



Reimagining Teacher Professional Growth in India through NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

With the advent of the New Education Policy (NEP 2020), teacher development and improvement has become a major theme in the education reforms in India. This paper examines how the NEP 2020 proposes new ways for teachers to adapt to changing times, embrace technology, enhance their performance and monitor their own teaching. The study examines in depth the major changes brought about for the professional development of teachers; such as continuous learning programmes (CPD), joint courses in teacher education, introduction of digital learning and setting of a national standard for teachers' work. This paper is based entirely on a careful analysis of secondary sources such as government policy documents, scholarly articles by experts, books, academic reports and recent research related to teacher training. The findings suggest that NEP 2020 aims to shift teacher training away from the old and traditional structure and towards a flexible and adaptive environment where teachers become lifelong learners and learn together. The policy encourages teachers to adopt new approaches to make the classroom lively and improve the educational outcomes of children, to connect with the digital world and to constantly learn something new. The research also identifies the ground-level difficulties and challenges

that stand in the way of these reforms; such as lack of resources in schools and colleges, lack of digital facilities for everyone, institutional constraints and reluctance to abandon old teaching methods. Despite all these obstacles, the policy offers a great opportunity to raise the quality of teachers in India and transform the entire education system. The gist of the paper is that the true success of NEP 2020 depends on how much our educational institutions support it, how it is put into practice, and how authentic and equitable an environment teachers find for practical learning.

TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND NEW EDUCATION POLICY (NEP 2020)

When we talk about teacher development or improvement, it is not a one-time task. In fact, it is a journey that continues throughout the entire career. A good teacher is one who changes his teaching style over time, learns from everyday classroom experiences and overcomes his weaknesses. Gone are the days when it was believed that a few days of training would be enough. Today's modern thinking says that the learning process is lifelong. This is what enables a teacher to adapt to the demands of the times and understand children better. In this regard, Taylor (2020) has also said a great deal that teacher improvement is not a simple matter; it is possible only through their own experiences, the support they receive from the school or college and a close look at their own teaching.

Now if we look at the education system of our country, this need has been felt even more acutely after the advent of the New Education Policy (NEP 2020). This policy clearly recognizes that no major change in the education system is possible without teachers. That is why it has been emphasized that teachers should always get full opportunities to learn something new, have new experiences and understand different topics. This policy wants to change this old, traditional training structure which is no longer effective. It is an attempt to bring in a flexible and modern system where technology is used as per the need and the main focus is on the needs of the children. The Ministry of Education (2020) also believes that today, in the 21st century, it is not enough for teachers to be limited to book knowledge alone to teach children but they should have the ability to assess the situation, the skill of taking all the children together, an understanding of the digital world and a passion for teaching practically. The main objective of this new policy is to ensure that teachers never lose their passion for being students and learning new things. This is why it places special emphasis on continuous professional development



(CPD) programs, so that teachers can keep their knowledge and information up to date. Research also suggests that such programmes are effective in improving the quality of teaching, engagement in the classroom and test scores (Day and Sachs, 2004). That is why NEP 2020 has proposed that every teacher should devote at least 50 hours throughout the year to enhancing their professional skills through various workshops, online courses and educational circles.

Experts also say that teacher development under NEP 2020 is not limited to formal training alone but also involves mutual cooperation and teachers' own knowledge communities. Patwardhan and Abrol (2023) found in their research that the practical and online programs run under this policy have greatly improved teachers' pedagogical understanding and classroom environment. Similarly, Dutta (2022) believes that for educational reforms to be successful, it is essential to link teacher preparation and training with real classroom experiences, multidisciplinary teaching and a performance-based system.

Another important aspect of this whole process is the use of technology. The policy encourages teachers to connect with digital platforms and online educational networks like DIKSHA and SWAYAM to enhance their skills. Recent research (Kangnal, 2025) has shown that training through digital means increases teachers' technical understanding and enables them to teach better in both online and offline (blended) environments.

On the other hand, researchers have also mentioned the difficulties that hinder this path; such as lack of proper support from institutions, lack of digital resources, lack of equal opportunities for all and reluctance to abandon old teaching methods.

