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Bridging Policy and Practice: Integrating Indigenous Knowledge and Value-Based Education in Primary School Curriculum under the Indian National Education Policy

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Abstract: This study examines the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and value-based education into primary school curricula under India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), with a particular focus on bridging the gap between policy intentions and classroom practices. Employing an integrative literature review and policy analysis, the study synthesizes policy documents, conceptual works, curriculum studies, and empirical literature related to IKS, value-based education, and curriculum implementation in Indian education. The findings reveal that although NEP 2020 provides a strong philosophical foundation for culturally rooted and holistic education, its implementation remains uneven due to limited operational guidance, inadequate teacher preparedness, insufficient contextual learning resources, and persistent structural constraints. The study further demonstrates that IKS and value-based education are mutually reinforcing, as Indigenous knowledge provides a culturally grounded context for ethical, moral, and social development. Teacher agency also emerges as a critical mediating factor in translating policy principles into classroom practices. The novelty of this study lies in its development of a policy–pedagogy–teacher agency framework for integrating IKS and value-based education in primary education under NEP 2020. By linking policy orientation, pedagogical practice, and teacher agency, this study contributes to the literature on culturally responsive curriculum reform and offers practical implications for policymakers, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and primary school practitioners seeking to advance context-sensitive and value-oriented education.

Keywords: Indigenous Knowledge Systems; Value-Based Education; Curriculum Implementation; National Education Policy 2020; Primary Education; Teacher Agency; Holistic Education; India

Introduction

The growing complexity of contemporary education has shifted global attention from purely cognitive learning outcomes toward more holistic approaches that integrate ethical, cultural, and social dimensions of education. Within this transformation, the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and value-based education has emerged as an important strategy for developing culturally responsive and contextually relevant curricula. Indigenous knowledge comprises locally grounded

systems of understanding shaped over generations through cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, and community experiences (Dei, 2000; Semali et al., 2002). Unlike dominant Western-oriented educational frameworks, Indigenous knowledge emphasizes relational understanding, community identity, sustainability, and cultural continuity. At the same time, value-based education seeks to cultivate ethical awareness, empathy, social responsibility, and moral character among learners, all of which are increasingly viewed as essential competencies in contemporary education systems (Lickona, 1996). The integration of these two educational dimensions has therefore become increasingly relevant in efforts to promote inclusive, culturally rooted, and holistic learning environments.

Recent educational reform movements have increasingly recognized the importance of integrating Indigenous perspectives into formal schooling systems to address issues of cultural marginalization and curriculum irrelevance. UNESCO (2017) emphasizes that sustainable and inclusive education requires the recognition of local knowledge systems and culturally embedded pedagogical practices. Previous studies have also demonstrated that Indigenous knowledge contributes significantly to learner engagement, cultural identity formation, and contextual understanding by connecting academic content with students' lived experiences (Mehta, 2025; Puri, 2025). Similarly, value-based education supports character formation, ethical reasoning, social cohesion, and responsible citizenship (Durlak et al., 2011; Isser et al., 2024). These developments indicate that contemporary curriculum reform increasingly requires educational models that integrate cognitive, moral, cultural, and social dimensions of learning rather than treating them as separate domains.

In the Indian context, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 reflects these educational transformations and represents one of the major curriculum reform initiatives in recent decades (Government of India, 2020). NEP 2020 explicitly promotes the integration of Indian Knowledge Systems, cultural heritage, ethical education, and holistic learning into the formal education system. The policy emphasizes multidisciplinary learning, experiential pedagogies, cultural rootedness, and the development of socially responsible learners capable of balancing global competencies with local relevance (Mittal et al., 2022). Through this framework, Indigenous knowledge and value-based education are positioned not merely as supplementary curricular elements but as foundational components of educational transformation in India (Mehta, 2025). The policy, therefore, reflects a broader shift toward culturally responsive and context-sensitive educational reform.

