Continuous Professional Development of Teachers: A Study Through the Lens of NEP 2020

SAVITA SAGAR*[1] AND PRATIBHA[2]

[1]Associate Professor and [2]M.Sc. Student
Department of Human Development and Childhood Studies, Lady Irwin College,
University of Delhi, New Delhi (India)

*Corresponding Author

ABSTRACT

The study titled "Continuous Professional Development of Teachers Through the Lens of NEP 2020" explores the challenges that schools and educators face in implementing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The research aimed to investigate how CPD is put into practice and the difficulties that arise during its execution. The sample included 30 teachers, with 15 from government schools and 15 from private schools in the Delhi area. The study looked at how teachers' roles and responsibilities are evolving in response to changing educational demands and student expectations, and whether NEP 2020 effectively supports teachers' professional development. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires, focusing on the implementation of CPD initiatives, the efforts made by schools to achieve CPD goals, and the challenges faced by teachers and institutions. The findings indicated that teachers in private schools generally have a more supportive environment for CPD compared to those in government schools, largely due to better resources and institutional backing. Schools have initiated various programs aimed at improving teaching quality, enhancing student learning, meeting professional standards, increasing job satisfaction, and retaining skilled teachers. However, several obstacles still impede effective CPD implementation, such as teachers' reluctance to engage, limited resources, and resistance to change. The study concludes that to enhance CPD implementation, it is crucial to ensure that programs align with teachers' current needs, encourage active participation, provide ongoing support, incorporate technology for professional development, regularly assess program effectiveness, and foster a culture of lifelong learning within educational institutions.

Keywords: Continuous Professional Development (CPD), National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Implementation, Educational institutions, Enhancing student learning

INTRODUCTION

India has always placed teachers at the pinnacle of their hierarchy since the teaching fraternity held a noble position in ancient times. According to Bahera (2014), a teacher is accorded the Sanskrit name *'Guru,'* meaning 'the one who removes darkness.' NEP 2020 is a major educational restructuring that restructures the whole education system of the country, India. The Government of India declared national policy on education in July 2020. National Policy on Education (1986), became India's first complete policy on education since 1986, after 34 years without any such policies in the country.

Education is the mainstay of development in every society, while the heart of any strong education system is comprised of its teachers. The most successful learning environments involve teachers who demonstrate professionalism in their dedication, strong subject knowledge, commitment to teaching, self-motivation, and teaching skills (Bhattacharjee, 2015).

The process of preparing a capable and equipped teacher has become more complicated in the modern environment. The profession of teaching as a whole has been placed under new challenges with the rapid growth

of technology and knowledge. A truly comprehensive and visionary teacher education program is fundamental to guaranteeing continuous development and effectiveness in the work performance of teachers across the country, noticing such elements of change in NEP 2020 (Ahangar, 2022).

The improvement of teacher education, so that a supply of competent and effective teachers is ensured, has continued to be a challenge globally. With the increase in recognition of the importance of teacher education in India, numerous policy documents and commissions have been formed with the aim of reforming this important sector.

While much has been achieved at the policy level, a number of important concerns remain unresolved and are in dire need of attention. The NEP 2020 acknowledges that a sizable proportion of teachers in India are unmotivated and lack enthusiasm. It has suggested that the profession of teaching needs a major restructuring to address the above concern. It has emphasized developing a solid, merit-based system comprising periodic professional training, institutionalized evaluations, and an open promotion policy. The aim of such a system is to give formal recognition to outstanding teachers and incentivize their performance based on their work (Chari, 2020).

CPD, or Continuous Professional Development, is all about professionals keeping their skills sharp and staying up-to-date. It's not just a box to tick off but a genuine record of what a professional learns, experiences, and how he or she brings new ideas into his daily work (NCERT, 2020).

With CPD as an ingrained practice, educators get to try fresh approaches and strategies that are even better. In this way, it will be easy for them to relate with the students in more meaningful ways and use what actually works in the classroom. Resulting teaching that's not just more effective, but genuinely makes a difference (NCERT, 2020).

CPD keeps teachers motivated. It gives them access to expert advice and pushes them to step out of their comfort zones. Suddenly, they're learners again, and that shift helps them improve what happens in the classroom.

The teachers participating in CPD become more confident in setting goals. They gradually start working according to the 'SMART' approach, which sharpens their teaching and makes them far more effective, both personally and professionally.

