Capacity Building of Teachers: The Promise and Pathways of NEP 2020

Abstract

This review based article explores the opportunities, NEP 2020 presents for teacher capacity building, while also addresses the challenges ahead, such as infrastructure limitations, digital literacy gaps, and ensured equitable access to training centres across regions. Several reports show positive results where teacher training was integrated with proper capacity building programme as envisioned by NEP 2020. Along with NEP 2020 various government reports, case studies from few states and research articles related to teacher's professional development is reviewed. The study starts with a brief articulation of teachers' needs in professional development or capacity building for quality education and concludes with some critical remarks on the issue being explored and some practical suggestions for more effective capacity development programme.

Keywords: NEP 2020; Capacity building; Teacher education; Quality education; Opportunities, Challenges

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a revolutionary shift in India's educational landscape, with a particular emphasis on teachers, who are seen as central to the policy's success (Chakarbarty, 2023). NEP 2020 envisions a comprehensive framework for teacher development, focusing on improving the quality of teaching, enhancing professional development opportunities, and ensuring equitable access to training resources. 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 (Prabhu, 2012).Also, since teachers are the backbone of the education system, it is essential to build their capacities to guide, mentor, counsel and educate their students in this regard(Kulal et.al.,2024)

Traditionally**,** teacher education in India has been criticized for its theoretical approach, out dated pedagogy, and lack of practical exposure (NCFTE, 2009). Teachers need to be looked at as crucial mediating agents through whom curriculum is transacted and knowledge is co-constructed along with learners (NCFTE, 2009; Villegas-Reimers, 2003)). The NEP 2020 aims to address these issues by emphasizing experiential learning, pedagogical innovations, and competency-based teacher training. In alignment with these objectives, the NCFSE, 2023 provides a roadmap for subject-specific and pedagogy-focused learning frameworks, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to address diverse learning needs.

By addressing the critical role teacher's play in shaping curricula, influencing academic systems and guiding student careers, The National Achievement Survey, 2021, (Day, 1999) and other research findings suggested the need for various capacity building programmes in terms of the emerging need for quality education as discussed in NEP 2020.

A key feature of the policy is the introduction of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), which outlines career management, professional development, and appraisal systems to ensure teacher accountability and growth. This initiative, along with the launch of a quality four-year Integrated B.Ed. program and the implementation of Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs), seeks to enhance the recruitment, training, and classroom performance of teachers. (NIEPA, 2020; Patidar, 2025)

By ensuring at least 50 hours of CPD annually and mandating the completion of the NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement) program, the policy aims to nurture and empower teachers at all levels. NISHTHA is a transformative teacher training initiative designed to equip in-service educators with modern pedagogical skills. By moving beyond traditional teaching methods, it promotes learner-centred approaches, school-based assessment, and competency-based teaching. Teachers are encouraged to adopt innovative strategies, creating more engaging and interactive classrooms that cater to students' evolving needs in the 21st century. Additionally, the NEP emphasizes mentoring support and systemic collaboration to ensure teachers are well-prepared for the dynamic classroom environment (NCFSE, 2023).

Furthermore, the NEP encourages innovative practices such as the sharing of teachers across schools to address shortages in specialized subjects like arts and crafts and foster lifelong learning(Darling-Hammond,2010).The policy ensures the best of teachers and their contributions to the education system. This view of education, points to the need to take a fresh look at teacher preparation. Thus, the new concept of CPD provides opportunities which can cater to the unaddressed needs of teachers (Kalyani, 2024). A coherent teacher policy aligned with education policy is crucial for quality education, requiring objective-led frameworks addressing supply, demand, budget, and resources to meet educational goals (UNESCO,2019).Employers should provide time and opportunities for school-based CPD, incorporating external expertise, mentoring, and peer support, ensuring equitable access for all teachers, including those in remote areas(OECD,2024).

This policy will not only bring changes in the education system but also present a number of challenges and opportunities for teacher education. The new policy will focus on improving learning outcomes, strengthening accountability, providing quality infrastructure and enhancing employability opportunities for students (Govinda R.2020; Darling-Hammond et .al.,2010) The policy aims to improve teacher training, provide equitable education access, enhance employability, and promote on-going professional development through evidence-based practices and collaboration with universities (Arun,et.al,2022).

