



Teacher Education Reform in the NEP Era

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Abstract: *The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings transformative reforms to teacher education, placing strong emphasis on modernizing pedagogical practices to align with an evolving knowledge-driven society. A major highlight of the policy is the introduction of the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which aims to promote a holistic and multidisciplinary framework of teacher preparation. The policy also underscores the importance of digital pedagogy and the cultivation of lifelong learning competencies. Under NEP 2020, the role of teachers is redefined - from mere transmitters of knowledge to mentors who guide learners in developing critical thinking, adaptability, and independent reasoning. This paradigm shift motivates students to adopt a future-oriented outlook, which involves envisioning possibilities, planning strategically, and working toward long-term goals despite uncertainty. Teachers trained within this framework are expected to integrate vocational exposure, problem-solving abilities, and socio-emotional learning into classroom practices, thereby fostering an environment conducive to future readiness. By recognizing teacher education as a cornerstone of educational transformation, NEP 2020 enhances the quality and professionalism of teaching. This article examines how the teacher education reforms proposed under NEP 2020 are intrinsically linked to future orientation and their potential to prepare learners for an opportunity-rich world.*

Keywords: *Envisioning Possibilities, Socio-Emotional, NEP, ITEP.*

Introduction: Teacher education in India has undergone a transformative shift with the introduction of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), which aims to align the education system with the demands of the 21st century. Recognizing teachers as the backbone of the education system, NEP 2020 emphasizes the need for high-quality, well-trained, and professionally competent educators who can foster critical thinking, creativity, and holistic development among students.

One of the most significant reforms introduced is the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), a four-year multidisciplinary course designed to replace the traditional fragmented teacher training system. This programme seeks to provide a strong foundation in subject knowledge, pedagogy, and practical teaching experience. By integrating theory with practice, it ensures that future teachers are better equipped to handle diverse classroom environments and adopt innovative teaching methodologies. The policy also highlights the importance of continuous professional development through regular training, workshops, and digital learning platforms. With the growing role of technology in education, teachers are encouraged to develop digital competencies and adapt to modern teaching tools. Furthermore, NEP 2020 promotes the use of local languages as a medium of instruction, enabling teachers to connect more effectively with students and enhance learning outcomes.

Another key aspect of teacher education reform in the NEP era is the focus on merit-based recruitment, transparent processes, and improved working conditions to elevate the status of the teaching profession. By ensuring better career progression and support systems, the policy aims to attract talented individuals into teaching. In conclusion, teacher education reform under NEP 2020 represents a paradigm shift towards a more holistic, inclusive, and future-ready education system. It not only strengthens the quality of teaching but also plays a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and social fabric of the nation.

History to Teacher Education Policies: The evolution of teacher education in India reflects a gradual shift from traditional practices to a more structured and professional system, culminating in significant reforms under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Historically, teacher education in India dates back to the ancient Gurukul system, where teaching was considered a noble duty rather than a formal profession. Knowledge was imparted orally, and there was no structured training for teachers. During the colonial period under British rule, teacher education became more organized. Institutions for teacher training were established, and a formal curriculum was introduced. However, the focus was largely on producing teachers who could serve administrative needs rather than fostering critical thinking or innovation.

After independence in 1947, India recognized the importance of trained teachers in nation-building. Several commissions, such as the University Education Commission (1948–49) and the Kothari Commission (1964–66), emphasized improving teacher quality and professional standards. This led to the establishment of teacher training colleges and the introduction of degrees like B.Ed. and D.Ed. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) was later set up as a statutory body in 1995 to regulate and maintain standards in teacher education across the country. Despite these efforts, teacher education continued to face challenges such as outdated curricula, lack of practical training, and insufficient integration of technology. Recognizing these issues, reforms were introduced in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, including the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (2009), which aimed to make teacher preparation more child centred and inclusive.

A major transformation occurred with the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. This policy envisions a complete overhaul of teacher education by emphasizing quality, multidisciplinary learning, and professional standards. One of its key features is the introduction of the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which combines subject knowledge with pedagogical training. The NEP also aims to phase out substandard teacher training institutions and ensure that all teachers are well-qualified by 2030. Furthermore, NEP 2020 highlights the use of digital technology, continuous professional development, and merit-based recruitment of teachers. It promotes holistic education, critical thinking, and experiential learning, aligning teacher education with the needs of a modern knowledge-based society.

Objectives of the study

1. To establish teaching as a highly skilled and respected profession through standardized, rigorous programs like the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP).
2. To shift from rote learning to developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and experiential learning in students.
3. To equip teachers with digital skills and promote the use of platforms like DIKSHA platform for effective, modern pedagogy.
4. To ensure lifelong learning for teachers through regular training, upskilling, and adherence to professional standards.
5. To prepare teachers for interdisciplinary teaching, inclusive education, and the overall development of learners (cognitive, social, and emotional).

