

## A Critical Analysis of NEP-2020's Aspirations and Challenges

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### Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India focuses on reforming teacher education programs to meet the changing needs of school education and the global landscape (Sharma & Mittal, 2023). NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of incorporating local, indigenous knowledge systems and folk pedagogy into teaching-learning practices to create an inclusive and effective education system (Prabhakar, 2023). The policy recognizes the role of teachers as the core of the educational process and aims to enhance their knowledge and expertise through access to information and communication technology, teacher trainings, and multidisciplinary approaches (Padmanabha, 2020). The proposed reforms in teacher education under NEP 2020 are seen as a tweaked version of India's conventional approaches, incorporating elements of global education policy discourses and traditional pedagogical heritages (Hijam, 2022). The NEP 2020 aims to ensure that teachers receive the best training programs and integrates teacher education into interdisciplinary departments and institutions (Kaur & Sangha, 2022).

NEP-2020 proposes a bold overhaul of Indian teacher education, with a 4-year integrated B.Ed. becoming mandatory by 2030. This holistic program combines subject expertise with pedagogy, foundational skills, and Indian values in multidisciplinary institutions. Quality measures include standardized exams, diverse faculty, and PhD pedagogical training. While promising, challenges like infrastructure, quality assurance, and societal perception require collaborative efforts for successful implementation. This research contributes to shaping NEP-2020's transformative vision for teacher education.

**Keywords:** Teacher Education, NEP-2020, Multidisciplinary Curriculum, Continuous Professional Development, India, Teacher Quality, Educational Reform

### Introduction and Nature of Teacher Education

The quality and extent of student achievement are widely recognized to depend significantly on teacher competence, sensitivity, and motivation. The National Council for Teacher Education defines teacher education as a comprehensive program involving education, research, and training for

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individuals to teach across various levels, from pre-primary to higher education. This program is designed to foster the development of teacher proficiency and competence, empowering educators to meet the demands of the profession and tackle its challenges. According to Goods Dictionary of Education, teacher education encompasses all formal and non-formal activities and experiences that qualify individuals to assume responsibilities in the educational profession effectively.

During the years 1906-1956, the teacher preparation program was referred to as teacher training, focusing primarily on skill training and preparing teachers as mechanics or technicians. This approach had narrower goals and limited scope. In the words of W.H. Kilpatric, "Training is given to animals and circus performers, while education is to human beings." Presently, teacher education goes beyond mere skill training, encompassing teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory, and professional skills. In essence, Teacher Education is the sum of Teaching Skills, Pedagogical theory, and Professional skills.

Teacher education is an on-going process, combining pre-service and in-service components that complement each other. The International Encyclopaedia of Teaching and Teacher Education emphasize three phases: Pre-service, Induction, and In-service, treating them as integral parts of a continuous process. Contrary to the belief that "Teachers are born, not made," teacher education operates on the principle that "Teachers are made, not born." Recognizing teaching as both an art and a science, it emphasizes the acquisition of not only knowledge but also skills known as "tricks of the trade."

This comprehensive approach extends beyond formal teacher training, encompassing community programs, adult education, non-formal education, literacy initiatives, and societal development activities. Teacher education remains dynamic and evolving, adapting to the changing needs of society to prepare competent teachers. The curriculum, design, structure, organization, and transaction modes form the crux of teacher education, with its knowledge base drawing from various disciplines. Unlike a mere blend of concepts from other fields, teacher education's knowledge base represents a distinct "gestalt" arising from conceptual blending. Differentiated into stage-specific programs, teacher education ensures a specialized and diversified knowledge base across stages, tailored to prepare teachers effectively for their roles. The system operates through interdependence among Inputs, Processes, and Outputs, emphasizing its holistic nature.

### **Need and Objectives of Teacher Education**

The importance of teacher education is underscored by the American Commission on Teacher Education, stating that the quality of a nation depends significantly on the quality of its citizens, which, in turn, relies heavily on the quality of their education—something influenced, to a critical extent, by the quality of teachers. Recognizing this, President Clinton emphasized the need for talented and dedicated teachers in every classroom, stressing the importance of recruiting promising individuals into teaching and providing them with high-quality preparation and training.