But the best improvement in at-scale student learning and teacher growth is all about community: when teachers work together in Professional Learning Communities, reflective about their practice, everyone benefits. You need an approach for change from the big picture, valuing new ways to assess, strong leadership support, smart professional development, and real community teamwork. That's what it will take to keep up with today's fast-changing world of teaching and learning as indicated by Ambon *et al.* (2024).

CPD helps teachers develop professionally in a continually changing world. In simple terms, it can be said that the underlying rationale is to make teaching more effective and relevant to the way students are actually learning nowadays. Teachers are exposed to moving away from old-school rote memorization and into more hands-on, student-centred approaches. It is about building skills, not just cramming for tests.

CPD also equips teachers with the means to devise stress-free, meaningful assessments. Rather than just a grade, it's an assessment that looks at the broader perspective: how the students are developing and what they are really capable of doing. In addition, CPD keeps teachers and school leaders current on all the latest changes and new ideas in education. It means they not only hear about but also understand how to apply any reforms at their schools.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for Teachers and School Heads:

CPD is not just another box to tick; it is about teachers and school heads who always grow and learn. It involves participation in different activities and experiences, which actually hone your skills and increase your knowledge. You record what you learn, try out new ideas in the classroom, and reflect back on what worked and what did not. That's where you actually see growth, not just on paper but in the way you teach and connect with students.

With CPD, there is a possibility for teachers to take risks in their teaching, test innovative techniques, and listen more deeply to students' needs. It's not just about improving test scores but also staying inspired, looking at your job differently, finding fresh energy, and getting advice from experts. CPD aids teachers in shifting from mere dissemination of information to becoming the learners themselves who continue to be curious and push for better. Plus, it arms them with tools to set goals clearly

and use the SMART framework so their teaching has real direction and purpose.

Stated by the NEP 2020, every teacher and school leader is supposed to engage in a minimum of 50 hours of professional development in every calendar year. To make this easier, there are now online forums where educators can connect, share ideas, and learn from each other across the country (NCERT, 2022).

The NEP 2020 and the NCERT (2022) provide guidelines clearly outline this information. The guidelines discuss about the framework for teacher and school development highlights the need to instil ethical, human, and constitutional values in students while preparing teachers to support learners academically, emotionally, and psychologically. It stresses the importance of incorporating art into education to enhance creativity and overall development, as well as creating inclusive and safe classroom environments where every student feels appreciated. According to Singh (1990), Teachers are encouraged to promote interdisciplinary learning, enabling students to connect concepts across different subjects and use hands-on, creative, and technology-friendly methods. The initiative also supports multilingual education and aims to develop key life skills such as teamwork, communication, and resilience. It seeks to foster respect for diversity in terms of gender, caste, religion, and background while instilling pride in India's cultural and intellectual heritage. By moving away from rote memorization and focusing on meaningful learning experiences, the framework aims to make assessments less stressful and more reflective of students' true abilities. Additionally, it prepares teachers for new educational policies and enhances the leadership skills of school heads in both academic and administrative roles.

Continuous professional reflection, research, and collaboration are encouraged to help teachers grow intellectually and keep up with new trends in education and society. Teachers are also supported in actively participating in curriculum design and digital content creation, adopting innovative child-centred teaching methods, pursuing self-directed professional development, and building strong professional networks for ongoing learning and knowledge sharing (Wallia, 2022).

CPD isn't limited to online and face-to-face courses only. It also covers a bundle of all academic activities that a teacher undertakes, such as attending or presenting seminars, workshops, and conferences; being a session leader or panellist. Even the development of textbooks,

e-resources, and other learning materials forms part of CPD. Field visits, exchange programs, and collaborative projects for learning likewise fall under CPD.

Teachers in their CPD should not just limit themselves to one kind of activity but mix it up, hence combining face-to-face, online learning, and distance education (Wallia, 2022).

CPD Portfolio:

Think of an e-portfolio as a kind of online scrapbook for yourself, where you house everything, you do to continue developing professionally. You can stash certificates, articles you've written, courses you've finished, reflective notes, and self-assessments all in one place.

CPD portfolio signify, that first of all, it enables you to gauge just how much time and effort you have used in your own development. You will be able to reflect on this, identify any patterns, and see where next you wish to work on developing. If you are coming up to an evaluation, you can show proof that you are taking steps towards improving in your job. This goes a long way in demonstrating what you are capable of, which is helpful whenever you are considering your next career step. The trick is to keep your portfolio updated. That way, it tells the story of how you're growing professionally (Joshi and Dixit, 2021).