Methodology: The methodology used in this research work and in the studies on teacher education reform under the National Education Policy 2020 is generally qualitative, descriptive, and policy-analytical in nature. Researchers primarily rely on document analysis, examining official policy texts such as NEP 2020, government reports, and frameworks like the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education to understand the scope and direction of reforms. A survey method is also commonly used, where data is collected from teacher educators, student teachers, and in-service teachers through questionnaires or interviews. These tools help capture perceptions, readiness, challenges, and attitudes toward the new reforms, including digital learning initiatives like the DIKSHA platform.

Rational Development of Teacher Education: The rational development of teacher education in the era of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is guided by the need to align teaching practices with the demands of a rapidly changing, knowledge-driven society. It emphasizes a logical, evidence-based, and systematic transformation of teacher preparation to ensure quality education for all learners. One of the primary rationales behind these reforms is the recognition that teachers are the most critical factor in determining learning outcomes. Earlier systems often produced inadequately trained teachers due to fragmented courses and outdated pedagogies. NEP 2020 addresses this by introducing the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which ensures a strong foundation in both subject knowledge and pedagogical skills. This integrated approach eliminates redundancy and enhances efficiency in teacher training. Another important aspect is the focus on multidisciplinary education. The policy promotes teacher education within universities and colleges that offer diverse disciplines, thereby enabling future teachers to develop broader perspectives and critical thinking abilities. This shift is rational because it prepares teachers to handle interdisciplinary learning environments and fosters creativity in classrooms.

The rational development also includes the standardization and regulation of teacher education institutions. Substandard institutions are to be phased out, ensuring that only quality institutions remain operational. This step is crucial to maintain uniform standards and accountability across the country. Technology integration is another key component. NEP 2020 emphasizes digital literacy, online teaching tools, and blended learning methods. This is a logical response to the increasing role of technology in education, especially highlighted during situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers are now expected to be technologically competent to facilitate effective learning. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is also emphasized, requiring teachers to engage in lifelong learning. This ensures that educators remain updated with new teaching methodologies, curriculum changes, and global best practices. It reflects a rational understanding that teacher education cannot be a one-time process. Lastly, the rational development of teacher education under NEP 2020 is rooted in improving quality, relevance, and accountability. By integrating multidisciplinary learning, modern pedagogy, technology, and continuous development, the policy creates a well-structured and future-ready framework for teacher education in India.

Findings of the Study: Studies on teacher education reform under the National Education Policy 2020 highlight a major structural transformation in how teachers are prepared. A key finding is the introduction of the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which replaces fragmented pathways like B.Ed. and D.El.Ed. This shift promotes multidisciplinary training and aims to standardize quality through frameworks such as the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, making teacher preparation more rigorous and professional.

Another significant finding is the transition from traditional content-based teaching to competency-based and learner-centered pedagogy. Teachers are now expected to facilitate critical thinking, problem-solving, and inquiry-based learning rather than rely on rote methods. This marks a paradigm shift in classroom practices, aligning teaching methods with the broader educational goals of holistic and experiential learning.

Technology integration has emerged as a central component of teacher education in the NEP era. Studies emphasize the growing importance of digital platforms, blended learning, and tools like DIKSHA platform.

Teachers are required to develop digital literacy and adaptability, making technology not just a support tool but a core aspect of pedagogy and professional competence.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is another crucial reform area. Research indicates that teacher education is no longer viewed as a one-time qualification but as a continuous, lifelong process supported by frameworks such as the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) (Paul, 2024; Sharma, Mittal and Zayan, 2023). This approach ensures that educators consistently upgrade their skills, engage in reflective practices, and adapt to evolving educational needs (Rudupra, 2024).

Studies also highlight a broader redefinition of the teacher's role, extending beyond classroom instruction to include leadership, research, and innovation. Teacher education programs now incorporate elements of educational leadership, institutional management, and action research, positioning teachers as contributors to knowledge creation and future school leaders.

Conclusion: In conclusion, teacher education reform under the National Education Policy 2020 represents a significant shift toward improving the quality, relevance, and professionalism of teaching in India. The policy envisions well-trained, competent, and reflective teachers who can meet the demands of 21st-century education through innovative and learner-centered practices. Overall, NEP 2020 provides a transformative framework that has the potential to reshape teacher education in India. If implemented effectively, it can lead to the development of skilled educators who play a crucial role in achieving quality education and national development goals.

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