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An Analysis of Teacher Education in NEP 2020

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Abstract

Teaching, a timeless thread woven through the very fabric of education, holds immense power. Revered for shaping young minds and building brighter futures, these dedicated individuals form the bedrock of successful learning systems. Acting as bridges between past knowledge and future potential, teachers, both within classrooms and communities, are the architects of flourishing educational landscapes. It's their impact on individuals and society that cements their role as the heart of progress, forever essential for education's onward journey. While there have been shifts in the responsibilities, knowledge, and training required for educators, the necessity for qualified educators has persisted throughout history. A country needs a clear and forward-thinking education strategy across the board because of the positive impact it can have on its economy and society. The National Education Policy 2020, which was developed with inputs from a panel of experts led by Dr. Kasturirangan, was unveiled by the Government of India. This paper gives an overview of the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 regarding teacher education and points out some problems related to it. Finally, some suggestions are put forward which could help in achieving its goals.

Keywords: Teacher education, National Education Policy 2020, Teachers

Introduction

Following a long delay (The previous national educational policy was issued in 1986), the Government of India finally unveiled NEP 2020 (National Education Policy 2020) in July 2020. The new policy represents a comprehensive and ambitious reimagining of India's educational landscape, with particular emphasis on the restructuring and revitalization of teacher education (TE). This policy document proposes substantive modifications to existing TE frameworks, signifying a paradigm shift in the conceptualization and execution of teacher preparation programs. Our large population and many different factors may work against us, but notwithstanding its present condition of aimlessness and inflexibility, the Indian education system may be transformed into one that is progressive, adaptable, interdisciplinary, technology-based and skill-focused that can produce proficient, artistic, talented, adaptable, and altruistic learners. A common thread that runs through them all is 'the teacher.'

"Of all the numerous aspects which determine the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, ability, and character of teachers are without a question the most significant" (Kothari Commission, 1966). "Teachers actually shape the destiny of our children, and by extension, the future of our nation" (National Education Policy, 2020), which implies that by nurturing high-caliber individuals within their classrooms, teachers become indispensable agents for national progress and societal advancement.

What is teacher education?

Educating teachers is a process concerned with fostering the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will equip them to fulfil the demands of their job. Teacher education is defined as "A programme of education, research, and training of professionals to teach from pre-primary to higher education level" by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

Professionalism, pedagogical knowledge, and classroom expertise are all parts of a well-rounded teacher education:

Teaching Skills: In order to improve educators' ability to organise and deliver instruction, offer appropriate reinforcement, and perform successful assessment, it is necessary to equip

them with training and practise in a variety of techniques, approaches, and strategies. Proficiency in classroom management, the development and execution of effective lesson plans, and clear communication with students are all indispensable elements of this competency.

Sound Pedagogical theory: Encompassing philosophical, social, and psychological dimensions, this concept cultivates a robust foundation for teachers' classroom practice, specifically addressing the demands and circumstances of distinct developmental stages.

Professional Skills: It covers the methods, procedures, and strategies that can assist educators advance their careers and contribute to the evolution of the teaching field as a whole. A person's "soft skills" consist of their ability to empathise with others, counsel them, interact with them, use technology to their advantage, retrieve and manage data, and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Review of Related Literature

Since independence, India has recognized the crucial role of teacher education in national progress, actively shaping the system through various commissions and committees. Efforts to ensure accessible, high-quality training relevant to classroom needs began with the establishment of the Central Institute of Education in Delhi and the transformation of the Government Training College in Allahabad into the Central Pedagogical Institute in 1948. These early milestones laid the groundwork for continuous reforms, while present challenges like teacher shortages and curriculum relevance call for further evolution in this vital domain. This dedication to shaping future educators through a dynamic and responsive system underscores India's unwavering commitment to building a bright future fueled by empowered and effective teachers.

University Education Commission (1948-49): Following India's independence, the inaugural education commission embarked on a crucial mission: to overhaul the nation's teacher education system. Recognizing the unique needs of different regions, they proposed tailoring training programs and refreshing the curriculum. Practical learning, deemed instrumental in assessing student progress, took centre stage. This spirit of reform continued through the 1950-51 conferences in Baroda and Mysore, where fruitful discussions spurred tangible changes. Notably, the very term "education" evolved into "training," reflecting a renewed focus on equipping educators with practical skills. Teacher education syllabi were comprehensively revamped, incorporating new areas of expertise and emphasizing hands-on activities. To foster continuous learning, workshops, seminars, and conferences became commonplace, solidifying a dynamic and responsive approach to shaping effective educators.

Secondary Education Commission (1952): The commission envisioned universities and colleges as hubs of continuous learning for teachers, offering refresher courses, specialized study programs, and practical workshops. They proposed mandatory extracurricular training for teacher candidates, a state-funded stipend during their training period, and the abolition of tuition fees in training colleges. This comprehensive approach aimed to equip teachers with

the latest knowledge, specialized skills, and real-world experience, all while ensuring financial support and accessibility.

NCERT (1961): The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) directed its primary efforts towards the enhancement of teacher training for both elementary and secondary school instructors. To achieve this, the council not only restructured student instruction and assessment methodologies but also prioritized the professional development of educators by establishing dedicated centers for continuing education.

