

## Teacher Education Opportunities and Challenges: NEP 2020

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### Abstract

Education is at the crossroad. The key for development of any society depends on the quality of teachers. Teacher's knowledge, teacher's dedication, teacher's quality, teacher's professional commitment and his inner motivation are the factors responsible teaching learning process. Production of competent teachers is a big challenge of the contemporary world. Necessary improvement in teacher education is a challenge for every nation to provide effective and competent teachers. To boost the growth of the Indian education sector, the present government decided to revamp it by introducing a comprehensive National Education Policy 2020. This is in line with the Prime Minister's recent call on leveraging the Fourth Industrial Revolution to take India to new heights. The currently introduced National Education Policy 2020 envisions an India centered education system that contributes directly to transforming our nation sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends major changes in the Teacher Education scenario. The recommendation on teacher education is given in chapter- 15 of the NEP-2020 under Part II which details the policy changes in Higher Education. It has divided into eleven sub points. The main objectives of NEP is to "ensure that teachers are given the highest quality training in content, pedagogy, and practice, by moving the teacher education system into multidisciplinary colleges and universities, and establishing the 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers" (NEP2020 -Page 42: 15.5). While analyzing the NEP 2020 more deeply, it is a curious combination of opportunities and at the same time challenges for Teacher education scenario. The present paper will try to analyse the NEP2020 documents in regard to Teacher Education Opportunities and Challenges: NEP 2020

**Keywords:** Teacher. Teacher Education, Policy Issues, National Education Policy 2020, Higher Education, Opportunities and Challenges,

### Teacher Education Opportunities and Challenges: NEP 2020

India has over 1.3 billion people with a huge need for skilled teachers. India's education quality is often criticized for lacking infrastructure, insufficient resources, and inadequately trained teachers. Recently, teacher training has been increasingly emphasized to improve the country's education quality. However, teacher training in India still faces several challenges and needs to be improved to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Government of India, as part of the adoption of the fourth Sustainable Development GoalSDG4-Education- out of the seventeen Goals adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, with regard to 2030 Agenda, prepared The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29th, 2020. It is high time to bring out an Education Policy because a major development since the last Policy of 1986/92 which we follow for around 34 years has been the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 which laid down legal underpinnings for achieving universal elementary education. To make India a Super Global Knowledge Power, we essentially need up to date fruitful implementations in the education field. Only through rapid movements and knowledge navigation, we can transform our country to a developed one. Considering multiple parameters for changing the curriculum and education system, it is essential to revise the policies in time for improving the existing system.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends major changes in the Teacher Education scenario. The recommendation on teacher education is given in chapter- 15 of the NEP-2020 under Part II which details the policy changes in Higher Education. It has divided into eleven sub points. The main objectives of NEP is to "ensure that teachers are given the highest quality training in content, pedagogy, and practice, by moving the teacher education system into multidisciplinary colleges and universities, and establishing the 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers" (NEP2020 -Page 42: 15.5). While analyzing the NEP 2020 more deeply, it is a curious combination of opportunities and at the same time challenges for Teacher education scenario.

India has the most extensive education system in the World, with about 1.5 million schools and over 8 million teachers. Despite the large number of schools and teachers, the quality of education in India remains a challenge. Many schools lack basic infrastructure

and resources, and it seems that there is a shortage of qualified and trained teachers. Even where teachers are present, they may not have the necessary training and support to perform their roles in a few schools effectively.

Teacher training is, therefore, essential to improving the quality of education in India. It can help improve teachers' knowledge and skills, enable them to use new teaching methods and technologies, and help them better understand students' needs. Teacher training can also help reduce teacher attrition, which can be high in some areas due to poor working conditions and low pay, which is more accurate for contractual teachers.

