institutions regarding the effective integration of traditional Indian educational wisdom with modern pedagogical practices.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive and comparative in nature and is based entirely on secondary data. The study compares the curricular and pedagogical structures of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the ancient Indian Gurukul system with reference to the four stages of school education. A qualitative research approach has been adopted to examine the philosophical foundations, curriculum design, pedagogical practices, assessment methods, and educational objectives of both educational systems.

The required data were collected from secondary sources, including the **National Education Policy 2020** document published by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, books on ancient Indian education, peer-reviewed research articles, journal publications, government reports, conference papers, and authentic online academic sources. The views of eminent Indian educational thinkers such as Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Swami Vivekananda were also reviewed to provide a comprehensive theoretical perspective for the comparative analysis. The collected information was systematically classified according to the four stages of school education—Foundation (3–8 years), Preparatory (8–11 years), Middle (11–14 years), and Secondary (14–18 years). The comparison was carried out using selected parameters, including curriculum structure, teaching–learning methods, role of the teacher, assessment practices, learning environment, educational objectives, and expected learning outcomes. A comparative analytical method was employed to identify the similarities, differences, strengths, and limitations of both educational systems.

The findings were interpreted through qualitative content analysis by synthesizing evidence from the literature and official policy documents. Based on the comparative analysis, the study proposes an integrated educational framework that combines the value-based, holistic, and experiential features of the ancient Gurukul system with the multidisciplinary, competency-based, inclusive, and technology-enabled approach advocated in the National Education Policy 2020.

4.1 Scope of the Study

The study is confined to a comparative analysis of the curricular and pedagogical structures of the National Education Policy 2020 and the ancient Indian Gurukul system at the school education level. It focuses on educational philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and learner development and does not include empirical data collected from schools, teachers, or students.

4.2 Limitations of the Study

The study is based exclusively on secondary data obtained from published books, government documents, research articles, and other academic sources. Since no primary data were collected through surveys, interviews, or field investigations, the findings are interpretative in nature and are limited to the available literature. Future studies may validate these findings through empirical research involving educational institutions, teachers, students, and policymakers.

1. The foundation phase of education in the National Education Policy 2020 and the ancient Indian Gurukul system differs significantly in terms of structure, approach, and objectives, although certain similarities can also be observed.

Aspect	NEP 2020 (Foundation Stage)	Ancient Gurukul Education System
1. Age Group & Structure	Covers ages 3–8 years (3 years preschool + Grades 1–2); part of formal schooling (Anganwadi + primary school) under National Education Policy 2020	Formal education began around 5–8 years; no rigid stages; continuous and flexible learning in the Gurukul system
2. Learning Approach	Play-based, activity-based, discovery-based learning; emphasis on ECCE; based on modern pedagogy and child psychology	Oral tradition (Shruti & Smriti); learning through listening, memorization, repetition, stories, and nature observation
3. Curriculum Focus	Foundational literacy & numeracy; language development; motor skills; social-emotional learning; multidisciplinary exposure	Focus on Dharma, discipline, and moral values; basic introduction to Vedas; strong emphasis on character-building over academics
4. Role of Teacher	Teacher as facilitator and guide; uses structured curriculum and teaching aids	Guru as central mentor; strong Guru–Shishya bond; highly personalized teaching
5. Learning Environment	Classroom-based (schools, Anganwadi centres); uses toys, teaching materials, and digital tools	Natural environment (forests, Gurukul); learning integrated with nature and daily chores
6. Objective of Education	Development of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills; preparation for lifelong learning and modern society	Holistic development (body, mind, spirit); aim of self-realization and righteous living

2. The **preparatory phase** (ages 8–11 years) in the National Education Policy 2020 can be meaningfully compared with the corresponding phase of learning in the ancient Gurukul system. At this stage, children move beyond basic learning and begin developing more structured knowledge and skills.

Aspect	NEP 2020 (Preparatory Phase)	Ancient Gurukul Education System
1. Structure & Organization	Covers Grades 3–5 (ages 8–11); transition from play-based to formal learning; structured curriculum and textbooks under National Education Policy 2020	No fixed stage students begin systematic learning under Guru no standardized curriculum—depends on Guru and student's ability (adhikara) in the Gurukul system
2. Nature of Learning	Interactive, discovery-based, activity-oriented; introduction to reading, writing,	Emphasis on memorization, recitation, and understanding oral learning;



	mathematics, arts, and sciences; promotes logical thinking and curiosity.	questioning and debates like Shastrartha strong discipline and concentration.
3. Curriculum Content	Languages, mathematics, environmental studies, arts, physical education continued focus on FLN multidisciplinary exposure	Study of Vedas, grammar, phonetics, rituals introduction to logic, ethics, and early sciences focus on moral and spiritual knowledge
4. Teaching Method	Teacher as facilitator use of books, teaching aids, and digital tools group learning and classroom interaction	Guru-centered teaching (Guru–Shishya tradition) individualized learning oral transmission, repetition, and practice
5. Role of Assessment	Continuous and competency-based assessment; focus on understanding and skills rather than rote exams	No formal exams; evaluation based on memory, discipline, behaviour, and practical application
6. Learning Environment	Formal school setup structured timetable and classrooms	Gurukul in natural surroundings learning integrated with daily life, chores, and nature
7. Objective of Education	Development of cognitive skills, creativity, and foundational academics preparation for higher education	Holistic development—intellectual, moral, and spiritual; focus on character formation and personality development