Despite the progressive vision articulated in NEP 2020, significant challenges remain in translating policy aspirations into meaningful classroom practices. Previous studies on curriculum reform consistently show that educational policies often encounter implementation difficulties due to inadequate teacher preparation, limited instructional resources, rigid institutional structures, and insufficient pedagogical guidance (Fullan, 2007; Spillane, 2004). Similar concerns have emerged regarding the implementation of NEP 2020, particularly regarding the integration of Indigenous knowledge and value-based education into everyday teaching practices (Rai et al., 2025). Although the policy provides a strong philosophical foundation, practical mechanisms for operationalizing these principles within diverse classroom contexts remain underdeveloped. As a result, many schools continue to experience a gap between policy intentions and pedagogical realities.

Furthermore, existing studies have predominantly examined Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education as separate areas of inquiry. Limited attention has been given to how these two components can be systematically integrated into curriculum implementation processes. In addition, much of the current literature on

NEP 2020 focuses on philosophical, conceptual, or policy-oriented discussions, while empirical and analytical investigations into translating these principles into classroom practice remain relatively limited, particularly in primary education contexts. This indicates a significant research gap concerning the relationship among policy frameworks, teacher agency, pedagogical practices, and curriculum implementation in primary education settings.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates how Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education can function as an integrative bridge between policy and classroom practice within the framework of NEP 2020. Specifically, the study explores the processes, enabling factors, pedagogical strategies, and implementation barriers associated with integrating Indigenous knowledge and value-based education into primary school curricula. Through an integrative literature review and policy analysis, this study seeks to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that links policy orientation, teacher agency, and classroom pedagogy in the implementation of holistic, culturally responsive education.

This study contributes to the literature in several important ways. First, it advances current discussions on curriculum reform by proposing a more integrated perspective on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education within primary education. Second, the study strengthens existing scholarship on NEP 2020 by critically examining the gap between policy intentions and classroom implementation. Third, the study proposes an integrative framework that connects policy, pedagogy, and teacher agency within the context of culturally responsive curriculum implementation. Finally, the findings offer practical insights for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators seeking to implement sustainable, context-sensitive educational reforms in culturally diverse settings.

Method

This study employed an integrative literature review and policy analysis to examine the integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and value-based education into India's primary school curriculum under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The integrative review approach is appropriate because it enabled us to synthesize diverse forms of evidence, including empirical studies, conceptual discussions, curriculum research, and policy documents related to Indian educational reform (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). In addition, we utilized policy analysis to critically examine how educators translate the principles outlined in NEP 2020 into pedagogical practices within Indian primary education contexts.

The study relied on structured literature identification and screening procedures using academic databases, including Scopus, ERIC, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The literature search employed predefined keywords and Boolean operators, including *"Indigenous Knowledge Systems," "value-based education," "curriculum implementation," "primary education,"* and *"NEP 2020."* Search combinations including "Indigenous Knowledge Systems AND value-based education AND NEP 2020" were also applied to refine the search results and ensure thematic relevance within the Indian educational context.

The selection process involved identification, relevance screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies aligned with the research objectives. A total of 214 records were initially identified across the selected databases. After duplicate removal and relevance screening, 148 records remained for title and abstract review. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 17 studies were selected for the final integrative synthesis and policy analysis. The inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed publications published between 2020-2026 that discussed

Indigenous Knowledge Systems, value-based education, curriculum reform, educational policy, and NEP 2020 within Indian education. Studies lacking conceptual or contextual relevance to the Indian educational setting were excluded from the review.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria Aspect	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Publication period	Studies published between 2020 and 2026, with older works included only when used as foundational theoretical references.	Studies published before 2020 that did not provide foundational theoretical relevance.
Thematic relevance	Studies discussing Indigenous Knowledge Systems, value-based education, holistic education, curriculum reform, teacher agency, or policy implementation.	Studies unrelated to Indigenous knowledge, value-based education, curriculum reform, or policy implementation.
Educational context	Studies focusing on Indian education, NEP 2020, primary/elementary education, or curriculum implementation in culturally diverse educational settings.	Studies outside the educational context or studies with no relevance to NEP 2020 and primary education.
Source type and accessibility	Peer-reviewed articles, policy documents, curriculum studies, conceptual papers, and accessible full-text educational research.	Opinion pieces, non-academic sources, unavailable full-text studies, and documents without clear scholarly or policy relevance.