REFORMS PROPOSED FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT UNDER THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY (NEP 2020)

The National Education Policy 2020 has introduced several important and far-reaching changes to enhance the professional skills of teachers in our country. These changes are actually a response to the old and serious problems that have been facing us for years in the form of declining quality of teacher training, lack of continuous learning opportunities and limited paths to progress. This policy does not consider teachers as just employees who teach lessons in the classroom but rather recognizes them as the most important pillar of nation-building and revolutionizing the education system.

The biggest change that has been brought under this policy is the requirement for teachers to continuously learn something. It clearly states that every teacher will have to devote at least 50 hours throughout the year to enhance their professional skills. Now this work can be done in different ways;



Such as peer discussions, workshops, online training, action research or acquiring new knowledge on their specific subject. Avolos (2011) also believes that this process of continuous learning deepens the understanding of teachers and does not allow their performance to deteriorate over the long journey of their job. The main objective of NEP 2020 is to create an environment where teachers do not just sit back and relax on their old degree but become lifelong learners.

Another major and revolutionary step is the introduction of the four-year Integrated B.Ed. (B.Ed.) program. According to the policy, this four-year course will be considered the minimum qualification for teaching in schools by the year 2030. Education experts, such as Darling Hammond (2017), argue that such integrated courses bridge the gap between textbooks and the actual reality of the classroom. The new structure aims to provide teachers with a strong grasp of their subject, excellent teaching skills and a real experience of practical teaching in one place.

At the same time, this policy also codifies the standards of teachers' work and their responsibilities. That is why it is recommended to set 'National Professional Standards for Teachers' (NPST) i.e. national level standards for teachers. These standards will determine the competencies, ethics and expectations associated with teachers at different stages of their employment. According to Kulchermans (2004), such professional standards help teachers to understand their identity and reflect on their teaching. The main objective of NPST is to raise the overall quality of teaching while maintaining the respect and independence of teachers.

Who can ignore the use of technology in today's era, and this policy is very clear in this regard. It encourages teachers to join online training courses and digital groups of teachers through digital platforms like DIKSHA and SWAYAM. Research by Trust and Horrocks (2019) suggests that by connecting to online educational networks, teachers can not only share new methods and resources with each other but also have access to each other at all times. The rapid spread of digital learning during and after the Corona (COVID-19) era has further increased the importance of these reforms.

A major emphasis of the policy is also on making teacher training practical and child-centered rather than traditional rote learning. Teacher training programs will now focus on critical thinking, inclusive education, classroom innovation, and performance-based learning. Zeichner (2010) rightly said that good teacher training is possible only when educational theories are closely linked to real classroom experiences. Following this thinking, NEP 2020 advocates learning in the school environment and self-monitoring of one's own teaching.



Indeed, all these reforms are like a golden opportunity for teacher development but many researchers also say that their success depends on how much support schools and colleges receive, how many experts we have to provide training, what is the funding situation and how the work is being done on the ground. Until this entire system of continuous support for teachers is strengthened, then these best reforms will remain just policies written on paper and no real change will be possible inside the classroom.

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS OF TEACHERS

In recent years, and especially after the advent of the New Education Policy (NEP 2020), the importance of technology in the learning and advancement process of teachers has increased immensely. It is now clear that for a 21st century teacher, it is not enough to just know the art of teaching but he must also be able to use technology well so that he can cope with the changing educational environment. This is why NEP 2020 has declared digital literacy, online learning and new teaching methods as an integral part of teacher development.

Educational researchers have long argued that if teachers are trained with technology, their teaching style and engagement with their work can improve. According to Kohler and Mishra (2009), the true benefits of technology in the classroom can only be realized when the teacher knows how to integrate technology with their subject matter and teaching methods. Their 'TPACK' framework is still considered a great model for understanding teachers' capabilities in a digital environment. NEP 2020 also follows the same thinking and encourages teachers to be part of programs where they can learn by combining technology and teaching.

A major work that has been done under this education policy is the promotion of digital platforms for teacher training and interaction. Government initiatives like DIKSHA, SWAYAM and NISHTHA have opened the doors to online courses, teaching materials, webinars and peer-to-peer learning communities for teachers. Research by Phillipson and colleagues (2019) suggests that if properly supported by institutions, such online programs can boost teachers' morale, improve their digital skills and help them function more easily in a technology-based environment.