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Several reasons drive the necessity for teacher education:

1. **Shift to Comprehensive Education:** The traditional focus on training teachers needs to evolve into a more comprehensive educational approach. This shift is crucial for positively influencing curriculum implementation, pupil learning, and societal transformation. Emphasis should be placed on academic preparation, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical skills, commitment, sensitivity, and motivation.
2. **Holistic Teacher Building:** Effective education depends not only on teachers possessing requisite knowledge and skills but also on their commitment to ensuring all students achieve high learning levels. A holistic teacher education approach, beyond mere training, is essential.
3. **Addressing Personal Beliefs:** Teacher education should critically examine individuals' beliefs, values, and moral codes from their upbringing. Forming a vision of good teaching is a central task.
4. **Complex Decision-Making:** Teachers encounter daily complex decisions that require diverse knowledge and judgment. Understanding student learning in various contexts is crucial, and teachers should prioritize gathering information while keeping the student's best interests in mind.
5. **Reshaping Attitudes:** While teacher education may not change personalities, it can reshape attitudes toward others, fostering a professional orientation toward teaching.
6. **Crucial Role in Education:** Teacher performance is identified as the most crucial input in education. Capable and committed teachers are essential for the effective implementation of education policies, particularly with advancements in technology. Well-planned pre-service and in-service training programs are vital for teachers to adapt to the evolving educational landscape.

The objectives of teacher education include offering chances to observe and engage with children, fostering effective communication and connections with them. It aims to facilitate self-learning, reflection, and assimilation of new ideas, promoting capacities for self-directed learning, critical thinking, and collaborative work. Additionally, teacher education seeks to provide opportunities for self-discovery and understanding of others, including beliefs and emotions. It aims to develop skills such as self-analysis, self-evaluation, adaptability, flexibility, creativity, and innovation. The program also emphasizes enhancing understanding, knowledge, and critical examination of disciplinary knowledge and social realities. It encourages connecting subject matter with the social context and cultivating professional skills in pedagogy, observation, documentation, analysis, drama, craft, story-telling, and reflective inquiry.

### **Teacher Education in Indian Scenario**

Even in challenging circumstances, the well-established tradition of teaching and learning in India

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has maintained its inherent strength. The post-independence era witnessed significant endeavors to foster and reshape teacher education. The system of teacher preparation faced considerable challenges due to the expansion of school education and efforts to universalize elementary education. Inherited from British rule in 1946, the foreign model of teacher preparation underwent substantial adaptation and updates to align with local needs, making it more context-based, responsive, and dynamically tailored to India's specific requirements. The present teacher education system is reinforced by a network of national, provincial, and district-level resource institutions collaborating to enhance the quality and effectiveness of both pre-service and in-service teacher preparation programs across the country.

➤ **Pillars of Teacher Education:**

- **NCERT:** NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) is an autonomous organization in India established in 1961. Through research and resources, NCERT supports the professional development of educators, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet national standards and address diverse learning needs. It develops and publishes textbooks, sets curriculum guidelines, conducts educational research, and provides training for teachers, playing a pivotal role in shaping the education system in the country.
- **SCERT:** SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training) is a state-level body in India that develops state-specific curriculum, publishes textbooks, conducts teacher training, and engages in educational research to enhance and support the education system within its jurisdiction.
- **NCTE:** NCTE stands for the National Council for Teacher Education. It is a statutory body in India established in 1995. The primary role of NCTE is to oversee and regulate teacher education programs across the country. It sets standards for teacher education institutions, provides recognition to them, and ensures the maintenance of quality in teacher education.
- **DIET:** DIET stands for District Institute of Education and Training. These are institutions in India that focus on teacher education and educational research at the district level. DIETs were established to improve the quality of elementary education in districts. They play a crucial role in conducting training programs for teachers, developing teaching-learning materials, and engaging in educational research to enhance the overall educational system within a district.
- **TEIs:** TEIs in the Indian context typically refer to Teacher Education Institutions. These institutions are responsible for providing training and education to individuals aspiring to become teachers. TEIs play a crucial role in shaping the skills

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and knowledge of future educators. They include colleges and universities that offer various teacher education programs, such as Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed).