The final corpus of selected studies comprised policy documents, conceptual papers, curriculum studies, and educational research focused on Indigenous Knowledge Systems, value-based education, and curriculum implementation in India, as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Corpus of Selected Studies

No	Author(s)	Focus of Study	Methodology	Key Findings
1	Government of India (2020)	National Education Policy 2020	Policy document	NEP 2020 emphasizes holistic and culturally rooted education
2	Mehta (2025)	Indigenous Knowledge Systems and holistic education	Conceptual analysis	IKS supports culturally responsive education
3	Isser et al. (2024)	Value-based education under NEP 2020	Policy review	Ethical education strengthens holistic learning
4	Mittal et al. (2022)	Implementation of NEP 2020	Policy implementation study	Curriculum reform requires institutional readiness
5	Rai et al. (2025)	Value-based education implementation	Literature review	Schools experience implementation barriers
6	Kumar (2024)	Indian Knowledge Systems in education	Conceptual study	IKS strengthens culturally grounded pedagogy
7	Padma & Pattammal (2025)	Integrating IKS into curriculum	Curriculum analysis	Curriculum should integrate local knowledge systems

8	Puri (2025)	Importance of IKS in education	Conceptual discussion	Indigenous knowledge strengthens cultural identity
9	Sahu (2025)	Integrating IKS into modern education	Comparative analysis	Institutional contexts affect implementation
10	Satapathy et al. (2024)	Challenges in educational reform	Educational review	Structural barriers hinder implementation
11	Soratha & Sharma (2025)	Curriculum and pedagogy under NEP 2020	Educational analysis	Experiential learning improves educational relevance
12	Tungoe (2024)	Pedagogical development under NEP 2020	Curriculum study	Context-based pedagogy enhances learner engagement
13	Kaurav et al. (2020)	NEP 2020 implementation	Content analysis	Institutional support affects reform success
14	Prakash (2025)	IKS and educational policy	Conceptual study	IKS revitalizes culturally responsive education
15	Sinha & Bhardwaj (2025)	Integration of IKS in education	Policy review	Holistic learning requires contextual curriculum
16	Banwari (2025)	Pedagogical innovation under NEP 2020	Educational discussion	Teacher readiness is essential for curriculum reform
17	Manju (2026)	Teacher readiness for NEP 2020	Educational study	Professional development supports implementation

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun & Clarke (2006) procedures. The analysis involved repeated reading of the selected studies, systematic coding of key concepts, identification of recurring themes, and interpretation of relationships among policy, pedagogy, and curriculum implementation. The coding process was conducted iteratively to maintain thematic consistency and analytical coherence across the reviewed studies. The findings were subsequently cross-validated through comparisons among conceptual studies, empirical research, and policy documents to strengthen the credibility and interpretative rigor of the analysis.

To enhance methodological rigor, the study employed multiple academic databases, structured screening procedures, thematic triangulation, and iterative coding processes. Through this approach, the study developed a comprehensive understanding of how Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education can function as an integrative bridge between educational policy and classroom practice within the context of India's curriculum reform under NEP 2020.

Result

1. Indigenous Knowledge Systems as Foundations of Culturally Responsive Education

The reviewed studies consistently position Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) as an important foundation for developing culturally responsive and context-sensitive education within the framework of NEP 2020. Several studies emphasized that Indigenous knowledge enables students to connect formal learning with local culture, community identity, ethical values, and lived experiences (Mehta, 2025; Kumar, 2024; Puri, 2025). Unlike conventional curriculum approaches, which are often dominated by standardized, Western-oriented perspectives, IKS-oriented learning

promotes contextual understanding, sustainability, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and cultural continuity. This reflects NEP 2020's broader vision of developing holistic education that integrates intellectual, ethical, cultural, and social dimensions of learning.