The rise of blended learning and online classes has changed the entire way teachers learn. Teachers are now expected to use videos, audio, interactive tools, online tests and digital connections in the classroom. Research by Howard and Mosaico (2015) suggests that when teachers engage with



technology, they are more reflective about their teaching, collaborate, and try new things in the classroom. This puts the child at the center of learning and increases children's engagement in the classroom.

Smart software and data-driven tools are now taking a new turn in the world of education. These advanced platforms can help teachers tailor their time to each child, track their progress, and explore new ways to teach. Lakhan and colleagues (2016) believe that these smart systems have the power to help teachers make informed educational decisions and enhance children's learning experiences. NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of these emerging technologies and recommends that they be incorporated into teacher training.

But despite all these good opportunities, researchers have also pointed to some on-the-ground difficulties. Poor internet connectivity, a lack of computers or other devices in schools, lack of digital training, and lack of resources—these are challenges that still plague many educational institutions, especially in rural areas. Artmer and Ottenbright-Leftwich (2013) noted that the success of technology depends not only on the equipment but also on the teacher's own perspective, confidence, and the environment of his or her institution. Therefore, it is not enough to simply teach how to use the machine during training but also to instill the mindset of using it correctly in teaching.

Another important point is that we need models that are sustainable and that relate to real life in the classroom. Short workshops lasting a few days do not make a big difference in teachers' ongoing teaching behavior. DeSimone and Garrett (2015) emphasized that any training is effective only when it is continuous, involves teachers working together, is focused on the subject matter, and is directly related to classroom experiences. NEP 2020 supports this idea and emphasizes the creation of permanent networks of teachers.

Overall, technology and new experiences are reshaping the learning process of teachers in our country. The dream of NEP 2020 is grand and progressive, where it is intended to make teachers modern, competent, and up-to-date in every way. But the real success of this dream lies in how prepared our institutions are, how equal access to technology is for everyone, and how much real support teachers get on the ground to move forward.

CHALLENGES TO THE NEW CONCEPT OF TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The reforms proposed for teacher development under the New Education Policy (NEP 2020) are not easy to implement on the ground; there are several administrative, institutional and pedagogical



obstacles in its path. Although this policy presents a very progressive idea for improving teachers, education experts clearly believe that the success of these changes depends on how ready our educational institutions are for it, how many resources we have and what is the actual reality of our country's education system.

The biggest challenge is the lack of uniformity in educational structures and resources in different regions. Many teacher training institutions in our country, especially in rural and economically backward areas, are still facing a shortage of internet, computers, libraries and trained teachers (faculty). Tilak (2021) has pointed out that educational reforms in India are often confused because of the vast differences in resources across regions and the lack of government investment in educational infrastructure. This disparity directly affects teachers' opportunities to learn and progress.

Another serious problem is the gap between policy rhetoric and the real world of the classroom. On the one hand, NEP 2020 emphasizes on nurturing children's potential and practical teaching methods but on the other hand, our teachers are still working in the same old system where the emphasis is only on passing exams and eliminating cumbersome syllabuses. Philan (2007) observes that educational reforms often fail when teachers are expected to adopt new teaching methods but are not given any concrete support from institutions or practical training. This is why most training programs are just textbooks that have nothing to do with real classroom experiences.

Researchers have also raised many questions about the quality and impact of teacher training. Short workshops of a few days or one-and-a-half orientation meetings do not bring about any major or lasting change in the professional behavior of teachers. According to Opfer and Peder (2011), true teacher development is possible only when this learning process is continuous, there is mutual cooperation and teachers are given the opportunity to reflect on their teaching, and not just put in a temporary training. Unfortunately, our training system is still a top-down model, where teachers have very little opportunity to give their opinions or do something new.

There is also a big wall in this whole matter, the 'digital divide'. The truth is that the new education policy has made big talks about technology but not everyone on earth has the same facilities of computers, smartphones or the internet. The research that came out after Corona (Kondo and Bij, 2021) clearly shows that many of our teachers were suddenly very worried about this pressure of teaching online. Neither had they ever received any kind of training before nor did the schools have any support system that would hold their hands and teach them. This painful situation has been seen most in rural schools and poor institutions.



