



How Book Banks can Help Meet the Outcomes Desired by the Policymakers of NEP 2020

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Abstract:

Academic libraries plays vital role in supporting students not only in their academic pursuits but also in their overall development. One significant initiative for weaker section taken by libraries is the book bank service. This helps economically weaker students. However, for holistic development, librarians have to play a significant role. This paper discusses briefly about teacher education colleges and their unique needs with respect to book bank facility. The genesis of book bank facility and take further as to how the objectives of NEP 2020 can be partly fulfilled by the book bank strategy.

Keywords: *B.Ed. College Library, Book Bank Service, NEP 2020.*

Introduction:

Academic libraries play a vital role in supporting students not only in their academic pursuits but also in their overall development. Dr. S.R. Ranganathan's principle of "every reader his or her book" emphasizes the importance of ensuring that each student has access to the resources they need. In line with this philosophy, colleges often provide concessions in fees and scholarships as part of their commitment to educational support.

Library services, in particular, are designed to assist economically weaker students. One significant initiative is the Book Bank Scheme, which enables students to borrow textbooks for extended periods, thereby reducing financial barriers to learning.

Furthermore, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the need for information professionals to adopt multidimensional roles at all levels. To meet the requirements of NEP 2020 and to foster the holistic development of students, librarians must evolve their services. Expanding and strengthening schemes such as the Book Bank is one effective way to align library practices with the vision of inclusive and equitable education.

Review of Literature:

Book bank services have long been recognized as a crucial support mechanism in academic libraries, particularly for students from economically weaker sections. The literature consistently highlights their role in promoting equitable access to learning resources, while the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 calls for librarians to adopt multidimensional roles that foster holistic student development.

User Demand and Satisfaction:

Garate and Garaate (2017) examined user satisfaction with book bank services and found them to be in high demand among students. Their study emphasized the need for librarians to continually innovate and improve these services. This aligns with NEP 2020's emphasis on student-centric approaches, where information professionals must adapt services to meet evolving learner needs.

Best Practices in Academic Libraries

Wagmoode Shahaji (2013) documented best practices at Sonubhau Baswant College Library, showing how book bank services, alongside other initiatives, increased overall library usage. Such practices illustrate how libraries can serve as hubs of inclusive learning, resonating with NEP 2020's vision of libraries as active partners in academic and personal growth.

Technological Applications and Cost-Effectiveness

Hussain (199*) explored the use of CDS/ISIS Version 3.07 for managing book bank distribution. He highlighted the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of book banks, particularly in resource-constrained institutions. This technological dimension reflects NEP 2020's call for digital integration and innovation in educational services, ensuring that access to resources is both scalable and sustainable.

Together, these studies underscore the importance of book bank services as:

- Equity-driven initiatives that ensure every student has access to essential textbooks.
- Catalysts for engagement, increasing library usage and fostering a culture of learning.
- Technologically adaptable systems, capable of evolving with digital tools and policy demands.

In the context of NEP 2020, librarians are expected to move beyond traditional roles and embrace multidimensional responsibilities—from resource management to student mentorship and digital facilitation. Strengthening book bank schemes not only addresses financial barriers but also supports the policy's broader goals of holistic, inclusive, and equitable education.

With my professional experience, wherein I am providing book bank services to the students of my college, I felt that the service is very well received by the students. While studying the NEP 2020 and how libraries can play an important role in fulfilling the objectives set by the policymakers, I felt that while the library provides necessary academic and Reference books as well as books for additional reading, a book bank developed towards holistic development of students could play a vital role in meeting the objectives of the policymakers. This will also ensure that the students get what they want in terms of academics while ensuring that they learn the allied topics towards value education, innovation, critical thinking as well as lateral thinking. The curiosity among students can be ignited to make them learn deeper in to the subjects of their choice may it be history, science and technology or any other.

During this paper, we will understand briefly about teacher education colleges and their unique needs with respect to book bank facility. The genesis of book bank facility and take further as to how the objectives of NEP 2020 can be partly fulfilled by the book bank strategy.

National Educational Policy 2020 and role of Library:

When we read the policy document, following points get highlighted as sort of the objectives the policy makers have in mind.

- NEP 2020 emphasizes equitable and inclusive education.

