

Building Strong Foundations: Teacher Empowerment under NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

The world is full of competition and achieving life goals requires capable, efficient and skilled teachers to help our future generations to achieve their long and short term life goals. Rather than blaming teachers for poor classroom learning outcomes in India, NEP 2020 attributes the dire state of teacher education, recruitment, turnover and working conditions to a lack of quality and motivation among teachers. The National Education Policy recognises and identifies teachers and faculty as the heart of the learning process. Recognizing the 'power of teachers', NEP 2020 introduced institutional reforms to help 'teaching' become an attractive profession for bright and talented youth. The report proposes several reforms to empower teachers and "restore dignity and prestige" to the profession, ultimately attracting the best minds and talent to teaching as a profession. 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. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession must be restored so as to inspire the best to enter the teaching profession. This paper emphasizes the fact that examine what the National Education Policy 2020 has in store for teachers to lift them out their current uninspiring job profile, rampant exploitation, dis-incentivised service conditions and empowering teachers in all aspects of quality education, career development, independence, performance and role expectations.

Keywords: *Teacher Empowerment, National Policy on Education 2020, Foundations for Teachers Empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

The knowledge landscape of the world is changing rapidly. Dramatic scientific and technological advances such as big data, machine learning, and the rise of artificial intelligence have the potential to replace many manual jobs with machines around the world, especially Mathematics, Computer Science, and the ever-increasing need for skilled labour.

Data science will be increasingly in demand along with interdisciplinary competencies across the sciences, social sciences and humanities. This National Education Policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century which aims to address the growing development requirements of our country. . In the new education policy of India, special attention has been given to the qualification and training of teachers apart from the education system. An ‘equal teacher and equal education’ policy will be worked out across the country and focus on human and social welfare and is a democratic, social, cultural and humane country that upholds the freedom, equality, fraternity and justice provided for in the Constitution.

According to the requirements of the 21st century, quality higher education should be in order to cultivate good, thoughtful, balanced and creative teachers. It enables individuals to study one or more professional areas of interest at an in-depth level, as well as character, ethical and legal values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temperament, creativity, service spirit and the development of 21st century competencies.

It is well known that teachers play a big and important role in shaping the life of man and has power to shape the whole world. They help every student in many ways to achieve success, such as increasing the level of knowledge, skill, confidence etc. and make life in the right shape. The Missile Man of India, former President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam has once said: “If a country is corruption free and has become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel that there are three major social members for it who can make a difference; they are father, mother and teacher.”

High-quality higher education should enable teacher’s achievement and development, constructive social participation and productive contribution to society. It should equip students with more meaningful and fulfilling life and work roles and enable them to become financially independent. In order to develop a holistic individual, it is essential that each stage of learning, from pre-school to higher education, includes a specific set of skills and values for all participants. Kurien and Chandramana (2020) gave a view that NEP has reassuringly provisioned for real-time evaluation systems and a consultative monitoring and review framework. This shall empower the education system to constantly reform itself, instead of expecting a new education policy every decade for a shift in curriculum. This, in itself, will be a remarkable achievement.

The NEP 2020 is a defining moment for higher education. Effective and time-bound. Therefore, more than the creation of greater opportunities for individual employment. It represents a key to more vibrant, socially engaged, cooperative communities and a happier, cohesive, cultured, productive, innovative, progressive, and prosperous nation. In this context, The NEP 2020 recommends that Teachers have a major role to play in creating an environment that fosters a mindset of lifelong learning. They have the power and influence to spark curiosity, to help students develop the ability to explore and ask questions. Teachers can bring this shift by making learning interactive, encouraging children to share knowledge and think for themselves through activities like class debates etc.

NEP 2020 & EMPOWERMENT OF TEACHERS

- A National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, NCFTE 2021 will be drafted to guide all teacher education, pre-service and in service, of teachers.
- The 4-year integrated B.Ed., the minimal degree qualification for school teachers, is conceived as a multidisciplinary and integrated dual major bachelor's degree.
- All multidisciplinary Universities have been directed to set-up an education department and run B.Ed. programmes in collaboration with their other departments.
- The B.Ed. degree will teach a range of knowledge content and pedagogy and include strong practicum training.
- Shorter post-B.Ed. certification courses will also be available for career growth of teachers who wish to move into more specialized areas of teaching.
- All fresh Ph.D. entrants, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching /education/ writing related to their chosen Ph.D. subject.

