

## **Reimagining Elementary Education: Narrative Pedagogies for Value-Based Learning under NEP 2020**

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### **Abstract**

The NEP 2020 highlights the importance of storytelling as a pedagogical tool to foster moral values, cultural awareness, and empathy among learners. It emphasizes that storytelling is a powerful medium to teach new concepts, encourage imagination, and develop problem-solving skills in children. In today's value fragmented society, education at elementary level must go beyond academic achievements to nurture ethically responsible and emotionally intelligent individuals. This conceptual study examines how Indian narrative pedagogies, especially the storytelling traditions of *Panchatantra* can be utilized as a model for providing value-based education (VBE) in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Based on narrative methodology, this study examines the *Panchatantra* story "*The Loss of Friends*" (Mitra-Bheda) critically. A multi layered narrative involving manipulation, trust, and the moral ramifications of strained relationships. Young students are encouraged to reflect upon challenges like loyalty, betrayal, empathy, and critical judgment all of which are important values highlighted in NEP's concept of holistic education by engaging themselves in such culturally grounded but morally complicated stories. This study also explores how storytelling is an experiential and affective pedagogical tool, aligns with the policy's focus on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) and moral reasoning. Additionally, it examines NCERT and CBSE's initiatives to foster value education through narrative integration in all educational curricula. In order to restore Indian narrative traditions as an effective means of developing morally conscious, value-driven citizens during the formative years of learning, the study concludes with practical recommendations for educators and curriculum designers.

*Keywords:* Elementary Education, Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), Narrative Pedagogy, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Value-Based Education (VBE)

## **Introduction**

Indian education has always combined intellectual growth with moral and ethical instruction. The notion that true education encompasses more than just imparting knowledge has been supported by prominent educators and philosophers such as J. Krishnamurti and Mahatma Gandhi. They contend that education ought to be an introspective process that cultivates emotional development, self-awareness, and critical thinking. The tenets of NEP 2020, which promotes value-oriented education that equips students for responsible citizenship, are strongly correlated with these values.

Value-Based Education (VBE) is more important than ever in a world where academic achievement is the primary focus of education. According to the Ministry of Education (2020), the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 highlights the importance of education in promoting holistic development, which encompasses not only intellectual advancement but also

the development of fundamental human values like empathy, respect, integrity, and responsibility. This method guarantees that students acquire the ethical and emotional intelligence necessary to function in a complex world, in addition to the skills necessary for academic success.

In this situation, narrative pedagogy i.e., the teaching of values through the use of stories proves to be a useful instrument. Important moral lessons have long been taught through Indian storytelling traditions like the Panchatantra, Jataka Tales, and Hitopadesha. These tales, which are full of moral quandaries and real-life experiences, give young students the opportunity to practice critical thinking and consider the repercussions of their choices within a framework that is culturally appropriate.

The possibility of incorporating these traditional tales especially the Panchatantra stories into elementary school instruction is examined in this study. This study aims to show how stories like "Mitra-Bheda" (The Loss of Friends) can support young learners' development of moral reasoning, empathy,

and social responsibility in line with the goals of NEP 2020.

#### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Value-Based Education (VBE) has become increasingly popular in India, particularly since the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was introduced. The policy emphasizes the value of teaching human values like empathy, integrity, and respect, all of which are critical for students' overall development (Ministry of Education, 2020). Singh and Agrawal (2021) state that VBE emphasizes moral and ethical development in addition to academic achievement in order to create socially conscious and emotionally intelligent citizens from an early age.

Supported by intellectuals like Mahatma Gandhi (1951) and J. Krishnamurti (1992), Indian educational philosophies place a strong emphasis on the connection between intellectual advancement and spiritual and ethical development. They support educational settings that foster moral consciousness via introspection, discussion, and hands-on learning—a strategy that is consistent with VBE's mission. The use of narrative pedagogy as a successful strategy for moral development is also supported by international scholarship. While Egan (1986)

emphasizes how narrative structures foster imaginative engagement and critical reflection, Bruner (1996) contends that storytelling helps students to engage with difficult ethical dilemmas. According to Narvaez (2002), moral stories that are developmentally appropriate help kids think more ethically.

Narratives such as the Panchatantra, Jataka Tales, and Hitopadesha have long been used in India as means of passing down values from one generation to the next. According to Nair (2019), these tales steer clear of didacticism and offer scenarios that are rich in meaning and invite individual interpretation. With tales like "Mitra-Bheda" (The Loss of Friends), the Panchatantra presents difficult subjects like deceit, loyalty, and resolving disputes (Ryder, 1925; Sharma, 2020). Initiatives by NCERT and CBSE are promoting the use of narrative-based pedagogies to promote moral development as a result of the growing integration of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) in education (NCERT, 2021).