- It envisions a future where no child is deprived of learning resources due to financial or social barriers.
- The policy highlights universal access to quality education, with special focus on marginalized communities.
- Extensive use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students, and educational planning and management.

Further, the objectives could be drilled down to

- Developing multidisciplinary thinkers
- Flexible approach
- Enquiry driven education
- Discovery oriented teaching
- Developing creativity
- Discussion based teaching
- Learning centric teaching
- Developing critical thinking

The Challenge – Access to Learning Materials

- Despite free schooling, many students struggle with the cost of textbooks and Reference materials.
- Libraries exist, but they often lack structured systems for continuous access.

This gap creates inequality: some students thrive with abundant resources, while others fall behind.

Expectation from library

The library should have material that answer the questions the children have, the answers must be available quickly and it should provide necessary supplementary information to do further research, study and quench the thrust of the children.

The NEP also envisages that the children will have the opportunity to read and learn from the original stories of the Panchatantra, Jataka, Hitopadesh and other fun fables and inspiring tales from the Indian tradition and learn about their influences on global literature.

The librarian can actively provide bibliotherapy services to nurture favourable traits and control, rein in the unfavourable ones in order to fulfil the aim of NEP in developing well rounded creative individuals

While all the above applies to every school and college, the Teacher Education Colleges offering B.Ed. courses do have specific needs as they not only have students who want to learn their discipline, but also create future educators who could ignite the necessary spark in the young children whom they are going to nurture.

Let us briefly understand the Teacher education colleges.

Teacher Education College:

Bachelor of Education is an undergraduate academic degree which prepares students for work as a teacher in

schools. A Bachelor of Education program typically lasts two to four years and combines both coursework and practical experience in educational settings. The curriculum is designed to provide foundational knowledge in pedagogy, educational psychology, teaching methodologies, and subject-specific training. Graduates of this program are equipped with the skills necessary to foster a supportive and effective learning environment for their students.

The coursework is complemented with practical training wherein the students visit designated schools and conduct classes in a real teaching environment. They are also expected to carry out the tasks that would help them become teachers in the schools after completion of the course. This means that for a significant period of their course, the students are away from the institute and as such have to make specific efforts to access the resources like library facility from their parent institute. It may also be noted that the typical intake of the BEd colleges is 50 per year, a small number compared to other colleges.

The above unique characteristics of the BEd course, makes it difficult for the students to frequently visit the library for issue and return of the academic books thereby the need to have a facility wherein they can retain the core academic books for a long term and still visit the library for additional resources as needed. Further, the availability of books specifically catering to specific academic course, makes it easy for the students to map the required books with their courses.

While we understand below the genesis of the book bank, and it typically points out to support the needy instead of all the students, we must also understand that unlike the students for other bachelor degrees in different colleges, the BEd students are not within the college premises all the time. Further since the number of students is small as compared to other colleges, it is easier for the BEd colleges to issue relevant books for long term, even superseding the typical objectives of book bank.

Origins of Book Bank in India:

- The Book Bank Scheme was first introduced by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in the late 1960s as part of its efforts to democratize access to higher education.
- The scheme aimed to provide sets of textbooks to students from economically weaker sections (EWS), allowing them to borrow books for an entire academic year rather than just a few weeks.
- This initiative was rooted in Dr. S.R. Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science, especially the principle "*Every reader his or her book*", emphasizing equitable access to knowledge.

Maharashtra's Role:

- Maharashtra quickly adopted the scheme in its state universities and affiliated colleges, making it one of the earliest states to operationalize book banks.
- Colleges such as Sonubhau Baswant College (Shahaji Wagmoode, 2013) documented best practices where book banks significantly increased library usage and student engagement.
- The state government provided financial assistance and guidelines to institutions for establishing book banks, often prioritizing professional courses like engineering, medicine, and law, where textbooks were expensive.
- By the 1980s and 1990s, many Maharashtra universities (e.g., University of Mumbai, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Nagpur University) had formalized book bank services, often supported by UGC grants.

Policy and Expansion:

- The National Education Policy (NEP) 1986 and later NEP 2020 reinforced the importance of inclusive access to resources, encouraging libraries to expand book bank schemes.
- Maharashtra's adoption of book banks was not only a financial support measure but also a social equity initiative, ensuring that students from rural and marginalized backgrounds could pursue higher education without being burdened by textbook costs.

