

Professional Growth of Teachers in the NEP 2020 Framework

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ABSTRACT

Teacher professional development (TPD) refers to the continuous learning process by which educators enhance their knowledge, skills and effectiveness in the classroom. It plays a critical role in improving teaching quality, student outcomes and personal growth for educators. Within the framework of India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, TPD is identified as a key factor for educational transformation. The NEP-2020 stresses the empowerment of teachers as critical to the future of the country. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge ethos and traditions and at the same time must also be well-versed with the advancements in education and pedagogy. Trained teachers develop better ranges of practical concepts, skills and strategies for teaching and assessments. The presence of outstanding and enthusiastic teachers that cultivate excellence and innovation is the core determinant of quality. The aim is to achieve the best, motivated, energized and capable faculty in HEIs towards advancing students, institutions and profession. Providing an enabling environment for appointments, professional development, career progression, retention, autonomy, a culture of excellence, appropriate incentivizing for outstanding and innovative teaching, research, institutional service and community are crucial to achieve our learning targets. This study provides an in-depth analysis of how NEP 2020 emphasizes the teacher Professional development (TPD) by highlighting the importance of latest pedagogies, competency-based learning, latest innovations and advances in their professions. It also tries to explore key initiatives of NEP 2020 and professional standards of teachers which help them to require training in high quality content as well as pedagogy. These initiatives are designed to empower teachers with new skills, promote professional growth, and contribute to the creation of a resilient, innovative, and inclusive education system. It also tries to emphasize the urgent need for additional special educators for certain areas of school education. This article aims to inspire educators and policymakers alike to adopt these transformative strategies and to prioritize teacher professional development as a cornerstone of quality education.

Keywords: *Teacher Professional Development, NEP 2020, Transformative strategies, competency-based learning, pedagogies*

Teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation. It is because of this noblest role that the teacher in India was the most respected member of society. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) emphasizes not just only the revitalization of the curriculum but also the role of teachers within the education system.

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Teachers, as emphasized by the NEP, are no longer seen as mere transmitters of pre-existing knowledge. Instead, they are envisioned as facilitators of holistic learning, innovators, and active contributors to the academic and emotional development of students (Ministry of Education, 2020). As the education system has evolved, teacher quality has become crucial for sustainable nation-building. Professional teaching standards aim to improve the teaching profession and contribute to the country's progress. Despite employing nearly 9.7 million teachers in India, there is still a shortage of 1 million teachers, and the demand for high-quality teachers continues to rise. To attract and retain talented individuals, significant changes are needed in the way the profession is viewed and practiced. (NPST 2020.)

Recognizing the essential role of teachers, NEP-2020 stresses a strong emphasis on Teachers Professional Development (TPD), aiming to create a robust, flexible, and adaptive framework that focuses on continuous improvement. The policy advocates for lifelong learning for teachers, with regular opportunities for skill enhancement, reflective practice, and pedagogical innovation (Bhargava & Pathak, 2020). NEP 2020 requires teachers to complete 50 hours of CPD per year. CPD aims to promote lifelong learning, enhance teaching abilities and help teachers adapt to various students population.

This study emphasizes an in-depth analysis of how NEP 2020 emphasizes the teacher Professional development (TPD) by highlighting the importance of latest pedagogies, competency-based learning, latest innovations and advances in their professions. It also tries to explore key initiatives of NEP 2020 and professional standards of teachers which help them to require training in high quality content as well as pedagogy.

Objectives

1. To study teacher professional development in the context of NEP 2020.
2. To study the integration of technology in the teacher professional development.
3. To study the blended learning and pedagogical innovation.
4. To study the school based and peer learning models.
5. To study the research on teachers professional development.
6. To study the challenges and opportunities for implementing teachers professional development.

METHODOLOGIES

The data used in this study are secondary data which are descriptive in nature. Therefore, the researcher has collected the data from various journals, books, reports, internet sites, newspapers etc.