The reviewed literature also indicates that integrating Indigenous knowledge enhances learner engagement and culturally meaningful learning experiences. Contextual pedagogies rooted in local traditions, storytelling, environmental practices, and community-based learning were found to improve student participation and cultural awareness (Padma & Pattammal, 2025; Sahu, 2025). These findings suggest that Indigenous Knowledge Systems should not be positioned merely as supplementary cultural content but rather as an integral component of curriculum design and pedagogical practice.

Collectively, the findings demonstrate that NEP 2020 provides a strong philosophical basis for culturally rooted education; however, the implementation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems within formal schooling remains uneven across institutions and regions. The reviewed studies consistently indicate that successful integration depends on curriculum flexibility, teacher preparedness, and institutional commitment to culturally responsive educational practices.

2. Value-Based Education and Holistic Learning Development

Another dominant theme emerging from the reviewed studies concerns the growing importance of value-based education in promoting holistic learner development. NEP 2020 strongly emphasizes ethical learning, empathy, social responsibility, and character formation as central goals of education (Government of India, 2020). Several studies highlighted that value-based education contributes not only to moral development but also to emotional intelligence, collaborative learning, and responsible citizenship (Isser et al., 2024).

The findings further reveal that value-based education is closely connected with Indigenous Knowledge Systems because both emphasize relational understanding, social harmony, cultural ethics, and community engagement. Rather than functioning as separate educational domains, the reviewed studies indicate that Indigenous knowledge and value-based education operate synergistically to support holistic, humanistic learning environments. Experiential learning, reflective pedagogy, and community-centered instructional approaches were repeatedly identified as effective strategies for integrating ethical values into classroom learning processes (Soratha & Sharma, 2025).

However, the reviewed literature also identifies several implementation challenges. Many schools continue to prioritize examination-oriented instruction and standardized academic achievement, limiting opportunities for reflective, ethical, and culturally grounded learning experiences. Consequently, although NEP 2020 promotes a holistic education philosophy, the practical integration of value-based learning into everyday classroom instruction remains inconsistent.

3. Teacher Agency and Curriculum Implementation

Teacher agency emerged as one of the most significant factors influencing the successful implementation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education. Several studies reviewed emphasized that teachers serve as critical

mediators between curriculum policy and classroom practice (Banwari, 2025; Kaurav et al (2020); Manju, 2026). Teachers are responsible for interpreting curriculum objectives, adapting pedagogical strategies, and contextualizing educational content according to learners' cultural and social realities (Tungoe, 2024).

The findings indicate that teachers with strong cultural awareness, pedagogical flexibility, and professional autonomy are better able to integrate Indigenous knowledge and value-based approaches into classroom instruction. Conversely, limited professional development opportunities, insufficient pedagogical guidance, and rigid curriculum structures frequently limit teachers' ability to effectively operationalize NEP 2020 (Mittal et al., 2022). Several reviewed studies further reported that many educators remain uncertain about how to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge Systems into formal teaching practices without compromising academic standards.

These findings highlight that curriculum reform cannot be achieved solely through policy transformation. Instead, effective implementation depends heavily on teacher preparedness, institutional support, and continuous professional development. Across the reviewed studies, teacher agency consistently emerged as a central mechanism for bridging policy intentions and pedagogical realities within culturally diverse educational settings.

4. Policy–Practice Gaps in NEP 2020 Implementation

A recurring theme across the reviewed literature concerns the gap between the philosophical vision of NEP 2020 and its practical implementation within schools. Although the policy strongly advocates culturally responsive, holistic, and multidisciplinary education, several studies identified substantial operational barriers that hinder effective implementation (Prakash, 2025; Rai et al., 2025; Satapathy et al., 2024). These barriers include limited institutional readiness, insufficient teacher training, a lack of contextual learning resources, and inconsistent interpretations of the curriculum across educational institutions.