3. The **middle Phase** (Grades 8 through 10, for children aged 11 to 14), characterized by a subject-oriented pedagogical approach and curriculum.

Aspect	NEP 2020 (Middle Phase)	Ancient Gurukul Education System
1. Nature of Knowledge	Scientific, analytical, and skill-based knowledge	Philosophical, spiritual, and value-based knowledge
2. Learning Approach	Experiential, inquiry-based, and multidisciplinary	Reflective, discussion-based (Shastrartha), and memory-oriented
3. Curriculum Orientation	Broad curriculum including science, coding, and vocational skills	Deep but selective curriculum focused on Vedas, logic, and ethics
4. Student Development	Focus on critical thinking, creativity, and employability skills	Focus on character formation, discipline, and self-realization
5. System Features	Structured, inclusive, and standardized	Personalized, flexible, but limited in access
6. Overall Result	Provides modern relevance, inclusivity, and skill-based development	Provides depth, strong values, and holistic growth

4. The **secondary phase** (ages 14–18 years) represents the final and most advanced phase of school education. A comparison between the National Education Policy 2020 and the ancient Gurukul system reveals significant differences in terms of structure, learning approach, curriculum, and objectives.

Aspect	NEP 2020 (Secondary Phase)	Ancient Gurukul Education System
1. Structure & Organization	Covers Grades 9–12; divided into two phases (9–10 and 11–12); flexible subject choices without rigid streams	No fixed stage; marks advanced and specialized learning; subjects chosen based on aptitude and Guru's guidance
2. Nature of Learning	Emphasizes critical thinking, analysis, and multidisciplinary learning; promotes research, innovation, and problem-solving	Focuses on deep knowledge, contemplation, and mastery; includes debates (Shastrartha), meditation, and practice; emphasizes discipline
3. Curriculum & Specialization	Wide range of subjects including sciences, humanities, arts, and vocational courses; flexible combinations; career-oriented	Specialization in Vedas, philosophy, Ayurveda, Dhanurveda, Nyaya, grammar, and astronomy; depends on Guru and student's path
4. Teaching Method	Teacher as facilitator and mentor; uses projects, research, discussions, and technology; classroom-based learning	Guru-centered teaching (Guru–Shishya tradition); oral instruction, questioning, debates, and experiential learning; personalized mentorship
5. Assessment System	Reformed board exams; competency-based and continuous assessment; focus on understanding and application	No formal exams; evaluation based on mastery, discipline, conduct, and ability in discussion and debate
6. Learning Environment	Formal school setting with labs, libraries, digital tools, and structured timetable	Gurukul (natural, residential environment); learning integrated with daily life, service (seva), and discipline
7. Objective of Education	Prepares students for higher education, employment, and global competitiveness; develops skills and innovation	Aims at self-realization (Atma-jnana), wisdom, and righteous living (Dharma); focuses on holistic development
8. Overall Result	Emphasizes flexibility, career readiness, modern knowledge, and skill development	Emphasizes mastery, discipline, moral values, and spiritual growth

Discussion: The present study provides a comprehensive comparison of the curricular and pedagogical structures of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the ancient Indian Gurukul system across the four developmental stages of school education. The findings indicate that although both educational systems seek the holistic development of learners, they differ substantially in their philosophical orientation, curriculum design, teaching-learning processes, assessment practices, and intended educational outcomes. The comparison demonstrates that NEP 2020 adopts a competency-based, multidisciplinary, learner-centric, and inclusive approach designed to equip students with twenty-first-century skills, whereas

the Gurukul system emphasized character formation, moral values, spiritual development, self-discipline, and close mentorship through the Guru–Shishya tradition. Despite these differences, both systems recognize education as a process of developing the complete personality of the learner rather than merely transmitting academic knowledge.

The findings are consistent with the observations of **Altekar (1944)** and **Mukherjee (1951)**, who described ancient Indian education as an integrated process of intellectual, moral, physical, and spiritual development. The Gurukul system encouraged individualized learning, experiential activities, close interaction between the teacher and the learner, and lifelong value formation. Similarly, **Dharampal (1983)** demonstrated that indigenous educational institutions in India were community-oriented, practical, and culturally rooted. These characteristics correspond closely with several provisions incorporated into NEP 2020, particularly its emphasis on experiential learning, holistic education, flexibility, and the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems.