1. NEP and Teacher Professional Development

The National Education Policy (NEP) of India, introduced in 2020, places significant emphasis on teachers' professional development as a key factor for improving the quality education. The NEP emphasizes the need for continuous professional development of teachers through out their careers. It suggests that teachers should be provided with opportunities for ongoing learning and upgrading of their skills, knowledge and pedagogical practices. The policy advocates for creating an ecosystem where teachers are lifelong learners, with access to training programs, workshop and digital resources. The NEP proposes the establishment of a National Mission for mentoring, which would facilitate the creation of a robust system for mentoring teachers at all levels. Teacher education is one of the major focal points of NEP. The policy

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recommends the integration of modern, interdisciplinary and practical approaches into teacher training programs. The aim is to prepare teachers for the diverse needs of students, fostering critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills. This policy also highlights the importance of leveraging technology to enhance teacher's skills and provide them with flexible learning options. Online platforms, digital content and virtual professional development programs will enable teachers to access training materials from anywhere, anytime. To motivate teachers, NEP suggests a performance-based system for assessing and rewarding incentives such as promotions, salary increases, or recognition for teachers who consistently demonstrate excellence in teaching and professional development. The policy envisions regular in-service training for teachers to keep them updated on new educational methodologies, curriculum changes and classroom innovations.

2. Integration of Technology

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the integration of technology in the education, particularly in teacher professional development. Now-a-days, as the world becomes digitized, the knowledge of teachers must be technology-based so that they can improve their capabilities to introduce digital tools into their classrooms. The NEP emphasizes the need for teachers to leverage the opportunities offered by the digital era to enhance their skills, improve pedagogy, and stay informed of global advancements in education (Rajesh & Rao, 2021).

To this end, the NEP promotes the use of digital platforms such as SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) and DIKSHA (Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing). These platforms offer a wealth of resources, including training modules, online courses, videos, and reading materials designed to aid teachers in their professional growth. SWAYAM provides access to online courses across a wide array of subjects, while DIKSHA focuses on content specifically tailored for teacher education, offering both pedagogical resources and subject-specific materials (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Moreover, these platforms provide teachers with access to global best practices in teaching and learning, fostering a more connected and informed teaching community. By engaging with digital tools and international resources, Indian teachers can benefit from diverse perspectives, enhancing the quality of their teaching and contributing to a global exchange of educational ideas (Mukherjee, 2021).

The NEP's push for the integration of technology is not merely about increasing digital literacy among teachers but about transforming the teaching-learning process. It encourages teachers to move beyond traditional methods and experiment with blended learning models, flipped classrooms, and interactive technologies like educational apps and learning management systems. In doing so, teachers are not only better equipped to teach in modern classrooms but also positioned to innovate and lead in an increasingly digital educational environment (Sharma, 2020).

3. Blended Learning and Pedagogical Innovation

National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes blended learning models, which is a teaching and learning method that combines online and in-person learning and it's an example of pedagogical innovation. Pedagogical innovation is the process of introducing new teaching strategies to improve learning outcomes. Blended learning can help teachers be more effective and meet the needs of all types of learners. By combining face-to-face interaction with online learning components, blended learning enables teachers to cater to diverse learning styles and

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ensure that education is accessible, interactive, and student-centered (Rao & Chakraborty, 2021).

In response to this shift, The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) stresses the need for professional development programs which helps teachers for acquiring the skills to implement digital pedagogy effectively. Teachers are trained not only to use interactive platforms but also to integrate a variety of technological tools, such as educational apps, virtual classrooms, and collaborative learning software. These tools are designed to create a more engaging and flexible learning environment, where students can interact with content in ways that go beyond traditional lectures (Patel & Sharma, 2021).