This article explores the transformative impact of NEP 2020 on teachers, discussing initiatives that support capacity building, professional development, and systemic reforms. It also delves into how these reforms aim to address long-standing issues such as inadequate teacher recruitment, poor service conditions, and lack of training, ultimately striving to create an empowered, respected, and motivated teaching workforce.

Empirical Studies on Teacher Professional Development in India

Several empirical studies examine the impact of professional development programs on teacher effectiveness in India.

Behera and Singh (2024) conducted an **e**valuative study on the NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement) program and found that while it improved pedagogical knowledge, the lack of follow-up mentoring limited its long-term effectiveness. Similarly, Mamung and Acharya (2024, Arun, et.al, 2022) highlighted that although teachers had a positive attitude towards NISHTHA training, challenges such as infrastructural deficiencies and inadequate post-training support hindered successful implementation. Verma (2022) studied teachers' engagement with DIKSHA, concluding that accessibility barriers and digital literacy gaps significantly reduced participation, particularly in rural areas. The NCERT (2023) Annual Report found that teachers who participated in blended CPD programs (both online and offline) demonstrated higher adaptability to the competency-based curriculum promoted under the National Education Policy, 2020. Banerjee, 2024 further emphasized that the NEP's teacher training framework is reshaping professional development by focusing on competency-based learning, but implementation remains inconsistent across states.

Furthermore, Azim Premji Foundation (2022) Report highlighted that continuous mentoring and community-based teacher networks enhance professional growth and classroom effectiveness. Kalyani (2024) added that NISHTHA's role in enhancing pedagogical practices has been significant, but the lack of structured career progression pathways for teachers remains a challenge. Patidar (2025) also assessed the impact of NISHTHA training and found that while pedagogical knowledge improved, its long-term sustainability depends on institutional support and periodic refresher training.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development report and NIEPA (2020) emphasizes that sustained; high-quality CPD improves teacher retention and professional competence. Their Education at a Glance Report (2024) and Paik (2020) found that teachers who undergo at least 60 hours of professional development annually demonstrate higher instructional quality and better student engagement. Similarly, UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report (2022) highlights that teacher training programs should be inclusive, practice-oriented, and designed to meet the needs of diverse learning communities.

Key Provisions of NEP 2020 for Teacher Training

1. The policy mandates a four-year integrated B.Ed. program as the minimum qualification for teachers by 2030. This is aimed at:

   - Improving the quality and depth of pedagogical training.
   - Providing subject-specific teacher education.
   - Ensuring that teachers undergo rigorous practical training and internships.

2. The policy introduces mandatory continuous professional development (CPD), requiring teachers to complete 50 hours of training annually through online and in-person workshops (NCFSE, 2023). To operationalize the CPD mandates of NEP 2020, the CBSE issued guidelines for implementing 50-hour CPD programs. These guidelines provide a structured roadmap for in-service teacher training, emphasizing:

   - Blended Learning Approaches – Combining face-to-face workshops, online courses, and school-based action research.
   - Subject-Specific Training – Ensuring that teachers receive domain-specific pedagogical guidance.
   - Competency-Based Evaluations – Using learning analytics and assessment tools to track teacher progress.
   - Mentorship & Peer Support Programs – Promoting teacher collaboration through school-based professional learning communities (PLCs).

   These guidelines ensure that CPD programs remain dynamic, scalable, and aligned with emerging educational needs.

3. NEP 2020 introduces National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) outlines framework, which sets:
   a. Competency-based teacher training benchmarks.
   b. Regular performance evaluations for teachers.
   c. Mentoring and peer-learning programs for professional growth.
4. The policy promotes large-scale digital CPD initiatives, leveraging platforms such as DIKSHA and SWAYAM to provide:
   a. Self-paced learning courses for teachers.
   b. AI-driven personalized learning paths.
   c. Interactive virtual training sessions with subject experts.
5. Establishment of National and Regional TEIs – Strengthening Teacher Training Institutes (TTIs) and regional teacher education hubs to ensure widespread access to high-quality teacher education.

Apart from this, NEP 2020 integrates several recommendations from previous policies and commission reports, ensuring a holistic, competency-based, and technology-driven approach to teacher training.