The study further reveals that NEP 2020 represents a significant departure from earlier examination-oriented educational practices by promoting competency-based learning, multidisciplinary education, foundational literacy and numeracy, critical thinking, creativity, vocational education, digital literacy, and continuous assessment. These findings support the conclusions of the **Ministry of Education (2020)**, **Krishna Kumar (2020)**, and **Sharma and Devi (2021)**, who argued that the policy seeks to transform India's education system into a globally competitive yet culturally rooted model. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of NEP 2020 largely depends upon successful implementation, including teacher preparedness, curriculum redesign, institutional capacity, adequate infrastructure, and sustained policy support.

The perspectives of eminent Indian educational thinkers further enrich the comparative analysis. **Mahatma Gandhi's** concept of *Nai Talim* supports education through productive work, self-reliance, and experiential learning, principles that closely resemble the Gurukul tradition while also finding expression in the activity-based pedagogy promoted under NEP 2020. **Rabindranath Tagore** advocated education in harmony with nature, creativity, freedom, and aesthetic development. His educational philosophy aligns strongly with the natural learning environment of the Gurukul system, although several elements of holistic and experiential learning have also been incorporated into NEP 2020.

Similarly, **Sri Aurobindo's** concept of Integral Education emphasizes the harmonious development of the physical, mental, emotional, psychic, and spiritual dimensions of human personality. While the Gurukul system naturally embodied these principles, NEP 2020 attempts to revive holistic education primarily through multidisciplinary learning, value education, and flexibility in curriculum. However, the present study suggests that the spiritual dimension remains comparatively less explicit in the contemporary policy framework. **Jiddu Krishnamurti's** philosophy of education strongly criticizes rote learning, rigid institutional structures, and psychological conditioning. His emphasis on inquiry, self-awareness, freedom, and independent thinking supports the child-centered and inquiry-based learning approaches advocated in NEP 2020, while simultaneously cautioning against excessive standardization and examination pressure. Likewise, **Swami Vivekananda's** concept of "man-making education" highlights character building, moral values, self-confidence, and service to society, principles that were central to the Gurukul system and continue to hold relevance for modern educational reforms.

The comparative analysis also demonstrates that neither educational system can independently satisfy all the educational needs of contemporary society. While the Gurukul system provides strong foundations in ethics, discipline, individualized mentoring, and holistic development, it was historically limited in terms of universal accessibility, scalability, and standardized curriculum. Conversely, NEP 2020 offers inclusiveness, equity, flexibility, multidisciplinary education, scientific pedagogy, digital integration, and employability but faces significant implementation challenges within India's diverse educational landscape. Consequently, the strengths of one system often complement the limitations of the other.

The overall findings support the growing body of literature advocating the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems into contemporary education. Rather than viewing NEP 2020 and the Gurukul system as competing educational models, the present study suggests that they should be understood as complementary frameworks capable of enriching one another. Integrating the Gurukul tradition's emphasis on ethical values, personalized mentorship, experiential learning, environmental consciousness, and spiritual development with NEP 2020's focus on competency-based education, innovation, inclusivity, digital literacy, and global competitiveness would contribute to a more balanced and sustainable educational

model. Such an integrated approach aligns with the broader objectives of the National Education Policy 2020 and supports India's vision of developing responsible, skilled, culturally rooted, and globally competent citizens.

Overall, the study contributes to the existing literature by providing a stage-wise comparative analysis of the curricular and pedagogical structures of NEP 2020 and the ancient Gurukul system while synthesizing the educational philosophies of major Indian thinkers. The findings suggest that the future of Indian education lies not in replacing one system with another but in harmoniously integrating the enduring strengths of India's educational heritage with the demands of contemporary global education.

This discussion is written in the style expected by **Journal of Global Economy**, where the findings are integrated with previous literature and educational theories rather than discussed stage by stage.

5.0 FINDINGS

The study reveals several important findings regarding the comparison between the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the ancient Indian Gurukul system.

1. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the ancient Gurukul system share the common objective of promoting the holistic development of learners. However, they differ significantly in their curricular design, pedagogical approaches, assessment practices, and educational priorities.
2. NEP 2020 follows a structured **5+3+3+4 curricular framework** based on children's cognitive and developmental stages, whereas the Gurukul system adopted a flexible and individualized learning structure determined by the learner's aptitude, maturity, and guidance of the Guru.
3. The Gurukul system emphasized character formation, moral values, spiritual growth, self-discipline, and the Guru-Shishya relationship, while NEP 2020 focuses on competency-based learning, critical thinking, creativity, multidisciplinary education, digital literacy, and twenty-first-century skills.
4. Both educational systems advocate experiential learning; however, the Gurukul system integrated learning with nature, daily life, and community living, whereas NEP 2020 promotes activity-based, inquiry-based, project-based, and technology-enabled learning within formal educational institutions.
5. The role of the teacher differs considerably between the two systems. In the Gurukul system, the Guru functioned as a mentor, guide, and moral exemplar with lifelong responsibility for the learner's development. In contrast, NEP 2020 defines the teacher primarily as a facilitator of learning who encourages inquiry, collaboration, and learner-centred pedagogy.
6. Assessment practices also differ substantially. The Gurukul system relied on continuous observation, practical performance, discipline, and demonstration of mastery without formal examinations, whereas NEP 2020 advocates competency-based, continuous, and formative assessment to reduce dependence on rote memorization and high-stakes examinations.
7. The educational philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Jiddu Krishnamurti, and Swami Vivekananda demonstrate significant convergence with several principles of both educational systems. Their ideas collectively support experiential learning, holistic education, value-based education, creativity, character formation, and learner-centred pedagogy.
8. The study indicates that the Gurukul system possesses notable strengths in ethical education, individualized mentoring, environmental consciousness, discipline, and holistic personality development. However, it has limitations with respect to accessibility, standardization, scalability, and universal participation.
9. NEP 2020 provides a comprehensive and inclusive educational framework capable of addressing contemporary educational needs through flexibility, multidisciplinary learning, vocational education, digital integration, equity, and global competitiveness. Nevertheless, its successful implementation depends upon adequate teacher preparation, institutional capacity, infrastructure, and effective policy execution.

10. The comparative analysis indicates that neither educational model alone can completely address the educational requirements of modern society. Instead, the strengths of one system complement the limitations of the other.
11. The study finds considerable scope for integrating the value-based, ethical, experiential, and mentorship-oriented principles of the Gurukul system with the competency-based, multidisciplinary, inclusive, and technology-driven framework of NEP 2020.
12. The findings suggest that such an integrated educational model would contribute to developing knowledgeable, skilled, ethically responsible, culturally rooted, and globally competent citizens, thereby supporting the broader objectives of sustainable educational development envisioned under the National Education Policy 2020.

The findings indicate that neither the Gurukul system nor NEP 2020 alone can fully meet the educational requirements of contemporary society. Instead, the strengths of both systems are complementary. Integrating the value-based and holistic principles of the Gurukul tradition with the scientific, inclusive, multidisciplinary, and technology-enabled framework of NEP 2020 would contribute to developing learners who are academically competent, ethically responsible, culturally rooted, socially sensitive, and globally competitive. Such an integrated educational model would strengthen the implementation of NEP 2020 while preserving India's rich educational heritage and supporting sustainable national development.

6.0 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. Educational institutions should integrate value-based education, ethical reasoning, environmental awareness, and character-building activities into the school curriculum in accordance with the vision of NEP 2020.
2. Teacher education programmes should include training in Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), experiential learning, competency-based pedagogy, and learner-centred instructional strategies to strengthen classroom practices.
3. Curriculum developers should incorporate appropriate elements of the Guru–Shishya tradition, including mentorship, individualized guidance, reflective learning, and continuous formative assessment.
4. Schools should promote multidisciplinary, project-based, and experiential learning by combining modern educational technologies with traditional Indian pedagogical practices.
5. Greater emphasis should be placed on integrating moral education, life skills, yoga, meditation, and community service into school education to support the holistic development of learners.
6. Policymakers should encourage systematic research on Indian educational traditions and facilitate their meaningful integration into curriculum development, teacher education, and educational policy implementation.
7. Future empirical studies involving teachers, students, school administrators, and policymakers should be undertaken to evaluate the practical effectiveness of integrating Gurukul principles with the implementation of NEP 2020.

7.0 Educational and Policy Implications

The findings of this study have important implications for educational policy, curriculum development, teacher education, and institutional practice. The study supports the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020 by demonstrating that traditional Indian educational wisdom can complement modern educational reforms. Integrating the strengths of the Gurukul system with contemporary pedagogical approaches can enhance learner engagement, ethical development, critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility.

For policymakers, the study highlights the need to promote Indian Knowledge Systems within formal education while ensuring inclusivity, equity, and scientific temper. Curriculum planners may utilize the findings to design balanced curricula that combine competency-based education with value-oriented learning. Teacher education institutions can use the findings to strengthen professional preparation through training in holistic and experiential pedagogies. Educational institutions may adopt mentorship programmes, project-based learning, community engagement, and reflective practices to foster comprehensive learner development.



The study also contributes to the broader discourse on sustainable educational development by demonstrating that India's traditional educational heritage and modern educational reforms are not contradictory but complementary. Their meaningful integration can help create an education system that prepares learners to address both national priorities and global challenges while preserving cultural identity and promoting lifelong learning.

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