Significance:

- Equity in education: Book banks reduced the financial barrier for students from low-income families.
- Holistic development: By ensuring access to core texts, students could focus on learning rather than financial constraints.
- Sustainability: Book banks promoted resource sharing, reducing duplication and encouraging collective use of academic materials.

As we have seen the nature of BEd colleges and typical objectives of book bank facilities, BEd colleges have found innovative ways to support the book bank facility wherein the students get what they want while the institute is not burdened heavily.

Below are some of the ways this is managed.

Self funding:

Any service provided by the library requires financial help. Book bank service requires money for collection development, repair, binding of books etc. Few colleges manage money source from themselves. Some colleges have practice to charge minimum amount for maintenance purpose from the student. Some colleges collect money as deposit and end of the year they deduct money and return the funds. Some colleges get donations from different sources. Some colleges also request the well to do students to donate one additional set for the economically weaker students.

University Book Bank:

The University of Mumbai has implemented a series of initiatives aimed at supporting underprivileged students, reflecting its dedication to educational equity. The Book Bank Scheme at Mumbai University aims to provide financial assistance to students from SC/ST/DT/NT categories to help them access necessary textbooks. The scheme is funded by the University and distributed to affiliated colleges. Students can borrow books from the list of books purchased under this scheme, with one book per subject. It is important for students to return the entire set of books within ten days of completing their final examination. If any books are lost or damaged, students must replace them with new books or pay the current cost plus any fines as directed by the authority.

Siddhivinayak Book Bank Scheme:

The Siddhivinayak Book Bank is a charitable initiative run by the Shree Siddhivinayak Ganpati Mandir Trust in Prabhadevi, Mumbai, which provides free textbooks to economically disadvantaged students from Class 11 to postgraduate levels.

What book banks can do?

- A Book Bank acts as a bridge between NEP's vision and ground reality.

- It is a structured system where students can borrow textbooks and Reference books for an entire academic year, just like a long-term library loan.
- This ensures continuity of learning, reduces financial burden, and promotes reuse and sustainability.

Alignment with NEP 2020 Goals

- **Equity & Inclusion:** Book Banks directly support NEP’s goal of reducing disparities in access.
- **Holistic Learning:** By providing not just textbooks but also supplementary materials (storybooks, Reference guides), Book Banks encourage multidisciplinary learning.
- **Digital Integration:** NEP 2020 emphasizes digital resources; Book Banks can evolve into hybrid models—physical books plus e-book lending.
- **Community Participation:** NEP encourages collaboration; Book Banks can be supported by alumni donations, NGOs, and local communities
- Book Banks transform schools into resource-rich ecosystems.
- They embody NEP 2020’s spirit of equity, sustainability, and lifelong learning.

As we can see the objectives of NEP 2020, the aim is to provide multidisciplinary education in a flexible manner. It is therefore an imperative that the libraries must adapt to the changing needs of the students. It can also be seen that there is a possibility of students electing to study diverse subjects putting a significant strain on the library budget and resources. It thus becomes necessary that the librarians, especially where they are understaffed, curate a customizable book bank and try to issue these books to the students on the long term basis issue books on different topics through book bank. This would help the students have access to appropriate resources and also the libraries to manage the upcoming workload.

As per NEP requirement make available number of copies of stories of the panchtantra, jatka, hitopadesh for book bank service

Librarian can suggest books as point of bibliotherapy as per student and make available on the book bank

Librarian can offer a greater number of books to divyang students.

Recommendations:

1. One objection of book bank is it reduces number of issue returns books, but if librarian is proactive then students borrow books on card other than educational books and textbooks .eg arrange book exhibition, arrange book talk, arrange book review session
2. Funding problem can solved by charging minimum amount for maintaince.
3. Librarian can request students to donate their used books

“When books circulate, knowledge multiplies. NEP 2020 and Book Banks together ensure no child is left behind.”

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Citation: Bhosekar, Dr. P. A., (2026) “How Book Banks can Help Meet the Outcomes Desired by the Policymakers of NEP 2020”, *Bharati International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research & Development (BIJMRD)*, Vol-4, Issue-01(1), January-2026.