Recognition and Incentives for CPD Completion:

As per NEP 2020, once the teacher completes the mandatory 50 hours of CPD, the door opens to an array of incentives. We are talking about promotion, new roles, certificates, awards, and even public mentions. Yes, there is a lot of financial motivation, like bonuses, increments, and sometimes even tablets or laptops. You may be invited to seminars or sent on exposure visits. Some schools give paid study leaves or declare your success on social media. After all, this is not just about ticking the boxes; it is about appreciating effort and ensuring that teachers feel valued for their efforts to grow professionally (NCERT, 2022).

Here's how the 50-hour CPD is structured. The purpose is quite straightforward: to support teachers to develop their skills and increase student learning. NEP 2020 lays it out clearly: all teachers and school heads must undergo at least 50 hours of CPD annually. In line with that, NCERT (2020) and the Ministry of Education introduced the NISHTHA program. Teachers can participate in the following ways:

Face-to-face sessions:

Think presentations, interactive talks, and hands-on activities.

Online courses through the DIKSHA platform: Each module runs for about four hours and is a mix of videos, quizzes, and reflective exercises.

Distance learning:

Institutions like NIOS provide modules according to their duration.

CPD include the curriculum accomplisheson the basic foundational literacy and numeracy. It goes even further, with training in hands-on and toy-based learning, technology integration, arts integration, and even sports. There is a focus on how to assess students as they learn, plus modules on leadership, school management, and practical skills for the modern world. Contents would adjust according to the grade level or whether you are a classroom teacher or head teacher. If a teacher's attending in-person, sessions usually are about an hour and a half. Mixing lectures and interactive parts, senior teachers give feedback. Inter-school meetups are also an opportunity to discuss the NEP guidelines and work out solutions to the shared challenges (NCERT, 2022).

Online and Distance Learning:

In addition, teachers should get a minimum of 10 hours of CPD via online or distance learning platforms. DIKSHA and NIOS both offer modular courses that fit different teaching roles. Teachers can pick modules that match their interests, though schools still suggest a few required ones.

Assessment Mechanism:

Once teachers complete their CPD hours, they need to upload evidence on their e-portfolio. The same is then scrutinized by committees. This assessment is done on a yearly basis, and everything is noted down on centralized portals like the one maintained by CBSE. Incentives and other benefits were being spoken about for such work, but most say that they haven't really seen it materialize as yet.

The trick lies in updating the portfolio regularly, so it tells the story of your professional development.

Recognition and Incentives for CPD Completion:

As per NEP 2020, teachers who complete the minimum 50 hours of CPD receive an entire set of incentives. Promotions, new responsibilities, certificates, awards, and even public commendation are on board. There are some financial benefits, too, which include bonuses, salary increments, and, occasionally, even a tablet or laptop. You might get invited to some events or go on an exposure visit. Some schools grant paid study leave or make celebratory posts about your feats on social media. All of this is not about the ticking of boxes; it's about recognizing hard work and making full sure that teachers feel valued for efforts put into their own growth (NCERT, 2022).

Challenges of CPD Implementation:

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) has great potential to enhance education quality, but implementing it effectively presents several challenges for teachers. Many schools do not have the necessary technology and infrastructure to support CPD programs. Teachers are often overwhelmed with increasing workloads and additional responsibilities related to research, innovation, and administrative duties. Adapting to new teaching methods can be difficult, as many educators find it hard to embrace unfamiliar strategies. Additionally, teachers often lack the time, motivation, and support from their institutions to pursue their own professional development. There is also a noticeable digital divide, with many teachers falling behind their students in terms of digital skills and technological knowledge, which complicates the successful application of CPD in the classroom (Azad and Kumar, 2016).

All of this is just adding to the stress in teachers. They are under pressure since expectations and responsibilities continue piling up. There are a set of entrenched problems that come in the way of good teacher training and professional development. First, there is simply not enough funding. Many schools lack even basic facilities such as libraries and laboratories. Evaluation mechanisms for teachers are also not great; meritocratic mobility is not fully ensured. Training programs are often too short to provide adequate time for teachers to build their skills. Institutions tend to work in silos, leaving teachers with feelings of isolation. Secondly, regulation is all over the place, and such unmanaged expansion has resulted in a drop in quality. The curriculum is mostly rigid, filled with theory and little practical experience. And to make things worse, too many teachers do not take the initiative to continue learning or seek professional development (Jadhav, 2021).

