



NEP 2020 AND TEACHER PREPAREDNESS: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GROUND REALITIES

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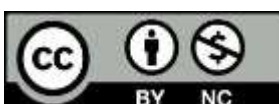
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Abstract: The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes a comprehensive transformation of the Indian education system, with teachers positioned as key agents of change. Its success, however, depends largely on how effectively educators are prepared to interpret and apply its reforms in diverse classroom contexts. This study critically examines the actual level of teacher preparedness in relation to the expectations outlined in NEP 2020, focusing on pedagogical skills, digital competence, professional autonomy, and institutional support systems. Using a qualitative analytical approach based on secondary sources, the paper identifies a persistent mismatch between policy intent and implementation capacity. While the policy promotes learner-centred methods, multilingual practices, and technology integration, many teachers continue to face limitations due to insufficient training, infrastructural constraints, and lack of sustained professional development. The study argues that without systematic and context-sensitive capacity building, the intended reforms may remain only partially realised.

Keywords: *NEP 2020, Teacher Preparedness, Educational Change, Professional Development, Pedagogy, India.*

Introduction:

Education significantly influences social and economic development, and its effectiveness is closely linked to the competence of teachers. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 introduces a shift in India's educational approach by encouraging competency-based learning, interdisciplinary perspectives, and student-centred teaching methods. Within this framework, teachers are expected to adopt more dynamic roles that involve facilitating inquiry, encouraging critical thinking, and addressing diverse learner needs. Despite these expectations, translating policy into classroom practice remains complex. The wide range of reforms proposed—such as foundational literacy, inclusive education, and digital learning—requires a level of preparedness that is uneven across regions and institutions. This paper examines whether current teacher





readiness aligns with these expectations and explores the structural and pedagogical challenges influencing implementation.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To explore the concept of teacher preparedness in relation to NEP 2020
2. To examine disparities between policy expectations and classroom realities
3. To identify key challenges faced by teachers during implementation
4. To propose measures for improving teacher readiness.

Review of Literature:

A. International Studies

World Bank (2020)

Objective: To assess global teacher policies, particularly in developing nations such as India.

Methodology: Extensive policy analysis.

Tools and Techniques: Secondary data sources and statistical reports.

Findings: The study revealed structural inefficiencies in teacher education systems and emphasized the need to align teacher competencies with evolving policy frameworks and international standards.

UNESCO (2020)

Objective: To analyse global educational challenges and examine the role of teachers in post-pandemic recovery.

Methodology: Comparative international analysis.

Tools and Techniques: Use of global indicators and secondary datasets.

Findings: The report identified teacher capacity-building as a key driver for achieving sustainable and equitable transformation in education systems worldwide.

OECD (2021)

Objective: To explore the competencies required for effective teaching in the 21st century.

Methodology: Cross-national comparative study.

Tools and Techniques: Benchmarking techniques and global performance indicators.





Findings: The study underscored the significance of digital literacy, adaptability, critical thinking, and ongoing professional development among teachers.

B. National Studies (India)

Singh (2020)

Objective: To critically examine the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in relation to teacher autonomy.

Methodology: Qualitative document analysis.

Tools and Techniques: Thematic analysis approach.

Findings: Although the policy advocated greater autonomy, practical implementation was often constrained by institutional rigidity and administrative pressures.

NCERT (2021)

Objective: To develop guidelines for the effective implementation of NEP 2020.

Methodology: Policy analysis.

Tools and Techniques: Document review supported by expert consultations.

Findings: Continuous Professional Development (CPD) was highlighted as crucial for enhancing teacher preparedness.

NCTE (2021)

Objective: To restructure teacher education programmes in accordance with NEP 2020.

Methodology: Policy review.

Tools and Techniques: Analytical frameworks and regulatory guidelines.

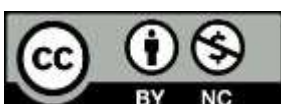
Findings: The introduction of a four-year integrated B.Ed. programme was proposed; however, its implementation has been gradual and uneven across institutions.

Kumar (2021)

Objective: To investigate teacher readiness for competency-based education.

Methodology: Descriptive survey method.

Tools and Techniques: Questionnaires and statistical analysis.





Findings: The study indicated insufficient training and limited understanding among teachers regarding competency-based instructional approaches.

Rao (2021)

Objective: To explore the challenges associated with multilingual education.

Methodology: Case study approach.

Tools and Techniques: Interviews and classroom observations.

Findings: A lack of adequate teacher training emerged as a major barrier to the successful implementation of multilingual pedagogy.

Das (2021)

Objective: To examine teachers' attitudes towards pedagogical change.

Methodology: Descriptive research design.

Tools and Techniques: Attitude scales.

Findings: Resistance to change was observed, largely due to insufficient training and limited technological familiarity.

Sharma and Gupta (2022)

Objective: To assess the level of digital readiness among teachers.

Methodology: Mixed-method approach.

Tools and Techniques: Digital literacy scales and interviews.

Findings: The results revealed a significant digital divide, particularly affecting teachers in rural regions.

Mehta (2022)

Objective: To evaluate the infrastructural readiness of schools.

Methodology: Survey research.

Tools and Techniques: Observation checklists.

Findings: Inadequate infrastructure was found to hinder the adoption of innovative teaching practices.

Banerjee (2022)

Objective: To compare teacher preparedness in urban and rural settings.





Methodology: Comparative research design.

Tools and Techniques: Surveys and statistical methods.