State Practices for NEP 2020 Implementation

While NEP 2020 implementation is on-going, several states have demonstrated innovative initiatives that align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, focusing on language inclusivity, teacher training, technology integration, and community engagement (Priyanka 2024). Karnataka's Multilingual Education Initiative supports mother tongue instruction up to Grade 5, promoting linguistic diversity and ensuring a seamless transition to other languages in later grades (MHRD, 2020). Similarly, Maharashtra has introduced inclusive education

practices through special education zones, ensuring accessibility for underprivileged communities and children with special needs (NCERT, 2023).

Teacher training and professional development are central to education reform. Rajasthan has pioneered teacher training reforms, emphasizing technology integration and modern pedagogical strategies to enhance classroom effectiveness. Kerala, known for its progressive education policies, has adopted competency-based assessments, prioritizing critical thinking and practical skills over rote memorization (NCFSE, 2023).

Technology integration and skill-based learning are also key focal points. Tamil Nadu has implemented digital classrooms, e-learning platforms, and virtual education initiatives to address the digital divide and enhance accessibility in remote areas (MoE, 2023). Meanwhile, Gujarat has launched skill development initiatives that incorporate vocational training and career-oriented curricula, preparing students for diverse career pathways (NCTE, 2022).

Furthermore, states have made significant strides in environmental education and community engagement. Himachal Pradesh's environmental education programs focus on hands-on sustainability initiatives, ensuring students learn about ecological conservation and environmental responsibility (NCERT, 2023).Uttarakhand, through its community engagement programs, actively involves parents, local communities, and grassroots organizations in the education system, fostering a collaborative approach to schooling and student development (Digital Education Report, MoE,2020). These diverse state-level initiatives collectively contribute to India's evolving educational landscape, ensuring inclusivity, innovation, and holistic learning for all students.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the opportunities presented by NEP 2020 for teacher capacity building.
2. To identify challenges in implementing NEP 2020 provisions.
3. To propose recommendations for effective capacity-building programs.

Methodology

This study employed a review method to understand and analyse the research on teacher training initiatives proposed by NEP, 2020. A total of 28 publications out of 72 were chosen for this study. Studies published between 2000 and 2025 were reviewed.

Below is a brief description of the literature search, screening strategy, and inclusion and exclusion criteria.

***Literature Search and Screening Strategy*:**

Literature search focuses on relevant government reports, academic articles, and case studies aligned with the objectives of the National Education Policy .The search was performed through databases such as SAGE publications, Taylor and Francis, JStor, Research Gate,

Springer, UNESDOC and Google Scholar. Subsequently, the researcher went through the research articles, and after the screening, articles were selected.

Inclusion and Exclusion Strategy:

Literature was included based on its direct relevance to teacher capacity building and excluded if it lacked substantial evidence or context-specific applicability. This approach ensured a comprehensive analysis of both theoretical and practical aspects of NEP 2020 implementation.

Results of the study

This section presents a detailed account of the study's outcomes, aligned with the objective of the study. The results are structured to reflect the key areas explored, offering a coherent understanding of the opportunities, implementation challenges within the framework of NEP 2020.

1. Opportunities Provided by NEP 2020

Professional Development and Autonomy: NEP 2020 prioritizes the continuous professional growth of teachers by promoting a culture of accountability, autonomy, and respect within the profession. It encourages reflective practice and the adoption of evidence-based teaching methodologies, empowering educators to make informed pedagogical decisions. This approach not only strengthens teacher competence but also equips them to effectively navigate diverse classroom environments and meet the varied needs of learners, thereby elevating the overall quality of education.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD): The annual mandate of 50 hours of CPD promotes lifelong learning and keeps teachers updated with modern pedagogical techniques. These programs incorporate digital resources, ensuring alignment with global education standards.

Collaborative Learning: NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of collaboration by encouraging partnerships between schools, universities, ed-tech companies, and research institutions. These alliances create dynamic opportunities for teachers to engage in knowledge exchange, stay updated with emerging pedagogical trends, and participate in innovative teaching practices. Involvement in collaborative projects, action research, and real-world case studies enriches professional learning, fosters creativity, and enhances the practical application of educational concepts in the classroom..

