

Concept Note
Synergising the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) with the
TRIVENI Initiative
Reclaiming India's Educational Roots for Local, Holistic and Future-Ready Learning

1. Background and Rationale

The **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** aims to transform India's education ecosystem by promoting accessibility, affordability, quality, and accountability across all levels of learning. Its emphasis on **multilingual education, reduced rote learning, critical thinking, holistic development, and community-based pedagogies** reflects a welcome shift toward learner-centred education. The NEP also encourages the integration of **hands-on learning, environment-based activities, and creative arts**, resonating deeply with Gandhian *Nai Talim* and civilizational models of Indian knowledge and practice.

However, the NEP's implementation faces obstacles, including:

- lack of a clear operational roadmap;
- uneven preparation of teachers and institutions;
- risk of over-reliance on private funding;
- digital accessibility gaps;
- challenges in local contextualisation;
- risk of curricular fragmentation despite pedagogic freedom.

At this juncture, the **TRIVENI Initiative**—focusing on Gandhian perspectives, Dharampal's historical legacy, and Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)—offers a synergistic framework to support the NEP's vision, especially at decentralised and district levels.

2. TRIVENI's Core Tenets Aligned with NEP Goals

TRIVENI rests on three complementary pillars:

1. **Gandhian Thought**, especially *Nai Talim*: education of the *head, hand, and heart* for self-reliance, dignity of labour, and community-rooted learning.
2. **Dharampal's Archival Insights**, viz. *The Beautiful Tree* (1983): evidence of India's historically widespread, inclusive, locally-funded and community-managed education system.
3. **Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS)** as living traditions: integrative knowledge, eco-centric practice, and culturally rooted creativity.

These pillars correspond directly to major NEP priorities:

- **Holistic, multidisciplinary learning** (NEP's call for "education, encouragement, enlightenment")
- **Experiential pedagogy and vocational exposure**
- **Mother-tongue instruction and multilingualism**
- **Community participation**
- **Equity and inclusion**
- **Teacher preparation and empowerment**
- **Integration of arts, culture, and sports** into mainstream learning

3. How TRIVENI can Facilitate NEP Implementation at Local Levels

3.1 Reviving Local Learning Ecosystems (drawing from *The Beautiful Tree*)

Dharampal's research demonstrates that pre-colonial Indian education was:

- **widely accessible**, even among lower status groups;
- **community-supported** rather than centrally orchestrated;
- **integrated with local livelihoods and cultural practices**;
- **pedagogically flexible**, adapting to regional needs.

The Beautiful Tree provides a historically grounded model for decentralised NEP implementation, particularly for:

- **School complexes and clusters** envisaged by NEP;
- integration of **community elders, artisans, and practitioners** as resource persons;
- **locally relevant curricula** embedded in ecology, crafts, oral histories, and regional knowledge systems.

3.2 Operationalising Nai Talim within NEP Pedagogy

NEP already promotes hands-on and experiential learning across all stages. TRIVENI can help operationalise this through **Nai Talim-aligned modules**, such as:

- community-based projects on water, health, agriculture, crafts, and sustainability;
- school-based productively useful work integrating maths, science, and language learning;
- reflective learning that nurtures civic responsibility and ethical reasoning;
- linking vocational exposure (a key NEP objective) with local livelihoods rather than externalised, commercialised skill centres.

This aligns directly with the NEP's praise for 'hands-on education' and 'community-intensive and environment-based activities', which the NEP identifies as in line with Gandhian principles.

3.3 Addressing NEP Implementation Gaps through TRIVENI

Challenges faced by NEP

Lack of operational roadmap and insufficient guidance from resource persons

Risk of unqualified volunteer teachers replacing trained faculty

Over-reliance on private funding and risk of commercialisation

Digital divide, especially in rural areas

Need for vernacular and tribal language promotion

TRIVENI Contribution

TRIVENI can provide **district-level orientation workshops, community knowledge mapping, and Nai Talim-based pedagogical toolkits**.

TRIVENI offers **structured community participation frameworks** (e.g., master crafts persons, local scholars) while respecting the professional role of trained teachers.

TRIVENI promotes **community co-ownership**, local philanthropy, and transparent, small-scale models based on *The Beautiful Tree* historical evidence.

TRIVENI emphasises **low-tech, experiential learning** that does not depend exclusively on digital infrastructure but complements it.

TRIVENI supports **local linguistic ecosystems**, oral traditions, storytelling, and indigenous knowledge documentation.

Through these mechanisms, TRIVENI becomes a **bridge** between NEP aspirations and localised implementation realities.

4. Proposed TRIVENI–NEP Synergy Programme

4.1 District Demonstration Sites (TRIVENI Learning Clusters)

Clusters of 10–15 schools and one or two colleges develop:

- Nai Talim experiential modules;
- IKS-based local curriculum components;
- community knowledge partnerships;
- teacher enrichment sessions;
- inclusive mother-tongue pedagogies.

4.2 Nai Talim & *The Beautiful Tree* Pedagogy Toolkit

A ready-to-adopt set of resources for schools:

- activity-based lesson plans linking academic subjects and productive work;
- guidelines for integrating local history, culture, and ecology;
- assessment rubrics reflecting competency, collaboration, and creativity (aligning with NEP's shift to performance-based assessment).

4.3 Teacher Capacity Building

Short modules on:

- Gandhian pedagogy and ethics;
- local craft- and skill-based learning;
- ethnographic & community-mapping methods;
- multilingual teaching practices;
- bridging experiential work with academic outcomes.

4.4 Community Knowledge Partnerships

Systematic involvement of:

- artisans, farmers, performers, tribal knowledge holders;
- retired teachers and local historians;
- women's self-help groups for local curriculum support.

This directly responds to NEP's emphasis on reducing rote learning and opening learning to "extra-curricular activities, creative arts, and sports", which strengthen self-initiative and collaborative spirit.

5. Expected Outcomes

1. **Enhanced local ownership** of education through community participation and culturally grounded curricula.
2. **Improved teacher capacity** to deliver experiential, multidisciplinary learning.
3. **Increased retention**, especially of girls and rural students, through meaningful vocational pathways aligned with NEP provisions.
4. **Context-specific NEP implementation models** that can be scaled to other regions.
5. **Revival of indigenous knowledge ecosystems** and reduction of dependence on commercialised education models.
6. **Strengthened alignment between NEP objectives and Gandhian–civilisational educational values**, supporting India's aspiration for holistic human development.

6. Conclusion

The NEP 2020 articulates a visionary direction for education in India. Yet, its success hinges on concrete, context-sensitive implementation mechanisms.

TRIVENI provides precisely such a mechanism—rooted in Gandhi’s *Nai Talim*, Dharampal’s historical insights from *The Beautiful Tree*, and the living richness of Indian Knowledge Systems. By grounding educational reform in India’s own civilisational strengths and community wisdom, TRIVENI offers a robust pathway for operationalising the NEP’s goals at the local level.

This synergy will not only revitalise India’s educational landscape but also help cultivate self-reliant, compassionate, and critically aware citizens—fulfilling the NEP’s commitment to holistic development by 2030.

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