The findings also reveal tensions between policy aspirations and existing educational structures. Many schools continue to operate within rigid examination-oriented systems that prioritize standardized achievement over contextual, experiential, and value-oriented learning. As a result, the implementation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education often remains symbolic rather than transformative. Several reviewed studies emphasized that educational reforms under NEP 2020 require not only curriculum revision but also broader structural transformation involving teacher education, assessment systems, institutional culture, and policy support mechanisms.

Overall, the reviewed studies collectively indicate that the successful integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education under NEP 2020 depends on the alignment among curriculum policy, teacher agency, institutional readiness, and culturally responsive pedagogical practices. Although NEP 2020 represents a progressive and culturally responsive educational framework, its long-term success ultimately depends on how effectively schools and educational institutions translate policy principles into sustainable classroom practices.

Discussion

1. Indigenous Knowledge Systems as Foundations of Culturally Responsive Education

The integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) within the formal curriculum of NEP 2020 holds transformative potential for Indian education. The findings from the reviewed studies consistently emphasize that IKS enables students to connect their formal learning with local cultural practices, community values, and lived experiences (Mehta, 2025; Kumar, 2024; Puri, 2025; Sinha & Bhardwaj, 2025). This alignment with students' own realities provides a foundation for culturally responsive education, where learning is directly linked to students' cultural identities and social contexts, consistent with culturally relevant pedagogy that emphasizes academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This shift from traditional Western-dominated curricula to a model that incorporates local knowledge systems aligns with the broader global movement to decolonize education and make it more relevant to marginalized communities.

The framework illustrated in Figure 1 captures this relationship between IKS and culturally responsive education, highlighting how Indigenous knowledge enriches the curriculum and empowers students by validating their cultural heritage. The findings underscore the significance of embedding Indigenous knowledge into mainstream education, making learning more relatable, meaningful, and accessible. This is supported by recent systematic evidence showing that the integration of Indigenous knowledge in primary schools can strengthen cultural relevance, learner identity, and contextual understanding when supported by appropriate pedagogy and institutional commitment (Da Silva et al., 2024).

This approach also supports NEP 2020's vision of developing a curriculum that is not merely academic but also ethical, community-oriented, and context-sensitive. However, the study also highlights that despite the policy's philosophical commitment to IKS, implementation barriers remain. Rigid educational structures, the dominance of standardized testing, and a lack of teacher preparedness impede the integration of IKS. Educators and policymakers must address these barriers to fully realize the true potential of IKS integration within Indian classrooms.

