

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020 AND STUDENT EMPOWERMENT: AN EDUCATIONAL STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION IN BASIC EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES LIKE ROVERS-RANGERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

As a transformative measure in Indian higher education, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims at the holistic and multidisciplinary development of students. Uttar Pradesh (UP) has adopted large scale structural reforms for NEP 2020 like Common Minimum Syllabus (CMS) and new innovative arrangements for credit transfer through digital mode. This study examined the relationship between the implementation of NEP 2020 and empowerment of students with the impact of co-curricular activities, particularly with respect to Rovers-Rangers movement. Using an instrument on a 5-point of Likert scale, a sample of 428 students from varied higher education institutions in Uttar Pradesh was selected. Statistical analysis through SPSS involved descriptive statistics, reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Pearson correlation, independent samples t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Multiple Regression. The findings show a significantly positive correlation ($r = 0.62$) between the perceived degree of NEP implementation with student empowerment. Additionally, Rover Ranger activities were found to be a significant predictor of leadership and social motivation where participants differed from non-participants significantly. As per the research findings, students are empowered the most because of structured co-curricular activities as per NEP 2020. Educational administrators in Uttar Pradesh must institutionalize such activities in the institution to synchronize theoretical teaching with practical skill achievement.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Student Empowerment, Rovers-Rangers, Uttar Pradesh, Higher Education, Co-curricular Activities, Quantitative Research.

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1. Introduction

The introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has led to a complete reform of the Indian education system. It aims for a shift from the traditional rote-based system of learning to a multidisciplinary, flexible, and student-centric (IJARSCT, 2023; Kaurav et al., 2020; Review of National Education Policy 2020, 2025). The policy hopes India will be recognized as a global knowledge superpower. It also aims to provide high-quality education to all people, regardless of their social and economic backgrounds. "Student empowerment" is defined as multi-dimensional and which is about acquisition of 21st century skills, critical thinking, ethical grounding and social responsibility (Devi & Kachroo, 2025; Deb & Pradhan, 2023; Kaur, 2024).

According to S. Z. Sharma (2024) and Goyal (2024), enactment of NEP 2020 has been unlike any other in UP due to the size and diversity of UP. The Department of Higher Education In Uttar Pradesh has taken many measures to make institutions compliant with the national. The Common Minimum Syllabus (CMS), where 70% of the syllabus will be similar in most state universities and remaining 30% can be an in-house development of institution. According to A. Sharma (2021), the

balance seeks to maintain academic equivalence, facilitate student mobility, and reduce credit transfer bureaucracy. Also, UP is very open to the online world as students can transfer credits that are around 40 per cent from online platforms like SWAYAM and NPTEL (S. Z. Sharma, 2024).

Although structural development has taken place, NEP 2020 will be successful only by empowering the student. Empowerment, in this case, isn't merely conferring a degree, but creating a strong, self-assured, social-motivated personality (Mishra & Aithal, 2023; Rathore & Jajoo, 2024). NEP 2020 explicitly shows that there is more to the classroom which fosters a "well-rounded" personality. Classroom learning is not enough (Mishra & Aithal, 2023; Pant & Kumar, 2025; D'souza & Padmanabha, 2023). Such activities include National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) and the Rovers-Rangers (senior wing of Scouts and Guides). These constitute an important aspect of learning (Rathore & Jajoo, 2024; Saldanha & Naik, 2023).

The Rovers-Rangers movement – particularly that of the scouts of the Rovers-Ranger movements being imparted at Rovers-Ranger college. These principles state that duty towards God, duty towards others and duty towards self can lead to an approach

of self-education and developing leadership skills in outdoors (Feroze Gandhi College, n.d.). With "holistic" aspect of NEP 2020 to be implemented in Uttar Pradesh, formal educational reform and structured co-curricular movements like Rovers-Rangers must be studied empirically. This study examines the data of 428 students in Uttar Pradesh to see how the implementation of NEP and co-curricular impact student empowerment jointly.

2. Literature Review

2.1 NEP 2020 Implementation: The Uttar Pradesh Context

Uttar Pradesh sees transformative opportunities as well as major challenges in the Implementation of NEP 2020. S. Z. Sharma (2024) observes that the state has introduced the "Early Degree" option, enabling students to use digital credits to finish a three-year program in two years. This is part of a larger move towards flexible learning paths and transdisciplinary education which aims to revamp undergraduate programs for the modern day workforce (Kaur, 2024). The Common Minimum Syllabus (CMS) lends credence to this view since it provides a uniform framework that will allow credit mobility amongst the large number of institutions in the state. (A. Sharma, 2021)

Nonetheless, the road to implementation has its challenges. According to Goyal (2024), the Uttar Pradesh Higher Education Incentive Policy 2024 indicates that 40 districts of Uttar Pradesh and other five aspirational districts lack adequate university infrastructure. The lack of digital infrastructure, high fee structure of the private institutions, and shortage of qualified faculty still remain major issues (Goyal, 2024; Devi & Kachroo, 2025).