## Types of Teacher Training in India

India has various teacher training programs, from short-term workshops and seminars to long-term certification programs. Some of the most common types of teacher training programs in India include:

- **In-Service Training:** In-service training is training that is provided to teachers who are already working in schools. It is designed to help teachers improve their skills and knowledge and to keep them up-to-date with the latest teaching methods and technologies.
- **Pre-Service Training:** Pre-service training is provided to teachers before they start teaching. It is designed to prepare teachers for their classroom roles and ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to be effective teachers.
- **Refresher Training:** Refresher training is provided to teachers who have already received training but need to update their skills and knowledge. It is typically shorter than initial training programs and is designed to reinforce previous learning.
- **Induction Training:** Induction training is provided to new teachers to help them adjust to their new roles and familiarize them with the school environment.

## Status of Teacher Training in India

The percentage of trained teachers in India varies depending on different sources and definitions of "trained." However, according to the Unified District Information System for Education, approximately 56.5 percent of primary school teachers in India have received in-service training. The corresponding figure for upper primary school teachers is 65.9 percent. It is important to note that this data only reflects in-service training and does not include pre-service training. Additionally, there may be discrepancies in the quality and effectiveness of the training provided, which could impact the overall impact of teacher training on student outcomes.

## Teacher training Institutions at different levels in India

In India, teacher training is conducted by various organizations at different levels, including the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private institutions. Some of the key organizations involved in teacher training at different levels are:

1. *National Council for Teacher Education:* The NCTE is a statutory body that sets standards for teacher education programs in India. It also researches teacher education and provides guidelines for teacher training institutes.
2. *State Council of Educational Research & Training:* is a state-level organization responsible for developing curricula, textbooks, and teacher training programs that also conducts in-service training programs for teachers.
3. *District Institute of Education and Training:* The DIET is a district-level organization that provides pre-service and in-service training to elementary and secondary school teachers. It also conducts research and provides support to schools in the district.
4. *State Institutes of Education (SIE):* The SIE is a state-level organization providing pre-service and in-service training to teachers. It also develops and evaluates teacher education programs.
5. *Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):* Many NGOs are involved in teacher training in India, particularly in rural and remote areas. These organizations provide in-service training, mentoring, and support to teachers in government schools.
6. *Private Institutions:* Private institutions like universities and colleges offer teacher education programs. These programs are typically more expensive than government-funded ones but may offer more specialized training and support.

Overall, teacher training in India is conducted by various organizations at different levels, aiming to improve the quality of education & provide teachers with the skills & knowledge they need to be effective in the classroom.

## Challenges of Teacher Training in India

While teacher training is essential, several challenges must be addressed in India. One of the significant challenges is the shortage of qualified, trained teachers. There are not enough qualified trainers to train all the teachers who need it, which can result in poor quality training. Another challenge is the lack of standardized training programs. There is no standardized curriculum for teacher training in India, which can result in inconsistent training quality and content. Additionally, some training programs may not be relevant to the specific needs of teachers or may not address the challenges teachers face in their local context. Some of the limitations are as follows:

- **Outdated Curriculum:** The teacher training curriculum in India is outdated and does not reflect the changing needs of the students. The focus is often on rote learning rather than practical and experiential learning.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** There is a shortage of quality training institutions and facilities in India. The existing institutions lack the necessary infrastructure to provide quality training to teachers.
- **Insufficient Resources:** The government's allocation of funds for teacher training is often inadequate. The resources available at present are insufficient in meeting the needs of the growing number of teachers in the country.
- **Lack of Qualified Trainers:** The country has a shortage of qualified trainers. The trainers themselves must be trained to provide quality training to the teachers.

The limitations mentioned above can be addressed through the following measures:

1. **Digital Platforms:** The rise of digital platforms presents an opportunity to provide quality training to teachers. Online courses and webinars can be used to train teachers across the country.
- 2.
3. **Public-Private Partnership:** Public-private partnerships may be used to improve teacher-training quality in the country. Private institutions can bring the necessary infrastructure and expertise, while the government can provide funding and support.
4. **Experiential Learning:** Teacher training can be more effective by incorporating experiential learning methods. Teachers can be trained through workshops and practical sessions.
5. **Continuous Learning:** Teacher training should be a continuous process rather than a one-time event. Regular workshops and refresher courses should keep teachers updated with the latest teaching techniques and technologies.