Ensure Capacity Building at All Levels: The peak ways of ensuring capacity building at all levels are the provision of a minimum of 50 hours of CPD for teachers annually, mentoring support and systemic collaboration for teachers and school leaders, providing mentoring support, and implementing the NISHTHA principles alongside customized training modules. NISHTHA, initiated by NCERT, focuses on enhancing teacher and school leader development from the elementary stage and offers a structured training program that includes various online

courses. Additionally, numerous tutorial training programs and research activities are available to support the personal and professional growth of teachers. NEP's participatory training methods identify and enhance teachers' existing skill sets. It emphasizes structured mentoring, customized training modules, and systemic collaboration to empower educators.

Technology Integration: NEP supports the integration of ICT tools in education, providing teachers with resources like virtual classrooms, e-learning platforms, and AI-driven assessment tools. This integration bridges the digital divide and facilitates personalized learning experiences.

Inclusive Education Initiatives: The policy advocates inclusive practices to address the needs of marginalized groups, ensuring equitable access to quality education. Special focus on skill development for differently-abled students highlights NEP's commitment to inclusivity.

Focus on Skill Development: The National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes the integration of vocational education and career-oriented training at the school level. This shift presents a valuable opportunity for teachers to expand their roles as facilitators of skill-based learning. By receiving targeted training, teachers are better equipped to guide students in acquiring practical, real-world competencies, thereby enhancing student preparedness for future career paths and fostering a more application-oriented education system.

Mentorship Opportunities: The policy promotes a culture of peer learning by encouraging experienced educators to take on mentorship roles for newly inducted teachers. This initiative fosters collaborative professional growth, strengthens support systems within schools, and enhances teaching practices through shared experiences and guidance. For seasoned teachers, it offers a platform to lead and inspire, while new teachers benefit from practical insights and continuous support.

2. Challenges for Effective Capacity-Building Programs

These challenges underscore the need for robust support mechanisms and capacity-building initiatives to ensure the effective execution of NEP mandates at the grassroots level.

Implementation Gaps: The shift from theoretical instruction to a holistic learning approach is often difficult to achieve in practice. Effective implementation requires systemic changes across multiple dimensions, including pedagogy, curriculum structure, and assessment methods. In the absence of clear guidance, adequate support, and institutional alignment, these changes can lead to fragmented or superficial application of CPD learnings, thereby limiting the impact of professional development efforts.

Syllabus Adaptation: Switching to an entirely new syllabus can be challenging for teachers during CPD program implementation. Transitioning from familiar content to new curricula requires time, training, and support. Without adequate guidance and resources, teachers may struggle to align their instructional practices with the updated syllabus, which can hinder the overall goals of professional development and curriculum reform.

Infrastructure Limitations: Inadequate classroom facilities, unreliable electricity, and the absence of essential digital tools create significant obstacles for both trainers and participants. These limitations restrict the reach and effectiveness of CPD initiatives, especially those that depend on technology and well-equipped learning environments..

Digital Literacy: Teachers often lack the necessary skills to effectively utilize ICT tools.A lack of digital literacy among teachers presents a major hurdle in the implementation of CPD programs, especially those that rely on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools. Many educators are not adequately trained to navigate digital platforms or integrate technology into their professional learning, which limits their ability to fully benefit from modern CPD initiatives. This gap reduces the overall effectiveness of technology-driven training programs.

Inequitable Training Access: Geographical disparities pose a significant barrier to the effective implementation of CPD programs. Teachers in remote or underserved areas often face difficulties in accessing training opportunities due to limited infrastructure, travel constraints, and lack of localized programs. This inequitable access hampers uniform professional development and widens the gap in teaching quality across different regions.

Funding Constraints: The successful rollout of CPD programs often requires significant financial investments. However, delays or inadequacies in budget allocation can significantly hinder program rollout. These funding constraints not only disrupt planning and execution but also undermine the overall effectiveness and sustainability of CPD initiatives.

Resistance to Change: : Some teachers may be resistant to adopting new pedagogical techniques or may lack the motivation to engage in continuous learning Resistance to adopting new pedagogical techniques can stem from a lack of awareness or confidence.