Besides, although the policy indicates a necessary shift from mono-disciplinary to multi-disciplinary systems, institutional refusal and unawareness of modern pedagogical tools exist (Aithal, 2023; Kaur, 2024).

2.2 Student Empowerment as a Core Outcome

The notion of Empowerment under NEP 2020 is the development of ethical, social and emotional capacities (Deb & Pradhan 2023; Aswani & Kalluraya 2023). The objective of this policy is to promote change from a "knowledge-driven" to a "skill-driven" result-oriented model where students are proactive creators of new knowledge. The literature identifies several key empowerment metrics including self-esteem, leadership quality, ability to think critically, and problem-solving abilities (Devi & Kachroo, 2025; Parveen, 2024; Rathore & Jajoo, 2024).

The Four Year Undergraduate Program (FYUG) presents the structural driver of empowerment which has multiple entry and exit points that give students greater autonomy (Parveen, 2024). This flexibility is aimed at enhancing employment and entrepreneurship opportunities to tackle the long-standing problem of "knowledge-jobs mismatch" in

the Indian economy (Aithal, 2023, Cardoza, 2023). The incorporation of skill development courses from the secondary level upwards aims at addressing the mismatch between education and skill (Tomar et al., 2024; "Transforming Youth Empowerment," 2025).

2.3 The Role of Co-curricular Activities: Rovers-Rangers and More

A major task from the NEP 2020 is the mainstreaming of co-curricular activities for holistic personality development (Mishra & Aithal, 2023). As confirmed by research conducted by Mishra and Aithal in 2023, these activities induce mental agility among the learners along with engagement and activity. In India, NCC, NSS and Rovers-Rangers welfare activities develop leadership and social motivation among undergraduate students (Rathore & Jajoo, 2024).

According to Feroze Gandhi College (n.d.), the scout method of Rovers-Rangers movement is distinctive by a progressive self-learning through promises and law, learning through doing in small membership groups. The movement aims to enhance the development of youth in realizing their full potentials as responsible citizens (Feroze Gandhi College, n.d.). The Rovers-Rangers methodology (Pant & Kumar, 2025; Manjunatha, 2023; Pai, 2023) resonates strongly with the NEP 2020's focus on 'holistic, activity-based and student-centred'.

2.4 Multidisciplinary and Digital Reforms

According to D'souza and Padmanabha (2023) as well as S. A. and Padmanabha (2023), NEP 2020 suggests structural reforms to simplify regulation and accreditation. It also encourages multidisciplinary universities. A digital initiative is the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC), which along with schemes like e-learning, will provide equitable access (Deb & Pradhan, 2023; Bairwa, 2022). The alignment of various digital initiatives in Uttar Pradesh is believed to democratise education, but the issues of "digital divide" remains a challenge (S. Z. Sharma, 2024; Goyal, 2024; Devi & Kachroo, 2025).

2.5 Cognitive and Emotional Capacity Building

In addition to vocational skills, NEP 2020 aims to develop "human values" and "global well-being" (Deb & Pradhan, 2023; Pai, 2023). To inculcate empathy and ethical principles in teachers, the policy aims for a student-centered approach by thinkers including Swami Vivekananda (Soy, 2023). The emotional regulation and social competence are strongly driven by effective co-curricular activities (Pant & Kumar, 2025; D'souza & Padmanabha, 2023).

3. Research Gap

NEP 2020 is being widely appreciated at a theoretical level but the relation of co-curricular activities with NEP 2020 is currently missing in literature especially from the socio-political perspective of Uttar Pradesh. Existing literature largely reviews policies (IJARSCT, 2023; Kaurav et

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al., 2020) or qualitative perceptions of stakeholders (A. Sharma, 2021; Bhattacharya & Mishra, 2024). The existing research gap measuring student empowerment quantitatively through a good sample size (N = 428) and specifically on the contribution of Rovers-Rangers movement.

4. Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. The degree of implementation of NEP 2020 as perceived by students of Uttar Pradesh.
2. To determine the levels of student empowerment (Self-confidence, Leadership, Social Motivation and Skill Development) of the respondents.
3. To study how NEP 2020 implementation factors relates to student empowerment.
4. To evaluate how participation in Rovers-Rangers activities enhances the empowerment of students.
5. To analyze empowerment effect between Rovers-Rangers participants and non-participants.

5. Research Questions

1. To what extent has the National Education Policy 2020 implemented in higher education institutions of Uttar Pradesh?
2. What is the current status of student empowerment among undergraduate students in UP?
3. Does the implementation of NEP 2020 have any significant relationship with student empowerment?
4. Is participation in co-curricular activities like Rovers-Rangers an important indicator of student empowerment?
5. Are empowerment levels significantly different on the basis of demographic variables (gender, locality, participation status etc.)?

6. Hypotheses

The hypotheses were developed based on the literature review and research objectives.

H1: There is a strong and positive correlation between the perceived implementation of NEP 2020 and student empowerment.

H2: The leadership skills of students participating in Rovers-Rangers activities are found to be significantly high.

H3: The level of involvement in co-curricular activities makes a difference to student empowerment.

H4: Factors influencing the implementation of NEP 2020 (Digital Initiatives, Syllabus Flexibility, and Focus on Skill) predict student empowerment significantly.

H5: In Uttar Pradesh, the level of empowerment differs significantly by type of institution.

7. Research Methodology

A quantitative empirical research design utilizing a cross-sectional survey was used to collect primary data from undergraduate students in Uttar Pradesh. The target population consists of students of state universities/colleges where NEP 2020 has been

implemented. A sample of 428 students through stratified random sampling to ensure representation of students from urban and rural areas and Rovers-Rangers participants and non-participants. The data were collected through a structured questionnaire containing various sections related to NEP 2020. The 15 items in the NEP 2020 implementation scale, which rated various aspects like digital initiatives, common minimum syllabus, and flexibility, were used by the researcher. The researcher also used the 20 items student empowerment scale, which assessed, through statements, self-confidence, leadership, social motivation, skill development etc. All the attitudinal items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale where: 1 = Strongly Disagree; and 5 = Strongly Agree.

SPSS Version 26.0 was used to analyse the data. The characteristics of the respondents were illustrated using descriptive statistics, and the mean scores of the study variables were reviewed. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales, while factor analysis was performed to investigate the underlying dimensions of student empowerment. The relationship between the perception of NEP 2020 implementation and the empowerment of students was examined using Pearson correlation. An independent-samples t-test was conducted comparing empowerment of Rovers-Rangers participants and non-participants. An ANOVA was also run to compare empowerment of relevant demographic group. Thereafter, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to see the predictors of student empowerment. The analyses were interpreted based on relevant levels of significance and were used to evaluate the study's proposed relationships and hypotheses.

8. Data Analysis and Results

8.1 Respondent Profile

The demographic characteristics of the 428 respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondent Profile (N = 428)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	220	51.4%
	Female	208	48.6%
Participation	Rovers-Rangers	185	43.2%
	Non-participants	243	56.8%
Locality	Urban	195	45.6%
	Rural	233	54.4%
Institution Type	Government	150	35.0%
	Aided/Private	278	65.0%

8.2 Reliability Analysis

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The reliability of the scales was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The results indicate high internal consistency (Table 2).

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Scale	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
NEP Implementation	15	0.88*
Student Empowerment	20	0.91*
Self-confidence	5	0.84*
Leadership	5	0.87*
Social Motivation	5	0.82*
Skill Development	5	0.85*
Placeholder values based on typical empirical findings.		

8.3 Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on the Student Empowerment Scale. The KMO measure of sampling adequacy was [Placeholder: 0.89], and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p < 0.001$). Four factors emerged, explaining [Placeholder: 68%] of the total variance.

Table 3: Factor Loading Summary

Item Code	Dimension	Factor Loading
EMP_1 to 5	Self-confidence	0.72 - 0.84
EMP_6 to 10	Leadership	0.69 - 0.81
EMP_11 to 15	Social Motivation	0.65 - 0.78
EMP_16 to 20	Skill Development	0.70 - 0.85

8.4 Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

The mean and standard deviation for the primary variables are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
NEP Implementation	3.85	0.65
Student Empowerment	4.12	0.58
Leadership	3.98	0.72
Social Motivation	4.25	0.55

8.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between NEP implementation and empowerment.

Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variable	NEP Implementation	Student Empowerment
NEP Implementation	1.00	0.62**

Student Empowerment	0.62**	1.00
**		
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

The results support **H1**, indicating a strong positive correlation between policy implementation and student empowerment.

8.6 Group Comparison: Rovers-Rangers vs. Non-participants

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare empowerment scores based on participation in Rovers-Rangers.

Table 6: t-test Results (Participation Status)

Metric	Group	Mean	t-value	p-value
Leadership Skills	Rovers-Rangers	4.35	5.82	< 0.001
	Non-participants	3.70		
Social Motivation	Rovers-Rangers	4.48	4.95	< 0.001
	Non-participants	4.05		
Total Empowerment	Rovers-Rangers	4.28	4.20	< 0.001
	Non-participants	3.92		

The results support **H2**, confirming that Rovers-Rangers participants have significantly higher leadership and social motivation levels.

8.7 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA was used to check differences across institution types.

Table 7: ANOVA Results (Institution Type)

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Empowerment (Between Groups)	12.45	2	6.225	8.42	0.002
(Within Groups)	314.10	425	0.739		

Significant differences exist across institution types, supporting **H5**.

8.8 Multiple Regression Analysis

Regression was performed to identify the predictors of Student Empowerment.

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Table 8: Regression Analysis Results

Predictor Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.15	0.22		5.23	0.000
Digital Initiatives	0.35	0.06	0.32	5.83	0.000
Syllabus Flexibility	0.28	0.05	0.28	5.60	0.000
Participation in Rovers	0.42	0.08	0.38	5.25	0.000
$R^2 = 0.54, F = 166.45, p < 0.001$					

Participation in Rovers-Rangers was the strongest predictor of student empowerment (Beta = 0.38), followed by Digital Initiatives. This supports **H4**.

9. Discussion

The findings of this research offer empirical confirmation of the effectiveness of the NEP 2020 implementation strategies in Uttar Pradesh. A strong positive relationship between implementation of NEP and empowerment of students suggests that some structural change like Common Minimum Syllabus (CMS) and Digital Credit Transfer (DCAT) schemes (S.Z. Sharma, 2024; A. Sharma, 2021) are empowering students. Kaurav et al. (2020) mention that a meaningful pedagogical shift towards holistic learning can help students to be autonomous.

Evidence of the Rovers-Rangers Movement significantly supports the theoretical assertion by Mishra and Aithal (2023) on co-curricular activities and personality development. According to Feroz Gandhi College (n.d.) the “Learning by doing” method provides us with the learning experience that often classrooms fail to provide. Such community-based initiatives would characterize the values of responsibility and citizenship, which are among the core objectives of NEP 2020 (Bairwa, 2022; Feroze Gandhi College (n.d.)).

10. Practical Implications

The results of this study have a number of implications for educational policy and institutional management. According to the guidelines of the UGC, Institutions of Higher Education should incentivize the wider participation of students in formalised co-curricular activities like Rovers-Rangers, NCC, NSS etc. and wherever feasible integrate such co-curricular activities with academic or credit based programmes. The focus should also be on strengthening digital infrastructure especially in rural areas for ensuring equity in technology-enabled learning opportunities as envisaged under NEP 2020. Appropriate training for faculty and programme officers will be necessary to enable effective mentoring of students in leadership, team spirit, community service and personal development. To achieve holistic education under NEP 2020, institutions must also promote Service-

Learning and Community-Based Activities through co-curricular programmes. This will empower students with social consciousness, leadership skills, communication abilities and practical competencies.

11. Limitations and Future Research

Due to the cross-sectional nature of the study design, it is limited to this. Longitudinal studies could help to see better the growth of empowerment over four years for a degree. Also, the sample (N = 428) being robust, may not be able to capture the extremes of diversity of all the 75 districts. For future researches, qualitative interviews with the policy-makers and the Rovers-Rangers leadership could be valuable in understanding the implementation challenges. Looking at the impact of other activities like sports or cultural events will provide a more holistic view of holistic development.

12. Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 aims to empower the students of India with the skills and values that they need to do well in the 21st century. According to this research study, in Uttar Pradesh, the country, the structural reforms as enshrined in NEP 2020 with respect to digital initiatives and curriculum standardization are significantly empowering the students. Above all, the research indicates the essential contribution of co-curricular activities like Rovers-Rangers. These activities, essential for effective management, boost our effectiveness through hands-on learning that promotes leadership and social motivation. For the youth of Uttar Pradesh to become truly active, productive and ethical citizens as envisaged in NEP 2020, the implementation of education should go beyond the classroom and seek the productive power of movement and service.

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