INTERVENTIONS IN TEACHER RECRUITMENT & EMPLOYMENT as per NEP 2020

- For recruitment in private or government school the teacher must qualify through TET, give a demonstration class, pass the interview, and have knowledge of local language(s).
- Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs) will now be extended to cover teachers across all the new stages (Foundational, Preparatory, Middle and Secondary) of school education.

- NEP 2020 promotes the idea of recruiting teachers to a school complex and sharing them across the group of schools to deal with shortage of teacher.
- The NEP 2020 also encourages school complexes to hire local eminent persons or experts as ‘master instructors’ in various subjects.

TEACHING CAREER & PROFESSIONALISM

- The NEP 2020 talks of creating performance standards for teachers clearly spelling out the role of the teacher at different levels of expertise/stage and competencies required for that stage. A set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be created that will determine all aspects of teacher career management.
- NEP 2020 also talks of Teacher Audit or Performance Appraisals that will be carried at regular intervals. These standards for performance appraisal will also be formulated. Henceforth, promotions and salary increases will not occur based on the length of tenure or seniority.
- School teachers must undergo 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year to keep themselves by attending workshops or online teacher development modules.
- School Principals too must undergo CPD in modules related to leadership, school management and for implementing competency based learning.

ENCULTURATION OF TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

- Teachers’ autonomy: The NEP 2020 gives Teachers autonomy in selecting appropriate pedagogy and encourages them also to ensure socio emotional learning of their students.
- Innovative teaching methods: Innovative teaching methods adopted by teachers to improve the learning outcomes will be recognised, documented, and shared widely as recommended practices. Close collaboration is recommended among schools within a School Complex as it will reduce teacher isolation experienced by teachers working in smaller schools.

In view of these conditions, there should be extensive brainstorming and thinking about the role of the teacher in the new education policy. Recruitment of well-qualified teachers into the schooling system is the first prerequisite to ensure that students receive quality education. However, teacher recruitment processes in the country are not adequately streamlined. There

are diverse recruitment processes across regions, school stages, and school types central, state, and private schools. This, in turn, leads to multiple criteria and processes for hiring teachers, thereby bringing a wide disparity in teacher quality across institutions and regions. Many of the processes are also sub-optimal in measuring the competency of a candidate.

One of the most common and widely-taken tests to ensure eligibility for recruitment is the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), conducted at both the state (STET) and central levels (CTET). However, in India, the test is required only for government school teacher recruitment at the elementary stage (Class 1-8). TET has been critiqued time and again for various reasons. These include low pass percentages, poor test quality, lengthy test papers and a serious lack of alignment with teacher preparation programmes. The test was in the news recently because of the teachers' recruitment scam in West Bengal.

To mitigate the longstanding gaps, the NEP 2020 recommends not only a revision of the existing test but also supplementing it with other processes such as classroom demonstrations and interviews to gauge the passion and motivation of individuals towards teaching.

There will be multiple long-term benefits for adopting such a holistic model of teacher recruitment. To begin with, it will ensure recruitment of quality of teachers in the country. This, in turn, will contribute to equitable education for students from diverse sections of society. The recruitment process will also become credible if it is rooted in a framework that outlines the core competencies of becoming a teacher. At the systemic level, this may also lead to a reduction in coaching centres as the assessment processes will be non-standardised and cannot be easily gleaned from coaching materials and guidebooks.

Teachers with a passion for the profession are foundational to the positive educational change envisaged by the NEP. Setting up clear benchmarks of quality and well-designed recruitment processes hold the key to ensuring better teaching-learning outcomes

Among the many factors that affect the quality of education and its contribution to national development, the quality, competence and character of teachers are undoubtedly the most important." NEP 2020 also encourages that "teachers truly shape the future of our children and thus the future of our country" and encourages teachers to play the most important role in nation building by producing quality human resources in the classroom. You are fulfilling it is because of this prominent role that Indian teachers are most respected in the society.

Only the most intelligent and Knowledgeable of them became teachers. Society has given teachers or leaders what they need to impart knowledge, skills and ethics to their students. The quality of education, recruitment, transfer, working conditions and empowerment of teachers is not as good as it should be, and as a result, the quality and motivation of teachers is less than desirable. The high respect for teachers and the high status of the teaching profession should be revived in order to create the best motivation to enter the teaching profession. We need the motivation and ability of teachers to ensure the best possible future for our children and our country.