## Recommendations of NEP-2020: Teacher Education

### Shift of Teacher Education into the University System

NEP 2020 made an observation that “a marriage of high-quality content with pedagogy that can only be truly attained if teacher preparation is conducted within composite institutions offering multidisciplinary academic programmes and environments” (NEP 2020, Page 42, 15.4.). For the vision implementation, “Teacher education for all levels - Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary - will take place within the university/higher education system as a stage-specific, four-year integrated B.Ed. programme, combining content, pedagogy, and practical training. Hope these changes may help to maintain the integrity of teacher education system in the country.

### Dual-Degree Provision

The provision of Dual –degree in NEP 2020 stating that “the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme of pre-service teacher preparation for different tracks will be offered at the university level as a dual-degree (in education together with any desired specialised subject) undergraduate programme of study, and will thus include both disciplinary as well as teacher preparation courses is a fascinating aspect and may be cautioned not to lead to drop outs from the „education“ sector in the context of increased rate of unemployment in India which results in scarcity of committed professionals in the education field.9 (NED 2020).

### Lacking Teaching Skill Enhancement

NEP identifies certain key areas of the curriculum for teacher preparation that will be reformed and revitalized such as “concentration on foundational literacy/numeracy, inclusive pedagogy and evaluation, knowledge of India and its traditions, and the development in students of 21st century skills such as problem-solving, critical and creative thinking, ethical and moral reasoning, and communication and discussion abilities”. But for a Teacher preparation programme, more than any other aspect, teaching Skill enhancement should be given the highest priority which has not been mentioned in NEP 2020.

### Closer of Substandard Standalone Teacher Education Institutions

The mission will be taken to shut down the substandard and dysfunctional teacher education institutions by 2023 for promoting only educationally sound teacher preparation programme in India. All stand-alone Teachers Education Institutions should convert themselves as Multidisciplinary HETs by 2030 to offer only four years integrated B.Ed. programme. Mandatory accreditation of all TEIs as multidisciplinary HEIs within the next 3-5 years. The progress of this mission will be supervised by National Higher Education Regulatory Authority [NHERA] every 3 months and by Rashtriya Shiksha Aayog [RSA] every 6 months(NEP 2020, Page 42, 15.5) which ensures an initiative in maintaining quality teacher education.

### Specialisations of Subject Teachers

As per NPE 2020, Teacher Education faculties include Specialised instructors for specialised subjects, generalist special educators for primary school subject areas, subject teacher in middle or high school. “Education of children with singular interests and talents is addressed through secondary specialisations for subject teachers or generalist teachers, after initial or pre-service teacher preparation is completed and which would be offered as certificate courses, in the in-service mode, either full time or as part time / blended courses - again, necessarily, at multidisciplinary colleges or universities. More clarity is needed in the concept of Secondary specialisations in the sense that it may not result in less privileged Special Education B.Ed. course.

### Teacher Education In Multidisciplinary Institutions

This is the major transformation in the teacher education sector. Teacher training colleges or Teacher Education Institutions which are running single-stream programmes must be phased out. “All multidisciplinary universities and colleges - will aim to establish, education departments which, besides carrying out cutting-edge research in various aspects of education, will also run B.Ed. programmes, in collaboration with other departments (NPE 2020). As a result, majority of Teacher training colleges of the State will be vanished or will be merged to multidisciplinary colleges as a department of education. This results the complete eradication of the great tradition of the prestigious concept of Training Colleges in the Country.

### Admission to the Course through the National Testing Agency

Admission to pre-service teacher preparation programmes, like all HEI admissions, will be carried out in large part through subject and aptitude tests as conducted by the National Testing Agency. This is in keeping with the principle of separating Board

Examinations from official university entrance examinations, while the full criteria and process for admissions will be left to the universities and colleges offering these programmes" (NEP 2020)which is an innovative and warm idea.