NEP 2020: How It Plans to Fix Teacher Education

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 focuses on empowering teachers by promoting collaboration, autonomy, and innovation in a supportive educational setting. It envisions schools that are safe, inclusive, and equipped with the necessary resources and support systems. To strengthen smaller or remote schools, the policy emphasizes the creation of professional teacher communities and the sharing of resources like counselors, technical staff, and administrative support, ensuring that teachers do not work in isolation. The policy aims to lessen non-teaching responsibilities, provide teachers with more freedom in their teaching methods, and acknowledge creative and effective teaching practices. Overall, these initiatives are intended to support teachers, encourage ongoing learning, and help them excel in their roles (Soni, 2022).

Objective of the study:

To investigate and examine the difficulties faced by schools and educators in carrying out Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as specified in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted to explore the recommendations of NEP 2020 regarding the process of implementation of the Continuous Professional Development program for teachers. The paper particularly focuses on analysing the steps made by educational institutions to meet the CPD goals specified in the policy framework. Before the data collection started, all ethical requirements were met.

A purposive and snowball sampling strategy was employed to locate and contact school teachers, considering the convenience of the researcher. This approach enabled the inclusion of those who, from the point of view of the study's aims, were best suited to provide relevant insights.

Data collection instruments include semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. The interview languages used were both Hindi and English, depending on the preference of the participants. This flexible method allows respondents to express opinions openly and in detail. The atmosphere during the interviews was made as relaxed and non-threatening as possible to ensure that the responses are candid and in-depth, with open communication. A paper-and-pen questionnaire was also administered to the participants in order to learn more about their opinions. The questionnaire was designed to supplement the information collected through interviews and gather additional data relevant to the objectives of the study, thereby enhancing overall data collection.

Since, the thematic analysis was considered to be an ideal approach for exploring the participant narratives and subjective views, qualitative data obtained for the research were interpreted with the assistance of thematic analysis.

FINDINGS

The key focus of this study was the implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers as stipulated in the NEP 2020, the efforts by schools to address the objectives of the CPD program, and various challenges that schools and teachers encountered during the implementation of the program.

The survey about knowledge of NEP 2020 concluded that all participating teachers—15 from government and 15 from private schools—were aware of the National Education Policy, 2020, and agreed on the fact, that the NEP was still in the implementation phase at their respective institutions. Teachers at private schools say primary school instructors are given greater importance due to their position in the early years of learning. Awareness was equally high in government schools, where administrators actively helped and monitored teachers—particularly those teaching at the elementary level—as they implemented the practices of NEP.

Both government and private teachers had an availability of visible materials in the form of banners, posters, and graffiti promoting NEP 2020, showing the institutional awareness about the same. No equivalent graphic depiction was present in most of schools. Most of the teachers recognized the importance of CPD in enhancing the quality of teaching. However, there were variations in the levels of implementation: In particular, instructors reported active implementation of CPD, while six instructors mentioned awareness of this practice but without formal implementation yet.

Only government schools testified to the adequate implementation of CPD, and acknowledged awareness but mentioned delays brought about by issues in funding and digital infrastructure. Overall, data indicated that instructors were well aware of both NEP 2020 and CPD;

however, their implementation varied, especially within government schools, due to resource and administrative limitations.

The study indicated that the need for the empowerment of teachers through CPD if they are to progress in their careers and improve student outcomes. Most teachers in both government and private schools indicated that they frequently attended seminars and were trained in digital literacy, with higher participation in private schools.

However, in both institutions, incentives and recognition still remain limited to bringing about more empowerment. Teachers' interpretation of empowerment involved autonomy in pedagogic decision-making, collaborative decision-making about school goals, and opportunities for career development. Detailed analysis showed that, compared to government school instructors, private school teachers more often participate in inter-school meetings, receive more leadership training, and have more exposure to digital media.

Despite involvement and awareness, various obstacles impede the application of CPD: The main issues threatening government schools are: under financing, poor infrastructure, teachers' lack of motivation, and digital illiteracy. The concerned issues in private schools are overworking, time pressure, and lack of recognition, due to favouritism. Sometimes there is also a lack of administrative support for teachers who seem reluctant to give up old teaching methods. In the face of overwhelming planning responsibilities and not-so-clear professional prospects, this weight falls most heavily on teachers.