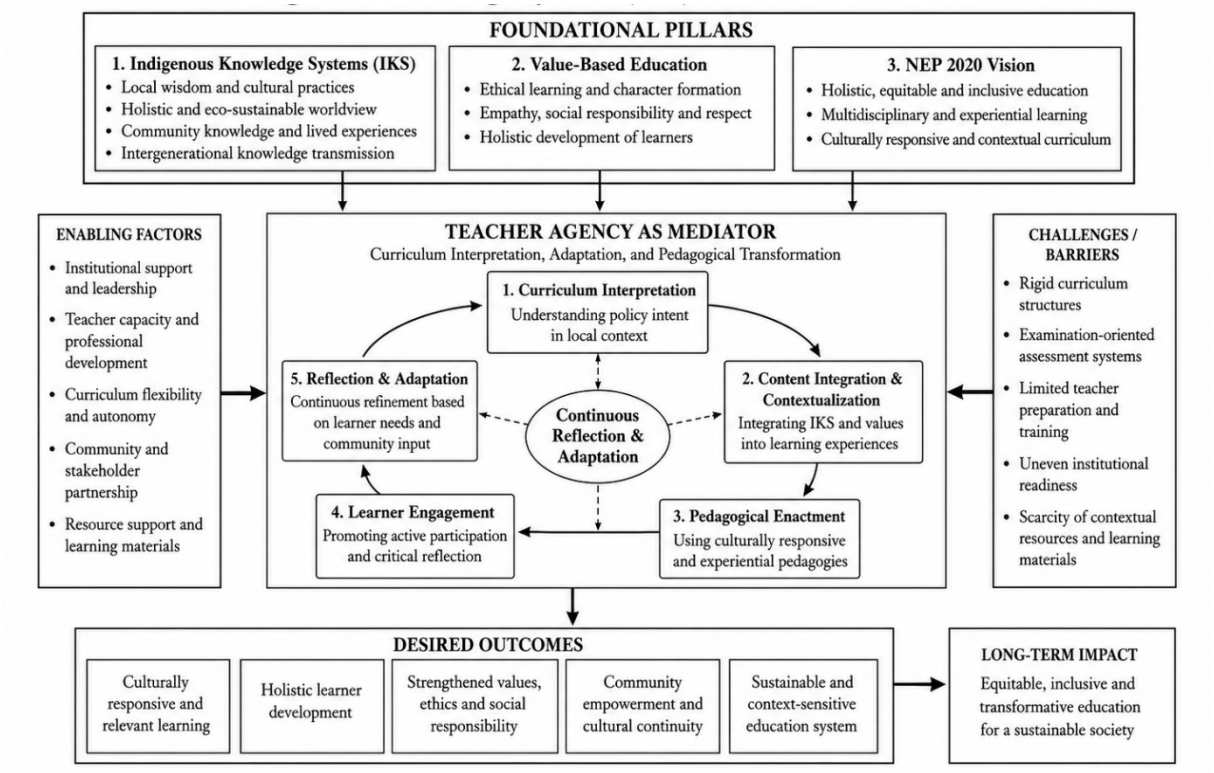


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Value-Based Education under NEP 2020

2. Value-Based Education and Holistic Learning Development

NEP 2020's emphasis on value-based education is crucial in shaping well-rounded, socially responsible individuals. The reviewed studies consistently demonstrate that value-based education contributes to moral development, ethical reasoning, empathy, and community engagement (Isser et al., 2024). This aligns with the holistic educational approach promoted by NEP 2020, which seeks to nurture both intellectual and moral capacities in students. Value-based education goes beyond cognitive development by supporting the formation of ethical awareness, empathy, responsible decision-making, and prosocial behavior, which are central to character education and social-emotional learning (Lickona, 1996; Durlak et al., 2011; Isser et al., 2024).

However, the practical integration of value-based education remains inconsistent across schools. Despite its philosophical integration in NEP 2020, the traditional focus on academic performance and exam-based assessments continues to dominate. The findings suggest that a shift in educational priorities is necessary to more effectively integrate value-based education. Schools must move away from a purely achievement-oriented focus toward one that values ethical development, social-emotional learning, and community engagement alongside academic success. Moreover, the reviewed studies emphasize that experiential learning and community-centered pedagogy are effective methods for fostering value-based education. However, these approaches are often underutilized because traditional teaching methodologies prioritize rote learning. There is a need for institutional support and curriculum flexibility to effectively integrate these experiential and values-driven learning models.

3. Teacher Agency and Curriculum Implementation

The concept of teacher agency emerges as central to the successful implementation of NEP 2020, particularly in integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems and value-based education. The reviewed studies consistently highlight that teachers are key agents in interpreting and enacting educational policies in ways that are relevant to their students and communities (Banwari, 2025; Manju, 2026). Teacher agency becomes the bridge between policy and classroom practice because curriculum reform does not move automatically from policy documents into teaching activities. Rather, teachers actively interpret policy principles, select culturally Teacher agency becomes the bridge between policy and classroom practice because curriculum reform does not move automatically from policy documents into pedagogical action. Rather, it depends on teachers' professional judgment, beliefs, contextual interpretation, and capacity to transform curriculum expectations into meaningful classroom practices (Biesta et al., 2015; Priestley et al., 2012). In the context of IKS and value-based education, this bridging role is especially important because NEP 2020 provides a broad philosophical direction, while classroom implementation requires contextual judgment, cultural sensitivity, and pedagogical creativity. Teachers therefore function not only as curriculum implementers but also as curriculum interpreters who connect national reform agendas with learners' local realities.