Findings: Teachers in urban areas demonstrated higher preparedness due to better access to resources and training opportunities.

Joshi (2022)

Objective: To analyse the challenges in implementing experiential learning.

Methodology: Qualitative study.

Tools and Techniques: Interviews and observational methods.

Findings: Constraints such as limited time, insufficient resources, and inadequate training affected implementation.

Mukherjee (2023)

Objective: To examine teachers' assessment literacy.

Methodology: Survey method.

Tools and Techniques: Assessment literacy scales.

Findings: The study highlighted gaps in teachers' skills related to competency-based and formative assessment practices.

International Perspectives:

Global studies emphasise that teacher quality is central to educational reform. Reports from organizations such as the World Bank (2020) point to inefficiencies in teacher development systems, particularly in developing countries. UNESCO (2020) highlights the importance of strengthening teacher capacity in response to emerging educational challenges, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, OECD (2021) underscores the need for adaptability, digital competence, and continuous learning among educators to meet evolving demands.

Indian Context

Research within India reflects similar concerns. Studies indicate that although NEP 2020 promotes greater autonomy and innovation, institutional structures often limit teachers' flexibility (Singh, 2020). Policy guidelines (NCERT, 2021; NCTE, 2021) stress continuous professional development, yet implementation remains inconsistent. Empirical studies (Kumar, 2021; Rao, 2021; Sharma & Gupta, 2022) reveal gaps in areas





such as competency-based teaching, multilingual instruction, and digital readiness. Additional research highlights disparities between urban and rural contexts, with access to resources playing a crucial role in shaping preparedness levels.

Research Gap:

Existing studies largely focus on policy interpretation rather than examining how reforms operate in real classroom environments. There is limited critical analysis of how teachers, particularly in rural and semi-urban settings, experience and respond to these changes in practice.

Background of the Study:

Educational reforms in India have gradually shifted from expanding access to improving quality and relevance. NEP 2020 represents a significant step in this direction by promoting flexible learning pathways, integration of technology, and development of higher-order thinking skills. Within this vision, teachers are expected to act as facilitators who guide students through interactive and experiential learning processes. However, long-standing issues within teacher education continue to pose challenges. Training programmes have often prioritised theoretical knowledge over practical application, leaving educators underprepared for contemporary classroom demands. In many areas, limited infrastructure and restricted access to digital tools further complicate the adoption of innovative teaching strategies. The pandemic period exposed these gaps more clearly, as teachers had to adapt quickly to online modes of instruction. While the policy strongly supports digital integration, actual readiness varies widely. Understanding these conditions is essential for assessing the feasibility of NEP implementation.

Significance of the Study:

National Perspective:

This study provides insight into the practical barriers affecting educational reform in India. It highlights the need for context-specific teacher training and stronger institutional support, especially in under-resourced regions.

International Perspective:

The findings contribute to broader discussions on educational reform by demonstrating how policy ambitions interact with real-world constraints. The study also aligns with global goals related to quality and inclusive education.

Methodology:

The study adopts a qualitative analytical design based on secondary data sources, including policy documents,





research studies, and institutional reports. A critical interpretative approach is used to examine how teacher preparedness aligns with policy expectations.

Tools and Techniques:

Content Analysis

Thematic Analysis

Comparative Review

Sources of Data:

Government publications (NEP 2020, NCERT, NCTE)

Academic journals and books

Reports from international organizations

Findings of the Study:

The analysis reveals several key issues affecting teacher preparedness. A major concern is the disconnect between reform-oriented policy goals and existing classroom practices, which often remain examination-focused. Training systems have not fully adapted to support competency-based and experiential approaches, limiting pedagogical change.

Digital competence is another significant challenge. While technology integration is strongly encouraged, many teachers lack the skills and resources required for effective use, particularly in rural and semi-urban institutions. Infrastructural limitations further restrict the adoption of innovative practices. Institutional support also appears insufficient. Teachers frequently operate without consistent mentoring, access to teaching materials, or structured guidance for implementing reforms. What is often described as resistance to change can instead be understood as a response to these systemic limitations. In addition, professional development initiatives are not always continuous or well-coordinated, reducing their long-term effectiveness. Together, these factors create barriers to the successful implementation of NEP 2020.

Implementation Strategies:

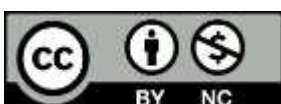
Strengthening continuous professional development systems

Expanding access to digital training and resources

Encouraging reflective and adaptive teaching practices

Improving institutional support and mentorship structures

Addressing regional disparities in training and infrastructure





Gap Between Vision and Reality:

Although NEP 2020 envisions technologically competent educators, the ground reality indicates uneven levels of digital preparedness among teachers. This disparity is not merely an individual limitation but reflects deeper structural issues, including inadequate training opportunities, limited access to digital infrastructure, and insufficient institutional support.

Key Dimensions:

- Structural limitations in training systems
- Unequal access to resources
- Impact on educational quality and equity
- Need for integrated teacher support mechanisms

Conclusion:

The study indicates that NEP 2020 presents a forward-looking framework for educational transformation, but its outcomes depend heavily on the preparedness of teachers. Current evidence suggests that many educators continue to face structural, pedagogical, and technological constraints that limit effective implementation. For meaningful progress, greater attention must be given to sustained and context-sensitive professional development, improved infrastructure, and stronger institutional support. Enhancing teacher capacity is therefore essential for ensuring that policy objectives translate into practical and measurable improvements in education.

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