In addition, teachers' workload and the pressure of non-academic responsibilities also hinder their development. In addition to teaching, teachers are often overwhelmed with so many clerical, paperwork and administrative duties that they have little time to learn new things or improve their skills. Hargreaves (2000) rightly wrote that when a teacher's workload is excessive and he or she does not receive any emotional or material support from the institution or system, he or she becomes discouraged and disengaged from his or her work.

Another major challenge is the reluctance to abandon old teaching methods. Teachers who have been teaching in the same traditional way for years find it difficult to suddenly adopt technology and new methods. To change the education system, it is not enough to teach them how to operate a machine; it is also necessary to change the thinking of teachers, their behavior and the entire environment of the institution. Guskey (2002) believes that sustainable professional development occurs only when teachers themselves see that their new methods are actually making a positive difference in children's learning and their outcomes. Until teachers see such a clear result of their work and a conducive environment, it will be difficult for them to wholeheartedly accept these reforms.

One last point is that there is a lack of coordination between policy makers, training colleges and the schools themselves. Researchers clearly say that when educational reforms are implemented piecemeal, their impact is completely lost. Therefore, if we really want to move teachers forward, we have to work with a long-term perspective; provide sustainable funding, connect institutions with each other and create a real system of continuous monitoring of work.

Despite all these difficulties, education experts definitely agree that NEP 2020 has shown an excellent and strong path to raise the quality of teachers in our country. But to make this dream a reality, it is not enough to just write policies on paper but it is very important to get down to the ground and work systematically, hold institutions accountable and give teachers real support by holding their hands at all levels.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The future of teacher development in our country now depends entirely on how well the changes envisaged under the New Education Policy (NEP 2020) are implemented. This policy has given a completely new and comprehensive dimension to the quality of being a teacher, which is far beyond the old and traditional training methods. Now the emphasis is on continuous learning, self-monitoring of one's teaching, adopting technology and working together. Researchers also believe that if we are to



prepare teachers in today's era who can face the social, technological and educational changes in the classroom, then we have to move forward with this thinking.

The most important thing that recent educational research emphasizes regarding the future is to create a system that is permanent and sustainable. The development of teachers is no longer a task that can be achieved through occasional training but should be part of their daily work. Lieberman and Miller (2008) argued that true teacher training occurs when teachers sit in classrooms and openly discuss issues, reflect on problems and connect what they have learned to the realities of the classroom. NEP 2020 advances this very idea, advocating for learning in the school environment, working with fellow teachers and continuously improving their skills.

Another important direction is to strengthen online and blended training models. The Internet and online learning have transformed the way teachers learn around the world. Research by Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017) clearly shows that training programs are most effective when they are consistent, technology-enabled, collaborative and address real-world challenges in the classroom. In our country's context, digital initiatives like DIKSHA and SWAYAM can open up big and easy avenues for teachers living in remote areas to move forward.

To move forward, there is also a dire need for genuine institutional support and policy coordination. Education experts insist that no training can be successful unless we have a good educational infrastructure, expert trainers, sustainable funding and inspiring leadership. According to the OECD (OECD 2020), education systems that give their teachers the freedom to make their own decisions, guide them and increase interaction, always produce the best learning outcomes. Therefore, our schools and colleges must create an environment where teachers are given full freedom and encouragement to try new things.

This development of teachers under the new policy is also deeply linked to an education system where every child gets the right to equality. Teachers are now expected to understand the different needs of children in the classroom, their different languages and social backgrounds, not just as a teacher but as a sensitive human being. This simply means that the purpose of training is no longer just to memorize books or complete courses but to instill in teachers a genuine empathy for children, a sense of morality, equality and the ability to understand their feelings.

In short, NEP 2020 presents a blueprint for teacher development in India that has the power to change everything. The policy seeks to move teacher training from old and fragmented methods to a



dynamic, lively and performance-oriented environment where teachers are always ready to learn something new. Although there are many challenges in implementing it, the policy has created several important possibilities for transforming the education system and raising the quality of teaching. The long-term success of this entire effort now depends solely on how committed our institutions are to it, how true the implementation of the policy is and how much we support our teachers in shaping them into lifelong learning leaders.

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