Generally speaking, though educators recognize the need for continuous professional development, systemic issues—workload and resource limitations in particular—hamper its fullest potential, especially within public institutions.

Both government and private schools lacked incentives and recognition for CPD engagement. Favoritism in promotions was more reported in private institutions, resulting in low participation and morale among the teachers. The general lack of acknowledgment and encouragement undermined the motivational effect of CPD.

Both government and private schools had a lack of incentives and recognition for CPD engagement. In private institutions, favoritism in promotions was more commonly reported, which had consequences in terms of low teacher participation and morale. The general lack of acknowledgment and encouragement undermined the motivational effect of CPD.

Conclusion:

Teaching is a noble, lifetime, and transforming profession, rather than just the transmission of mere academic knowledge. Besides contributing to the general development of students, only the really effective instructors can help in moulding the personality of students and inciting critical thinking and curiosity. Teaching, therefore, has to be considered a lifetime learning process that requires continuous professional development and adaptation to new teaching methods and approaches.

The study concluded that how crucial CPD is to enhancing teachers' skills and ensuring quality, student-centred learning. Private schools are more likely to have available resources and display systematic CPD, even though issues such as increased workload, institutional support, and lack of recognition still exist-especially in government schools.

However, regardless of the type of institution, high-quality CPD opportunities must exist for everyone. For CPD to be successful, schools must adopt a proactive, inclusive approach and integrate CPD into the wider teaching and learning strategy. This means investing time in teachers, providing different training modalities, and engaging them with the development and delivery of CPD opportunities.

These findings also bring out the imperative that educators understand and contribute to the development of the National Education Policy 2020. Teachers' understanding, preparation, and involvement are vital for the successful implementation of NEP 2020, a far-reaching reform in education. Consequentially, if the policy's expressed aspiration for a modern, equitable, and learner-centred educational system is to be realized, educators must be provided with the wherewithal, training, and institutional support required.

REFERENCES

Ahangar, S. (2022) NEP-2020 and teacher education-some issues Retrieved from https://www.ijcrt.org

Ambon. J, Alias, B.S. and Mansor, A.N. (2024). Transforming Education: Innovative Practices In Teacher Continuous Professional Development. *Educational Administration: Theory & Practice*, **30**(4) : 10154-10163.

Azad, S. and Kumar, P. (2016). Teacher education in India. *Some Policy Issue & Challenges*, **2**(6). Retrieved from https://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/Teacher_education_in_India__Some_Policy_ issues_and_Challenges_ijariie3514.pdf

Behera, S. (2014). Gurur-brahmaagurur-vissnnur-gururdevomaheshvarah, gurureva param brahma tasmaishriiguravenamah. **2**(12A). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286046505

Bhattacharjee, J. (2015). Progress in Teacher Education in India. *Internat. J. Humanities & Soc. Sci. Studies*, **2**(1) : 213-222.Retrieved from https://oaji.net/articles/2015/1115-1438580397.pdf

Chari, R. (2020, August 30). 'NEP 2020': Empowering the teacher. Times of India: Indian Edition. https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/edutrends-india/nep-2020-empowering-the-teacher/

Jadhav, N. (2021). Issues and challenges of national education policy (NEP) 2020 implementation in teacher education. *Internat. J. Enhanced Res. Educational Development (Ijered),* **10**(3) : 2320-8708. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/362538441

Joshi, B. and Dixit, M. (2021). Teaching model for community education: an implication of nation education policy-2020Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/35228184

NCERT, (2020). https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/Guidelines50HoursCpd.pdf

NCERT (2022). Guidelines for 50 Hours of Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

NCFTE (2009). National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education. New Delhi https://ncte.gov.in/website/PDF/NCFTE_2009.pdf

NCTE (2005) National Council for Teacher Education. https://ncte.gov.in/website/index.aspx

NEP (2020). National Education Policy 2020.Retrieved from https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf accessed on 20-12-23

NPE (1986).National Policy on Education.Retrieved from https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/nep/Policy_1986_eng.pdf on dated 15-11-23

Singh, L. (1990). Teacher Education in India: *Concept of teacher education*. A Resource Book, Delhi, NCERT. https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/publication/journalsandperiodicals/journalofindianeducation/JIE_AUG2012.pdf

Soni, R. (2022). Challenges and issues in national education policy 2020. Retrieved from https://www.irjmets.com

Wallia, P. (2022). Continuous professional development: A policy analysis in Indian perspective. Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13664530.2023.2167858?src=&journalCode=rtde20.

****