However, the findings also point to several challenges teachers face in implementing these reforms, including limited professional development, insufficient pedagogical training, and institutional barriers that restrict teachers' ability to exercise their agency fully. When teacher agency is weak or institutionally constrained, the integration of IKS and value-based education risks remaining symbolic, limited to policy statements or curriculum documents without meaningful transformation in classroom pedagogy. Without ongoing teacher education programs focused on culturally responsive teaching and value-based education, teachers may struggle to transform Indigenous knowledge and ethical values into teachable content, reflective activities, and community-connected learning experiences. The study therefore underscores the need for comprehensive professional development programs that empower teachers to act as mediators of policy, facilitators of holistic education, and designers of culturally grounded learning. These programs should not only enhance teachers' conceptual understanding of NEP 2020 but also strengthen their practical capacity to adapt curriculum content, assessment practices, and classroom interactions to local cultural and ethical contexts.

4. Policy–Practice Gaps in NEP 2020 Implementation

The gap between the philosophical goals of NEP 2020 and its practical implementation within schools remains a significant challenge. This reflects a broader issue in education policy implementation, where policy success depends not only on formal policy design but also on how school actors interpret, negotiate, and enact policy within local institutional contexts (Spillane et al., 2002; Viennet & Pont, 2017). While the policy outlines a progressive vision for culturally responsive and inclusive education, several studies in the review highlighted the operational barriers that hinder its effective realization (Rai et al., 2025; Satapathy et al., 2024). The persistence of exam-centric education systems, institutional inertia, and inadequate support for teachers are major obstacles to the reform's success. These barriers often result in a system that prioritizes standardized academic achievement over the holistic, value-based, and culturally relevant learning experiences promoted by NEP 2020.

The framework in Figure 1 reflects these challenges. It shows that educators and policymakers need to shift not only curriculum design but also assessment systems, teacher training, and institutional policies to realize the goals of NEP 2020 fully. The study reveals that policymakers have embraced IKS and value-based education at the policy level. However, traditional practices that focus narrowly on examination results continue to undermine their integration into the classroom. Thus, educators, institutions, and policymakers need to address this policy-practice gap through systemic reforms that de-emphasize standardized testing and focus more on experiential, interdisciplinary, and culturally grounded pedagogies.

Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights, it has some limitations. First, the study uses secondary data and existing literature, which may not fully capture the practical challenges that teachers and students face when implementing IKS and value-based education. Future researchers could conduct empirical studies to explore how teachers apply these concepts in diverse classrooms across India. Second, this study focuses on literature published between 2020-2026, which may exclude earlier foundational works that provide further depth to the discussion. Future studies could expand the scope of the literature by including older studies to contextualize the evolution of Indigenous education and value-based learning in India. Finally, this study proposes a framework specifically designed for the Indian context, so future researchers still need to examine its applicability to other educational systems in the Global South. Comparative research could broaden understanding of how educators can adapt and apply similar frameworks across countries.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates the transformative potential of integrating Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) and value-based education within the framework of NEP 2020, with a particular focus on primary education. The findings highlight that while NEP 2020 provides a strong philosophical foundation for a culturally responsive and holistic education, practical implementation faces significant challenges, including rigid curriculum structures, teacher preparedness, and institutional support. The proposed conceptual framework offers a clear pathway for overcoming these barriers by emphasizing the interconnection between teacher agency, curriculum flexibility, and institutional readiness.

For primary education, the successful realization of NEP 2020 depends on addressing the policy-practice gap, empowering teachers, and fostering a system that values ethical development alongside academic success. By integrating IKS and value-based education, Indian primary education can move towards a more inclusive, culturally relevant model that better prepares students for the complexities of a globalized world while respecting local cultures. Future research should explore the practical application of this framework in primary education settings by examining how teachers can effectively integrate Indigenous knowledge and value-based learning into early education curricula across diverse educational contexts in India.

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