3. Practical Suggestions for Effective Capacity-Building Programs

Phase wise Implementation: To ensure a successful and positive realization of the National Education Policy (NEP), it is essential to adopt a phase-wise implementation strategy. This structured approach enables a systematic rollout of initiatives, ensuring that each phase builds on the learning's and outcomes of the previous one. By breaking down the NEP's vision into manageable and time-bound stages, stakeholders can maintain focus, monitor progress effectively, and make necessary adjustments along the way. Most importantly, such an approach makes the goals of capacity-building programs more achievable and measurable, fostering sustainable development and continuous improvement in teacher competencies

Digital Infrastructure: Improving digital infrastructure is essential for effective capacity building. This includes expanding high-speed internet access, especially in rural and remote areas, and ensuring teachers have access to digital devices such as tablets or laptops. Governments should collaborate with private sectors to bridge the digital divide.

Localized Training: Training programs should be designed to address the unique needs of specific communities. For instance, incorporating local languages and cultural contexts into training materials can make programs more relevant. Involving community leaders and stakeholders in planning can further enhance effectiveness.

Mentorship Networks: Establishing mentorship networks can help teachers learn from each other's experiences. Peer learning sessions, virtual communities, and regular workshops led by experienced educators can encourage knowledge exchange and build confidence among teachers.

Incentivize Learning: Recognizing and rewarding teachers who actively participate in professional development can motivate others to engage. Career advancement opportunities, certifications, and financial incentives can serve as effective motivators for continuous learning.

Monitoring Mechanisms: Regular monitoring and evaluation are critical for ensuring the success of capacity-building programs. This includes tracking participation rates, gathering feedback, and assessing the impact on teaching practices and student outcomes. Data-driven insights can help refine programs for better alignment with NEP goals.

Discussion

The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is a significant move towards enhancing education quality in India, particularly in teacher education. It emphasizes the need for strengthening teacher education and developing a solid research foundation in this field. The policy presents an opportunity to improve teacher training by addressing the needs of key stakeholders, including students, teachers, and parents. By focusing on research-driven practices, NEP 2020 aims to ensure that teacher education is well-aligned with educational objectives and contributes to the overall improvement of the education system in India.

NEP 2020 presents a promising framework for teacher capacity building, focusing on continuous development, ICT integration, and experiential learning. However, challenges such as infrastructure limitations, digital literacy gaps, and uneven access to resources need to be addressed to ensure the success of these initiatives. By learning from best practices and addressing these challenges, India can build a robust system for teacher education that ensures quality learning for all students.

This paper emphasizes the need for collaborative efforts among policymakers, educational institutions, and teachers to make the vision of NEP 2020 a reality. Nonetheless, teacher education has been struggling to strengthen its identity. It is true that after persistent struggle there is an evident improvement, but there is no end to perfection. The problems concerning teacher education which were encountered in 1960s and 70s are still persistent and cause hurdles in achieving quality. In the current view of education knowledge is not coming from external sources but constructed by the joint effort of the teacher and the learner both acting as beneficiaries. This view points to the need to take a fresh look at teacher preparation. In this

scenario the statement by Alvin Toffler suits the situation rightly, "It is no longer sufficient for Johnny to understand the past. It is not even enough for him to understand present for 'here-and-now' environment will soon vanish. Johnny must learn to anticipate the directions and range of change- And so must Johnny's teachers" (Alvin Toffler, 1970, p.364). This speaks for the future vision of teacher education.

Conclusion

NEP 2020 represents a transformative approach to teacher education, emphasizing CPD, ICT integration, and experiential learning. By addressing challenges like infrastructure gaps and digital divides, the policy can empower teachers and enhance educational outcomes. Collaborative efforts among stakeholders are essential to realizing NEP 2020's vision. The policy has set the context – it is upto the larger community to intervene for the provision and distribution of resources to meet its objectives. Thus, NEP 2020 needs a realistic implementation plan that addresses its limitations and the apprehensions of the stakeholders to realize its ambitious vision of transformation.

Future research should evaluate specific initiatives such as CPD programs, technology integration, and mentorship models to identify their impact and scalability across diverse educational settings. However, challenges such as limited funding, varying regional education policies, and resistance from stakeholders need to be addressed to ensure comprehensive evaluations. Methodologies like longitudinal studies, pilot program evaluations, and metrics such as teacher retention rates, student learning outcomes, and technology adoption rates could provide valuable insights.

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