#### NEP 2020 PEDAGOGY

A critical evaluation of multidisciplinary research on narrative pedagogy, value-based education, and the educational applications

of Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS). The theoretical foundation for storytelling as a moral and cognitive learning tool is informed by the works of Bruner (1996), Narvaez (2002), and Sharma (2020). This study follows a **qualitative and conceptual research approach** to explore the pedagogical potential of Indian narrative traditions, particularly the *Panchatantra*, in delivering value-based education (VBE) at the elementary level, aligned with the principles outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. As this research is theoretical in nature, it primarily relies on **secondary sources** including academic publications, policy documents, curriculum guidelines, and ancient literary texts. The Panchatantra story "The Loss of Friends" (Mitra-Bheda) is closely read and interpreted, with an emphasis on important moral lessons like loyalty, trust, treachery, and conflict resolution. A thematic framework that identifies values present in the story and their significance to the moral development of elementary school students serves as the basis for this analysis.

A review of NEP 2020's suggestions for experiential and holistic learning, including the use of IKS and storytelling in the

classroom. Additionally, the study examines NCERT and CBSE programs that use art and narrative integration to promote value-based learning (NCERT, 2021; Ministry of Education, 2020). An interpretive approach to assess how educators can use narrative-based strategies in classrooms. This includes identifying pedagogical tools such as reflective questioning, classroom dialogue, and moral dilemma discussions that align with NEP's learner-centered and competency-based vision. The study intends to develop a culturally grounded yet modern educational model that leverages Indian storytelling traditions to develop morally conscious, emotionally intelligent, and socially conscious students in their early years by integrating these methodological components.

#### ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN PEDAGOGY AND NEP 2020

One of the earliest and most instinctive ways that people have learned is via storytelling. Stories were utilized to transmit values, information, and wisdom from one generation to the next before textbooks were invented. Storytelling still has a lot of educational value in today's classrooms, particularly when it comes to educating kids

about relationships, empathy, morality, and making decisions.

Storytelling is acknowledged as more than just a teaching tool in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020; it is an essential part of joyful and experiential learning. In contrast to mechanical memorization, NEP promotes a learning approach that prioritizes emotional connection, relevance, and meaning (Ministry of Education, 2020). These qualities are naturally fostered by storytelling, which engages the heart and mind while making principles more relevant and learning more remembered.

Children use stories to make sense of the world, as Bruner (1996) argues. Young students are inspired to think critically, challenge actions, and consider the repercussions when they are exposed to moral quandaries in stories. A primary objective of Value-Based Education (VBE) under NEP is the development of moral reasoning, which is aided by this method. Additionally inclusive and flexible, storytelling works well in a variety of

educational contexts. Stories promote fairness and inclusivity in schools both in rural and urban areas by bridging social and linguistic divides. They support NEP's focus on cultural relevance by enabling all students to interact with the content and relate what they are learning to real-world situations.

According to educational theorists such as Egan (1986) and Narvaez (2002), narrative-based instruction raises social conduct and emotional intelligence in addition to comprehension.

Stories provide primary school pupils with a mild yet effective means of exploring feelings, behaviors, and virtues like honesty and kindness. Storytelling in the classroom contributes to the development of transformative learning settings that support NEP's mission to develop morally conscious, imaginative, and intelligent citizens. To understand how story telling aligns with the NEP 2020, the following table outlines key educational goals of the policies and also illustrates how Indian narrative elements supports these goals in a pedagogical setting.

**Table 1: Integartaion of Indian Narrative pedagogies with NEP 2020 goals.**

NEP 2020 EDUCATIONAL GOALS	INDIAN NARRATIVE ELEMENT	PEDAGOGICAL BENEFIT	CLASSROOM EXAMPLE
Holistic and experimental learning	Panchatantra, Jataka tails, folk stories and loers.	It stimulates emotional, cognitive and social growth	Reflective journaling and story-based role plays.
Integration of IKS (Indian Knowledge System)	Use of indigenous moral stories	It helps to revive cultural roots and traditional wisdoms	By incorporation of local tales in lesson planning.
VBE (value-based education)	Stories involving ethical dilemmas	Helps to build empathy, moral reasoning and integrity	By classroom discussion and moral judgment exercise.
Multilingualism and inclusivity	Narratives from diverse regions	Encourages respect for diversity and inclusion	By story telling in regional languages or translations.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PANCHATANTRA TALE: “THE LOSS OF FRIENDS” (MITRA-BHEDA)

More than just an animal fable, the Panchatantra tale "*The Loss of Friends*" (Mitra-Bheda) teaches important lessons about friendship, trust, and consequences. According to the story, two crafty jackals use fear and deceit to break the close bond between a bull and a lion. Because of mistaken trust and unbridled emotions, what begins as a true friendship turns tragic.

Children, particularly those in elementary

school, who are only starting to comprehend relationships, emotions, and decision-making, can relate to this narrative immediately. It enables them to investigate issues such as: What constitutes a good friend? What causes miscommunications? How do we prevent being duped?