Blended learning allows students to have more flexibility and control over the time, place and pace of their learning while still benefiting from in-person interactions and instruction. Blended learning offers a balance between direct teacher-student interaction and independent online study, facilitating a more personalized and flexible learning environment. In a blended learning environment, teachers transition from being the sole source of knowledge to facilitators or guides. Instead of delivering all content through traditional lectures, they use in-person time to engage students in work and problem solving activities. Teachers support students as they work through online lessons independently, providing guidance when necessary.

Moreover, the policy emphasizes the importance of assessment tools that are tailored to the needs of diverse learners. Traditional assessment methods may not fully capture the competencies of students in a blended learning environment, which requires teachers to adopt formative assessment strategies. These include the use of digital platforms for real-time feedback, interactive quizzes, and project-based assessments that reflect a student's understanding of both in-class and online materials (Rajput & Kumar, 2021).

4. School based and peer learning model

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates for a school-based professional development model and tries to stress the importance of teachers engaging in ongoing learning within their immediate work environment. This policy encourages peer learning and school-based learning models that focus on creating an inclusive and interactive learning environment. NEP 2020 encourages peer learning as a more effective learning process than traditional methods. Peer learning can be done through various models and strategies, where an older or more experienced student teaches a younger or less experienced peer. NEP 2020 recommends reconfiguring the school education curriculum and pedagogy to be more responsive to the needs and interests of learners at different stages of development. NEP 2020 encourages teaching and learning to be more interactive, with more questions and activities that are fun, creative, collaborative and exploratory. NEP also promotes collaborative learning communities, encouraging teachers to engage in peer learning, share best practices and collaborate with colleagues. This creates a supportive environment for professional growth and enhances teaching effectiveness.

This model of professional development is further supported by the establishment of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), where teachers meet regularly to collaborate on lesson planning, analyze student performance data, and reflect on teaching and learning practices. PLCs provide an ongoing platform for teachers to engage in action research, where they can test new strategies in the classroom, collect data on student learning, and refine their methods based on evidence. This process of continuous improvement ensures that professional

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development is not a one-time event but an integral part of a teacher's daily routine (Das & Nair, 2021).

Moreover, the school-based model helps the students for improving their potentialities and become success in their life. Teachers within a school work together towards common goals, such as improving literacy rates, closing achievement gaps, or enhancing student engagement. By working collaboratively, teachers are more likely to take ownership of their professional development and commit to lifelong learning, which is a key objective of the NEP 2020.

5. Research on teachers professional development

Professional development of teachers is a lifelong process which begins with the initial preparation that teachers receive and continues until retirement. Research on the professional development of teachers is extensive and covers various aspects such as effective strategies, impacts on teaching practices, student outcomes and the role of leadership. Effective professional development can lead to improved instructional strategies, greater knowledge of content and better classroom management. There is a strong correlation between high-quality professional development and improved student achievement. When teachers improve their skills, students are more likely to benefit academically. Sustained professional development allows educators to apply new skills over time and receive feedback. Professional development that encourages collaboration among teachers fosters a community of practice, leading to shared knowledge and support. Professional development should connect to improving student learning. This approach ensures that teachers understand how their development is linked to their student's success.

Recent studies have also underscored the importance of involving teachers in the design and planning of their own professional development. According to Singh and Patel (2020), when teachers are given the autonomy to co-create their professional development plans, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning and are better equipped to implement the new skills and knowledge in their classrooms. This sense of ownership is crucial in fostering long-term commitment to professional growth and ensuring that new pedagogical strategies are applied effectively. By advocating for collaborative, reflective, and contextually grounded professional development, the NEP 2020 integrates global best practices in teacher education with the specific needs of the Indian educational landscape. The policy emphasizes the creation of professional learning communities, peer mentorship, and school-based learning models that allow teachers to engage in ongoing, meaningful professional growth while remaining closely connected to their teaching environments. This approach ensures that teachers are not only recipients of professional development but active participants in shaping their professional journeys.