STATUS OF THE TEACHER

New education policies must help restore teachers at all levels as the most respected and integral members of our society. Because teachers truly shape the next generation of our citizens. Step should be taken so that teachers are empowered and able to do their work as efficiently as possible. The new education policy ensures livelihood, respect, dignity and independence, while instilling basic quality control methods and system accountability to attract the best and brightest to the teaching profession at all levels should be beneficial. Kumar et al. (2022) analyzed that teachers actually shape the future of students, so they also build the future of our nation. Teachers in India are now the most respected members of society and only the most gifted and knowledgeable persons are teachers. In order to provide students with the prescribed knowledge, skills and moral values, society provided all they needed by teachers or gurus. The spirit of higher status for teachers and respect for them and respect for teachers must be revived so that teachers are encouraged to include better people in their profession.

CAREER MANAGEMENT AND PROGRESSION (CMP)

Teachers doing outstanding work must be recognized and promoted, and given salary raises, to incentivize all teachers to do their best work. Therefore, a robust merit-based structure of tenure, promotion, and salary structure will be developed, with multiple levels within each teacher stage that incentivizes and recognizes outstanding teachers.

MOTIVATED, ENERGIZED, AND CAPABLE FACULTY

The most important success factor of any higher education institution is the quality and participation of its faculty. Recognizing the importance of teachers in achieving the goals of

higher education, various colleges have been established in the past few years to systematize recruitment and career advancement and ensure fair representation of different groups in teacher recruitment. Salary levels for full-time teachers in public institutions have also increased significantly. Various efforts are also underway to provide professional development opportunities for faculty. However, despite these various improvements in academic professional status, the motivation of professors to teach, research and serve in higher education institutions is far below the desired level. Address the various factors behind low levels of faculty motivation and ensure that each faculty member is happy, engaged, engaged, and motivated toward student, institutional, and professional advancement. This should be checked. For this purpose, this policy recommends several efforts to obtain the best, motivated and competent faculty in higher education institutions. By embracing this spirit of NEP, teachers can make a lasting difference in their students and prepare them for future success. In the words of one of India's most famous teachers, requires freedom of thought and freedom of imagination, both of which must be facilitated by teachers." Paschal and Srivastav (2022) concluded that teachers should be given the option to teach the subjects that they want to teach in order to make their jobs more pleasurable. Both the instructor and the kids will benefit from this. Furthermore, keeping into account the concept of 'span of control,' there should be no overcrowding in the classrooms. Planning lessons according to the number of pupils a teacher can handle guarantees that the instructor is not overworked and enjoys his work. To break up the monotony of day-to-day work, teachers should be given sound magazines in the staff room and the establishment of a sports or recreational hall for teachers in every school. Workshops for instructors should also be organized, which will assist them enhance their teaching approaches while also introducing a fresh aspect. Apart from sending instructors to academic training courses like B.Ed. or M.Ed., a range of training and development programmes, including personality development programmes, can be offered. These will assist in meeting both bodily and psychological demands, as well as increasing job satisfaction. Teachers must have their disciplinary as well as professional associations, which NEP also desires to establish.

The focus of academic leadership should be learner-centric and research-oriented. According to the new policy, teachers and principals will undergo Continuous Professional Development modules every year to improve their leadership, teaching, and school management skills and implement competency-based learning. Cooperation with others and Relationships with the Surrounding Community Teachers are kept up to date on school system changes and their

impact on higher education. Teachers share their experiences and knowledge with their peers and learn what future employers want their students to know. He participates in discussions about the purpose of higher education.

CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 focuses on teacher status, scope, role, dignity, autonomy, role expectations, professional development, career advancement and teaching skills to achieve quality higher education. Ahmad and Tehseena(2023) is of the view that the Role of Teacher is to shape the minds of the younger generation. Teachers must be passionate, motivated, and well qualified, and well trained in content, pedagogy, and practice. Teachers play very important roles in the lives of the students in their classrooms. Teachers are best known for the role of educating the students that are placed in their care. Beyond that, teachers serve many other roles in the classroom. Role of passionate Teacher and motivated Practioner. Creating a classroom environment with well qualified, well trained in content, mentoring and facilitator. Thus, The NEP emphasizes the teacher's contribution, their sacrifice and efforts to uphold the dignity, respect and honour of this profession.

The NEP 2020 recognizes the reality of unmotivated and demoralized Indian teachers and completely overhauls the teaching profession to create a robust merit-based structure of tenure, pay and promotion that encourages and rewards the best teachers. The secret of success is to be ready when an opportunity arises. The time has come for Indian teachers to take their chances and make their own destiny. To do it, have a dream and work hard to achieve it.

Be an informed enthusiastic and empowered practitioner. Share your ideas and grow through experimentation and research. Insights can also come from the thoughts, beliefs, and experiences of fellow practitioners. Enjoy the journey as you move from class to class and make beautiful connections with generations of lifelong learners.

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