Stories like this, when presented with appropriate instruction, encourage young learners to think critically about real-life scenarios, such overcoming peer pressure, overcoming jealousy, or mending damaged friendships. All of these fall under the

category of value-based and holistic education as defined by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. NEP promotes learning that goes beyond textbooks and uses experiential learning and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) to develop character and emotional intelligence (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Mitra-Bheda's multi-layered narrative is its strongest point. Young children could see it as a straightforward story of treachery, but an educator might help them dig deeper by talking about how uncertainty and fear can destroy even the closest relationships. This backs NEP's advocacy for participatory learning, moral reasoning, and critical thinking. Additionally, this story encourages classroom discussion, allowing students to ask questions, role-play, and explore "what if" scenarios. NEP's vision of a well-rounded learner includes the development of empathy, self-awareness, and decision-making abilities, all of which are enhanced by such activities. In short, this Panchatantra story is not just a traditional tale it is a practical teaching tool. It provides educators with a means to integrate culture and character education, assisting kids in developing into

considerate, morally conscious adults at an early age.

#### NCERT AND CBSE INITIATIVES ON VALUE-BASED EDUCATION THROUGH NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY

Both NCERT and CBSE, alongside other board affiliates, made strides integrating value-based education through story-telling and narrative in alignment with the NEP 2020 aims. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023, which NCERT developed, highlights the need to integrate values and Indian cultural aspects into education systems. It encourages the incorporation of stories, folk and local tales for the purposes of nurturing moral and emotional development among children (NCERT, 2023).

Also, CBSE has introduced numerous programs aimed at building life skills and moral reasoning through narrative techniques. The Life Skills Education Program enables students to grapple with troubling ethical challenges through stories and discussions focused on building character, empathy, and problem-solving. Furthermore, the Art-Integrated Learning (AIL) initiative inspires teachers to employ story-telling in value-based narratives aimed

at fostering creativity and critical thinking in students. The Moral Experiential Learning guidelines provided by CBSE encourage the use of real-life situations including moral stories for ethical discourse in class. Such guidelines enable students to interact with stories that prompt reflection on moral actions and their consequences.

Moreover, NCERT textbooks for elementary classes include, as a norm, value-based stories from the rich cultural heritage of India. They are intended to build such virtues as honesty, respect, and empathy while reinforcing the central ideas of NEP 2020. Both NCERT and CBSE have started culturally anchoring storytelling into their curriculum in response to the holistic approach of NEP 2020 to shift focus on ethical citizenship education grounded in cultural narrations.

#### SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In implementing narrative pedagogies into value-based education under NEP 2020, several encapsulated steps can be taken. As a starting step, local and cultural stories should be incorporated into the lessons at school so that the students can appreciate where they come from. The Panchatantra and other

Indian traditional stories are replete with values that aid moral reasoning, like honesty, let alone empathy, let alone integrity. Such stories not only tell moral lessons in the classroom to students but engage with them in the most useful and pithy manner.

Aligned with the NEP 2020, appreciating the spirit of ‘learning by doing’, teachers need to support storytelling as a hands-on technique. Students considering themselves as protagonists and antagonists of moral issues within types of ‘Edutainments’ like role plays, debating or other group work help children understand difficult sociocultural and ethical problems. It also helps mold critical and emotional competencies which in turn enable learners as they grow older to responsibly know how to exercise social responsibility alongside sound decision making from early on.

On top of that, through improvement in teacher training, educators must be prepared within their stories which tailor to aid students as socio politically aware critical thinkers. Training, where pedagogy makes stories the center-piece across sub-disciplines of a single subject, need to aim at creation and discussion fostering methods focused on the embedded values within. If such framing and

encompassing subjects within a framed story works. With the right preparation, teachers may use storytelling as a potent tool to help kids develop empathy, compassion, and moral judgment.

Lastly, the incorporation of narrative into educational frameworks need to be a top priority for both curriculum designers and legislators. To guarantee that value-based education is a fundamental component of school curriculum, explicit criteria that connect narrative-based learning to certain moral outcomes should be developed. By putting these suggestions into practice, we can raise a generation of students who share NEP 2020's vision of being not only academically strong but also morally and socially aware.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion the incorporation of storytelling pedagogies in elementary teaching particularly through Panchatantra tales promises great impetus to the values-based educational system in consonance with NEP 2020. Empathy, honesty, and critical analysis are some of the valuing steps that can be taught through storytelling wherein the students are engaged at both cognitive and

affective levels to turn them into ethically responsible citizens.

This conceptual study illustrates the ways in which some traditional Indian stories can be brought into modern classrooms not only as culture-based auxiliary materials but also as instruments for social responsibly teaching and ethical problem solving. NCERT and CBSE have an equally important role to play in incorporating value education in narratives and carve policies for integrated education because this approach brings together different subjects as called for by the policy. There is growing recognition of storytelling as a powerful teaching strategy, and so is the need to foster young children's social-emotional skills such as self-management, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making.

These narrative strategies offer a fresh perspective to educators and curriculum developers by shifting away from memorization to guided contemplation, responding to what is frequently regarded as a problem of pedagogy. By following the recommendations outlined in this study, Indian education can move toward a more integrated, value-driven approach that prepares students to be not just academically

successful, but also socially and morally responsible citizens.

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