➤ **Policies and Commissions:**

- **University Education Commission (1948-49):** The Radhakrishnan Commission identified shortcomings in training colleges and suggested a revamped teacher education program, emphasizing a harmonious blend of theory and practice. It proposed recruiting trainees with firsthand school teaching experience and advocated for a flexible curriculum adaptable to social situations.
- **Secondary Education Commission (1952-53):** The Mudaliar Commission extensively examined teacher and training issues, proposing three types of institutions: Primary, Secondary, and Training Colleges for certificate holders and graduates. It endorsed training in co-curricular activities, refresher courses, and research for M.Ed degrees, supporting dynamic teaching methods.
- **Kothari Commission:** The Kothari Commission emphasized enhancing teacher education for better quality. It proposed improvements, including summer schools and correspondence courses for untrained teachers. Emphasizing "quality," it recommended two years for primary teacher training and one year for graduate students. Following this, universities introduced M.A. degrees in Education.
- **National Policy on Education (1968):** The National Policy on Education (1968) was a significant initiative in India, aiming to establish a uniform education system. It introduced the 10+2+3 system, emphasized scientific and technological advancements, and promoted vocational education. The policy sought to reduce educational disparities and set the stage for subsequent reforms.
- **National Commission on Teachers (1983-85):** Prof. D.P. Chattopadhyaya's Commission proposed improvements to education, suggesting criteria like physique and linguistic ability for teaching trainees. It recommended an inclusive selection process with objective tests, discussions, and interviews. Emphasizing professional preparation, it focused on Education study, practice teaching, and skill acquisition.
- **National Policy on Education (1986):** The National Policy on Education (1986) recommended free and compulsory education up to the age of 14, emphasized a child-centered approach, promoted technology use, and advocated for vocational education. It also underscored the need for continuous evaluation, community participation, and local involvement in educational planning.

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- **Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990):** The Acharya Ramamurti Committee (1990) proposed key recommendations to enhance the Indian education system, advocating increased financial support, curriculum restructuring, research promotion, and prioritizing teacher training. The committee aimed to enhance overall education quality and effectiveness in India.
- **National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005):** NCF 2005 recommended a learner-centric, holistic approach with a flexible curriculum, interdisciplinary integration, emphasis on critical thinking, and diverse perspectives. It aimed for a child-friendly, inclusive environment, fostering creativity, and aligning education with dynamic societal needs.
- **National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE 2010):** NCFTE 2010 emphasized learner-centric approaches, technology integration, and practical classroom skills. It advocated a holistic view of teacher education, including social and emotional development, to enhance teacher quality and effectiveness aligned with evolving educational needs.

#### **Challenges in the Current State of Teacher Education:**

1. **Low-Quality TEIs:** Over 10,000 profit-driven TEIs compromise education quality, offering subpar training with unqualified faculty, resulting in ill-prepared teachers and impacting educational standards.
2. **Regulatory Challenges:** Ineffective regulations fail to enforce quality standards and prevent malpractices like degree selling, encouraging substandard practices and hindering innovation in teacher education.
3. **Inadequate Multidisciplinary Learning:** Traditional single-subject B.Ed. programs lack multidisciplinary perspectives crucial for effective teaching. Teachers need broader knowledge in psychology, sociology, and philosophy to meet diverse student needs.
4. **Single-disciplinary Focus:** Stand-alone TEIs emphasize single-subject B.Ed. programs, neglecting pedagogy and holistic education, resulting in teachers with limited pedagogical skills.
5. **Faculty Expertise Shortage:** TEIs often lack qualified faculty in education and related fields, weakening teacher preparation and limiting exposure to cutting-edge pedagogical practices.
6. **Uneven Admission Standards:** Admission tests lack standardization, disadvantaging students from certain backgrounds and creating an uneven playing field.

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7. **Limited Field Experience:** Prospective teachers lack opportunities for essential experiences like student-teaching, crucial for developing effective teaching skills and understanding real-world challenges.
8. **Insufficient Researcher Training:** Ph.D. graduates lack pedagogy skills, weakening the link between research and teaching, representing a missed opportunity for effectively bridging research and practice.
9. **Stagnant In-service Development:** In-service training programs are often limited, hindering teachers' adaptation to changing educational demands and resulting in outdated teaching practices.

### **National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020)**

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) is a comprehensive framework that outlines the vision and roadmap for transforming the education system in India. Approved by the Union Cabinet in July 2020, NEP-2020 marks a significant shift in the approach to education, focusing on holistic development, flexibility, and the integration of modern pedagogical practices.

Key features of NEP-2020 include a restructured school curriculum to foster critical thinking and conceptual understanding, the introduction of a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, emphasis on early childhood care and education, a flexible and multidisciplinary approach to higher education, and the promotion of research and innovation. NEP-2020 also envisions the use of technology in education, promoting teacher training and professional development, and addressing issues related to access, equity, and quality in the education system. The policy aims to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century, aligning education with the needs of a rapidly changing global landscape.

**Provisions for Teacher Education in NEP-2020:** Teacher education is a crucial component of the educational system, playing a vital role in shaping the next generation. The NEP-2020 acknowledges the need for radical action to address the prevailing challenges in teacher education, including the proliferation of substandard Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) and the absence of stringent regulatory measures.