Kothari Commission (1964-66): This committee was the first of its kind to cover every aspect of training future educators. The report's focus was on educational reform in its broadest sense, including issues of scope and execution as well as classroom practises and pedagogical content. Some universities, including Aligarh, Kurukshetra, and Kanpur, begun offering a Master of Arts in Education on its recommendation.

Indian Association of Teacher Education (IATE-1965): It recommended introducing correspondence courses and beginning summer Institutes to raise the number of trained instructors. It further suggested that there should be a practice school associated with every university that offers teacher training.

The National Policy on Education (1968): It suggested that educators should be held in high esteem. Considering their skills and duties, their pay and working conditions should be adequate and satisfying. Teachers should be given the opportunity to do and publish their own research, be shielded from retaliation for speaking out on important national and international concerns, and be encouraged to continue their own education throughout their careers.

The National Council for Teacher Education (1973): The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), acting in an advisory capacity, crafted a curriculum that reimagines the teacher as a leader both within and beyond the classroom walls. This vision translates into five key goals:

- **Elevating Teacher Education Management:** Ensuring efficient and effective administration of teacher education programs.
- **Realigning Curriculum with Needs:** Tailoring the curriculum to meet the evolving needs of children, society, and the nation as a whole.
- **Refining Evaluation and Grading:** Introducing a robust evaluation system with a transparent grading and semester structure.
- **Enriching Teaching Techniques:** Emphasizing self-learning, problem-solving, and practical work to equip teachers with dynamic and engaging teaching methods.
- **Nurturing Community Engagement:** Building stage-by-stage objectives for teacher education that prioritize active involvement with the community.

National Commission on Teachers (1983-85): The commission recommended

- A four-year training programme after intermediate that culminates in a graduation degree.

- To expand the one-year B.Ed. programme by two summer months to ensure a 220-days academic session with longer working hours.
- To recruit teachers based on qualities such as physical fitness, linguistic proficiency, communication skills, global awareness, a positive view on life, and the capability for strong human interactions.

The National Policy on Education (NPE-1986): Recognizing the interconnectedness of pre-service and in-service teacher development, the committee echoed a sentiment shared by the NPE 1986 and its Programme of Action (1992): improved teacher education is key to elevating academic standards. This led to the transformation of existing training facilities into specialized institutions like District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs), and Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education (IASEs), dedicated to both initial and ongoing teacher training.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005) suggested changes to teaching methods, scholastic programmes, and standardised testing, along with other things. It asserted that the quality of teachers is a result of not just their academic and professional training, but also their professional standing, salary, and working conditions. National Knowledge Commission (2007) recommended proper supervision of the teacher education programmes by private institutions. It further recommended an increase in the budgetary allocations, proposed revamping of the SCERTs along with DIETs and incorporation of ICT in teaching learning process.

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE-2009) emphasized the significance of competent and professionally prepared teacher educators in shaping future generations of educators, the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), in collaboration with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), has undertaken a series of measures to elevate the standards and improve the overall quality of teacher education programs.

Justice Verma Committee (2012): To tackle the critical shortage of qualified teachers, the committee proposed a two-pronged approach: enhanced investments and stricter standards. Firstly, they urged the government to increase funding for educator development and educational institutions, ensuring teachers receive ongoing support and quality training. This includes the need for a rigorous testing process to maintain the integrity of teacher preparation programs. Secondly, the committee emphasized the crucial role of higher education in addressing the teacher shortage. They recommended integrating teacher education programs directly into the higher education system, potentially extending their duration to equip future teachers with deeper knowledge and skills. Notably, the committee stressed the importance of face-to-face instruction for initial teacher education, reserving distance learning formats for continuous professional development throughout a teacher's career.

Objectives of the Study

The National Education Policy 2020 contains numerous measures to enhance the quality and depth of India's teacher education system. These are the objectives of this study:

1. To overview the recommendations of NEP 2020 regarding teacher education.
2. To highlight some problems in the implementation of the recommendations regarding teacher education
3. Suggestions for the successful implementation of NEP 2020 with regards to teacher education.

Methodology

The data for the present study is gathered through various primary and secondary sources i.e., online journals, articles, websites, government documents and reports of various commissions etc.

Overview of Teacher Education in NEP 2020

Born from nationwide discussions and deliberations, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP) aims to comprehensively overhaul India's education landscape. Striving to align with 21st-century ideals and Sustainable Development Goals, the policy's ambitious vision seeks to create a revamped education system that simultaneously fosters cutting-edge knowledge and strengthens India's rich traditions and values. This transformation not only seeks to upgrade education governance but also reimagine the system's core structure, paving the way for a generation equipped for the future while remaining deeply rooted in India's heritage.