### **Substantial New Teacher Preparation**

NPE says that, The fundamental transformation to the four-year integrated teacher preparation programme on one hand and the shutting down of dysfunctional institutions on the other hand, will require the creation of substantial new teacher preparation capacity: substantial public investment will be required for the sect. Philanthropic efforts will be encouraged in this sector through special schemes to be designed by the RSA" (NPE 2000). It is a fearful fact that these measures will largely allow for greater penetration of private capital in education, especially Teacher Education which is meant to "shape the next generation. Confusion still arises here that by engaging with the multi-fold ramifications of this provision, heavy cost that the common masses will pay in terms of growing inaccessibility of higher education. This model of graded autonomy may not be helpful for the universalization of educational resources and equal access to quality higher education.

### **Departments of Education in Universities**

NEP has recommended the Department of Universities to strengthen and develop the spaces for research and innovation in education. "Departments of Education in universities will need to be built up to take on the central role of anchoring education programmes in all disciplines through meaningful relationships with all other departments in education. They will cater to pre-service education and in-service Continuous Professional Development (CPD) of teachers in school education as well as faculty in higher education. They will also prepare faculty for teacher education. They must develop courses and activities for in-service CPD of teachers, and offer mentoring programmes to beginning teachers. All courses offerings must be available in a range of formats including part time, evening, blended and online, in addition to full time programmes" (NPE Draft). Showering more responsibilities to Departments of Education in universities can be considered as opportunities to act.

### **Faculty for Teacher Education**

NPE 2020 has advised to appoint faculty with training in areas of social sciences that are directly relevant to school education e.g., psychology, child development, linguistics, sociology, philosophy, economics, and political science as well as from science education, mathematics education, social science education, and language education programmes. The faculty profile in Departments of Education will be diverse with Ph.D. in different areas. The faculty profile in Departments of Education will necessarily aim to be diverse, but teaching/field/research experience will be highly valued (NPE 2020). Hope that the concept would give more dignified individuality to teachers

### **Re-Orientation of Ph.D. Programmes**

As a matter of re-orientation of Ph.D. programmes, NPE 2020 suggested that all fresh Ph.D. entrants, irrespective of discipline, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy/writing related to their chosen Ph.D. subject during their doctoral training period. Ph.D students will also have a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships and other means. Ph.D. programmes at universities around the country will be re-oriented for this purpose.

### **In-Service Programme for Professional Development of College and University Teachers**

Existing institutional arrangements and ongoing initiatives will continue for the In-service continuous professional development for college and university teachers. The use of technology platforms such as SWAYAM/DIKSHA for online training of teachers will be encouraged (NPE 2020) which is most welcome and inspire teachers to be continuous learners.

### **National Mission for Mentoring**

NPE 2020 suggests framing a pool of outstanding senior/retired faculty to provide short and long-term mentoring/professional support to university/college teachers(NPE 2020) which is also a warm welcome supportive system for teachers. All schools of foundation, preparatory, middle, and secondary level should appoint 4- years integrated B.Ed. degree holders as teachers with dual major specialization (Education & Subject). Till 2030, there will be two years B.Ed. programme for 3 years UG and one-year B.Ed. for four years UG and those who have Master's degree in other subjects. M.Ed. will be one year with research focus. All interested senior or retired faculty will be utilized short or long term for guiding, mentoring, or professional support for research/training/innovation. A separate National Mission for Mentoring will be established.

## **Research and Administration**

### **Conclusion**

Teacher training is critical to improving the quality of education in India. While there are several challenges, there are also many opportunities to improve the quality of teacher training. The government, private institutions, and civil society need to work together to address these challenges and create a system that provides quality teacher training. Only then can we ensure that every child in India receives a quality education to prepare students for the 21st century.

Without debate, it can indeed be said that teacher training is a critical component of school education in India. It can help to improve the quality of education, reduce teacher turnover rates, and better equip teachers to meet the needs of students. While challenges must be addressed, teacher training is an essential investment in the future of education in India.

NEP-2020 has recommended for the quality education for all by creating an educating system which is deeply rooted in Indian ethos and rebuilds India as a Global Knowledge Power. Building Cross disciplinary collaboration in Education through Liberal Arts Education is a welcome intention. These efforts are essential in improving the quality of education in the region and ensuring that teachers are better equipped to meet the needs of their students.

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