1. **Strict Action against Substandard TEIs:** NEP-2020 seeks to enhance regulations for swift action against substandard TEIs. By 2030, only high-quality, multidisciplinary teacher education programs will be permitted, requiring a major overhaul. Regulations will have the power to close or restructure non-compliant TEIs within a year, encouraging improvement and eliminating underperforming institutions.
2. **Multidisciplinary HEIs for Teacher Education:** NEP-2020 requires transforming standalone TEIs into multidisciplinary institutions by 2030. These institutions will collaborate with various departments, enriching teacher education with diverse perspectives and fostering multidisciplinary learning environments.

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**3. 4-year Integrated B.Ed.:** NEP-2020 aims for a 4-year integrated B.Ed. as the minimum qualification for school teachers by 2030, enhancing the depth of teacher education. The program combines education with a specialized subject, offering a holistic dual-major Bachelor's degree. Scholarships will attract meritorious students to various B.Ed. programs, enabling comprehensive learning in both a subject and pedagogical skills.

**4. Specialized B.Ed. Options:** Providing tailored 2-year and 1-year B.Ed. options for graduates with existing Bachelor's degrees caters to individual needs and career paths. This flexibility increases accessibility and attracts diverse candidates to the teaching profession.

**5. Expert Faculty and School Networks:** HEIs with teacher education programs will collaborate with government and private schools, providing student-teaching, community service, adult education, and vocational education opportunities. This partnership ensures practical exposure for future teachers. HEIs must have qualified faculty in various disciplines and partnerships with diverse schools, creating an enriched learning environment. Direct exposure to real-world classrooms enhances practical skills and understanding for prospective teachers.

**6. Standardized Admission Tests:** NEP-2020 proposes standardized subject and aptitude tests by the National Testing Agency for pre-service teacher programs. The process, accommodating linguistic and cultural diversity, ensures a fair admission system, allowing candidates with the required skills and aptitude to enter the field.

**7. Diverse and Experienced Faculty:** NEP-2020 stresses faculty diversity in Education Departments, aiming to recruit experts in education, social sciences, science, math, and language education. This enriches teacher education, fostering a multidisciplinary approach. Continuous professional development for in-service teachers will be enhanced through existing institutional arrangements and platforms like SWAYAM/DIKSHA. Diverse faculty backgrounds contribute to a well-rounded learning experience for future teachers.

**8. Pedagogy Training for Ph.D. Students:** Mandatory credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy for all Ph.D. students, regardless of discipline, will bridge the gap between research and practice. This equips future researchers with essential teaching skills and fosters a stronger connection between research and classroom application.

**9. Teaching Experience for Ph.D. Students:** Enforcing a minimum number of teaching hours for Ph.D. students through assistantships or similar methods offers practical experience, honing their pedagogical skills. This exposure bridges the gap between theoretical research and real-world application, preparing Ph.D. graduates for roles in education or academia.

**10. Enriched In-service Teacher Training:** Enhancing current institutional setups for

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continuous professional development of college and university teachers ensures they stay abreast of evolving educational practices and technologies. This ongoing training elevates teaching quality and cultivates a culture of continuous learning in the education system.

**11. National Mentoring Mission:** A National Mission for Mentoring will leverage the expertise of retired senior faculty, including those proficient in Indian languages, to offer mentoring and professional support to university/college teachers. This initiative enhances the overall quality of teacher education by providing valuable guidance, fostering collaborative learning, improving teaching practices, and supporting career development for teachers.

By implementing these comprehensive provisions, the proposed reforms seek to address the current challenges in teacher education and create a robust system that prioritizes quality, multidisciplinary perspectives, practical experience, and ongoing professional development. This transformation has the potential to elevate the teaching profession, enhance student learning outcomes, and ultimately cultivate a future generation of well-equipped and dedicated educators.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, teacher education significantly shapes student achievement, adapting over time to address evolving challenges. Historical efforts and policy interventions, like the Radhakrishnan Commission and Kothari Commission, reflect a commitment to improving quality and quantity in teacher education. The current landscape faces issues like low-quality institutions, regulatory gaps, and faculty shortages. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) emerges as a transformative framework, emphasizing stringent actions against substandard institutions, multidisciplinary approaches, and a 4-year integrated B.Ed. program. NEP-2020 envisions a dynamic system, promoting standardized tests, diverse faculty, and ongoing professional development, aiming to elevate the teaching profession, enhance learning outcomes, and prepare educators for the future.

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