The following are some of the highlights of this policy on the teacher education programme:

- Restoring the prestige of educators in our nation hinges on reforming teacher education regulations. By 2030, all existing programs must evolve into robust, multifaceted, and integrated learning journeys for future teachers. This transformation, encompassing sound pedagogy, diverse knowledge domains, and seamless experiences, will not only equip educators with cutting-edge skills but also rekindle the respect they deserve, placing them at the heart of nurturing future generations.
- In order to provide the 4-year integrated teacher training programme, all standalone TEIs will need to transform into multidisciplinary institutions by the year 2030.
- The proposed 4-year integrated B.Ed. program offers a unique combination: a Bachelor's degree in Education combined with expertise in a specific subject like language, music, or science. It goes beyond just pedagogy, immersing future teachers in vital domains like psychology, sociology, and Indian history and culture. Additionally, they'll master foundational skills in literacy and numeracy, preparing them to nurture young minds effectively. This initiative is designed to nurture a generation of teachers not only proficient in contemporary teaching methodologies but also deeply rooted in the wisdom and ideals that define India's cultural landscape.
- Institutions providing a 4-year integrated B.Ed. program might also present a 2-year B.Ed. option for individuals holding a Bachelor's degree in core subjects. Similarly, those with a four-year bachelor's degree in a specific discipline could qualify for a 1-year B.Ed. program.
- To encourage exceptional students to join the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program, merit-based scholarships

will be introduced for the one-year, two-year, and four-year durations.

- Recognizing the need for specialized guidance in newly introduced subjects like classical languages, vocational skills, and traditional arts, the NEP 2020 proposes a unique solution: "master instructors." These figures, drawn from local communities, would be prominent personalities or specialists in their respective fields. By integrating their expertise within school complexes, they would bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, enriching young minds with the wisdom and skill sets passed down through generations. This innovative approach aims to cultivate not just academic prowess, but also cultural richness and entrepreneurial spirit, ensuring holistic education thrives in every corner of the nation.
- The National Testing Agency (NTA) will conduct examinations in relevant subjects and general aptitude to select candidates for pre-service teacher training programs. These assessments will be standardized, considering the diverse linguistic and cultural aspects of the nation, to maintain consistent quality across all teacher preparation programmes.
- To address the critical shortage of specialists in areas such as music, dance, art, craft, guidance counsellors, coaches, trainers for vocational education, classical language instructors, social workers, technicians, and maintenance personnel, NEP 2020 promotes bringing in educators to work in a cluster of schools and then sharing them up across the various institutions.

Problems in the implementation of the recommendations regarding teacher education

- Implementing the NEP 2020's recommendations for improving teacher education might require significant investment in terms of infrastructure, technology, and resources. Ensuring that teacher training institutes have the necessary facilities, equipment, and digital tools could be a challenge, especially in remote and underserved areas.
- Teachers and teacher educators might not be fully aware of the new policies, curriculum changes, and training opportunities outlined in the NEP 2020. Disseminating information effectively and ensuring that all educators understand and embrace the changes could be a hurdle.
- Altering the mind-set of teacher educators in order for them to fulfil their duties and obligations in multidisciplinary institutions.
- Designing the new curriculum for integrated teacher education programme (ITEP).
- While NEP 2020 encourages the integration of technology in education, not all teacher educators might be comfortable with technology. Training teachers to effectively use digital tools for instruction and learning assessment could be a hurdle.
- Sufficient funding is required to implement the major suggestions proposed by NEP 2020.
- Training of the existing teachers as per the changes recommended by NEP 2020.
- Effective implementation of NEP 2020's teacher education recommendations require coordination among various governmental bodies, educational institutions, and organizations responsible for teacher

training. Ensuring smooth collaboration and communication might require careful management.

- The translation of policy recommendations into practical actions might be hindered by bureaucratic processes and delays in decision-making. Streamlining administrative processes is crucial for timely implementation.

Suggestions

- Teaching is among the least-paid occupations in India, with an annual income of approximately Rs 200, 000 (Panda, 2020) ^[11]. Though the state and central governments revise the salaries of teachers from time to time but that is not the case with private teaching jobs, which makes the government teaching jobs more attractive and private sector is considered as the last option by the aspiring teachers. To attract top-tier individuals, the private teaching sector must improve its economic standing.
- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to elevate the Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs) by incorporating enhanced test content and pedagogy, encompassing teachers across all school education levels. Implementing this involves a substantial change in school recruitment strategies, necessitating the identification of existing teachers lacking sufficient training and providing them with opportunities for professional development courses.
- A teacher may be good at delivering content but not so good at coordinating group work or disciplining a class, or he or she may have strong digital skills but be less proficient in English. Consequently, generic teacher training is not possible in light of these variances. Teachers must be provided with courses and seminars tailored to their individual needs.
- During the internship period in schools; in the beginning, the student teachers should be made to work as assistants of the main teachers of each class so that they can learn to manage a classroom and other related activities.
- Like other professional courses, there should be a provision of paid internship for the student teachers which will attract the aspiring candidates towards the teaching profession.

Conclusion

The overarching goal of the NEP 2020 is to revitalize and invigorate the Indian education system. While there is a collective aspiration among Indians for an improved education system, merely having policies on paper is insufficient to achieve the desired goals. Realizing the intended outcomes requires a strong belief in positive actions. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 pledges to translate this vision into reality by cultivating compassionate and insightful educators capable of producing more proficient teachers, thereby revitalizing the prominence of the Indian education system.

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