6. Challenges and Opportunities

While the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a strong framework for teacher professional development (TPD), its successful implementation faces several challenges. Lack of infrastructure availability is one of the important barriers, particularly in rural and remote areas. The policy emphasizes the integration of technology into professional development through platforms like SWAYAM and DIKSHA, yet the digital divide remains a significant issue. Many rural schools lack reliable internet access, adequate digital infrastructure, and the technical support necessary to fully implement technology-based learning programs (Rao & Kumar, 2021). IN this condition, teachers face difficulty to engage with online professional resources which could limit the equitable access to the benefits of NEP 2020.

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One significant barrier to professional development is time constraints. Teachers often have heavy workloads and competing responsibilities, such as grading papers, attending meetings and preparing lesson plans, leaving little time for professional development activities. Additionally, teachers may have personal responsibilities outside of work, such as caring for children or elderly family members that further limit their availability for professional development activities.

Another barrier to professional development is inadequate funding. Teachers may not have access to the resources necessary to attend professional development opportunities or purchase instructional materials that can enhance their teaching practices. Limited access to relevant resources, such as technology or instructional materials, can also be a significant barrier to professional development.

Additionally, a lack of support from school leadership can undermine teacher motivation to pursue ongoing professional development. Without leadership support, teachers may not see the value in engaging in professional development activities, leading to a lack of motivation to pursue ongoing learning and growth. Limited access to relevant resources is another barrier to professional development for teachers. Access to technology, instructional materials and other resources can vary widely between schools and districts, creating disparities in opportunities for professional growth (Peyton, 2019). The policy also promotes innovation in teaching, particularly through the use of blended learning models and multidisciplinary approaches. Teachers are encouraged to integrate creative pedagogical strategies that blend various subject areas, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students. These opportunities for innovative teaching not only enhance the learning experience but also prepare students for a future that demands adaptability and creativity (Das & Reddy, 2020).

In conclusion, while NEP 2020 presents several implementation challenges—such as infrastructure gaps, resistance to change, and the need for more tailored professional development in higher education—the opportunities it offers for transforming the teaching profession are immense. By equipping teachers with the resources, skills, and collaborative networks necessary to succeed in an increasingly complex educational landscape, NEP 2020 has the potential to usher in a new era of professional growth and educational excellence.

CONCLUSION

Teachers truly shape the future of our children - and, therefore, the future of our nation. It is because of this noblest role that the teacher in India was the most respected member of society. Only the very best and most learned became teachers. Therefore, the National Education Policy 2020 stresses the importance of digital literacy, peer engagement, and pedagogical innovation of teachers professional development. By integrating these key elements into professional

development frameworks, NEP 2020 aligns with global trends in education, emphasizing the importance of teachers as lifelong learners and agents of change. The policy recognizes that teachers must not only impart knowledge but also try to develop critical thinking, creativity and adaptability among their students.

NEP 2020 focuses the continuous learning for educators, by providing access to digital platforms, fostering collaborative learning environments, and encouraging the use of blended learning models and equips the teachers with the skills which is very essential for today's classroom.

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Moreover, NEP 2020 stresses the empowerment of teachers for addressing the unique challenges of their local environments, whether in rural or urban settings. This context-driven approach, makes professional development effective for fostering the sense of ownership and autonomy among the educators and acquiring the skills and knowledge through such programs.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a landmark reform in India's education system, aiming to transform the educational landscape by fostering a more holistic, flexible and integrated approach. Teachers play a pivotal role in implementing these changes, and their professional development is crucial for the policy's success. The success of this policy will ultimately depend on collective efforts to overcome the challenges of implementation, ensuring that every teacher, regardless of location or resource availability, can benefit from the transformative potential of professional development.

With a strong commitment to innovation, collaboration, and ongoing professional growth, NEP 2020 lays the foundation for a future where teachers are not just facilitators of knowledge but also leaders of educational change playing a pivotal role in shaping the future of India's students and society.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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