

# **New Roles of Teachers in the Light of National Education Policy 2020 in India: Reimagining Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Nation Building**

**QUAISAR ALAM**

Assistant Professor

Department of B.Ed., Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad Teachers' Training College, Darbhanga (Bihar) India  
(Affiliated to Lalit Narayan Mithila University, Darbhanga)

## **ABSTRACT**

The National Education Policy 2020 represents one of the most comprehensive educational reforms in post-independence India. It seeks to transform the Indian education system into a learner-centered, multidisciplinary, inclusive, and globally competitive framework aligned with the demands of the twenty-first century. Within this transformative vision, teachers occupy a pivotal role as facilitators of knowledge, innovators, mentors, researchers, and agents of social transformation. This paper critically examines the emerging roles of teachers in the context of NEP 2020 and analyzes how the policy reshapes pedagogical practices, teacher professionalism, educational leadership, technology integration, and inclusive learning. The study employs a qualitative and analytical approach based on policy analysis and contemporary educational literature. The paper argues that the successful implementation of NEP 2020 depends largely upon teacher preparedness, institutional support, and continuous professional development. It further highlights the challenges associated with infrastructural deficiencies, digital inequalities, teacher training, and policy execution. The study concludes that teachers are central to India's aspiration of becoming a global knowledge society and that empowering teachers is essential for achieving educational equity, quality, and sustainable national development.

**Keywords:** National Education Policy 2020, Teachers, Educational Reform, Professional Development, Inclusive Education, Multidisciplinary Learning, Educational Technology

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is widely recognized as the cornerstone of national development and social transformation. Teachers play an indispensable role in shaping the intellectual, emotional, moral, and civic capacities of learners (Woolfolk, 2013). In contemporary societies characterized by rapid technological advancement, globalization, and changing socio-economic realities, the role of teachers has expanded far beyond traditional classroom instruction (Schön, 1983; Woolfolk, 2013). The National Education Policy 2020 acknowledges this changing educational landscape and envisions teachers as the foundation of educational transformation in India.

The Indian education system has historically been criticized for promoting rote memorization, examination-

oriented learning, fragmented curricula, and limited emphasis on creativity and critical thinking. NEP 2020 attempts to address these concerns by introducing a holistic, flexible, multidisciplinary, and competency-based educational framework (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2020). The policy recognizes that educational reforms can only succeed if teachers are professionally competent, socially respected, and institutionally empowered.

Consequently, NEP 2020 redefines the professional identity of teachers by assigning them multiple new responsibilities, including mentorship, innovation, inclusive pedagogy, technological integration, and promotion of experiential learning. This paper critically explores these emerging roles and examines the opportunities and challenges associated with their implementation.

### **Conceptual Foundations of Teacher Transformation under NEP 2020**

The philosophical foundation of NEP 2020 is rooted in holistic human development, social justice, constitutional values, and knowledge creation (Government of India, 2020). The policy draws upon both indigenous educational traditions and contemporary global educational frameworks. It emphasizes learner autonomy, flexibility, creativity, and experiential learning.

The transformation of teachers' roles under NEP 2020 reflects major educational theories proposed by scholars such as John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky, and Paulo Freire. Dewey (1938) argued that education should be based on lived experiences and democratic participation. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the social nature of learning and the importance of guided interaction, while Freire (1970) criticized the "banking model" of education and advocated dialogic and transformative pedagogy.

NEP 2020 reflects these principles by encouraging inquiry-based learning, collaborative classrooms, critical thinking, and active student participation. Teachers are therefore expected to facilitate learning experiences rather than simply transmit information.

### **Teachers as Facilitators of Holistic and Experiential Learning**

One of the defining features of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on holistic education. The policy seeks to develop learners' cognitive, emotional, ethical, social, and creative capacities simultaneously. Teachers are thus expected to create learning environments that support the overall development of students.

Traditional pedagogical approaches in India often focused heavily on memorization and standardized examinations. NEP 2020 challenges this paradigm by promoting experiential learning, project-based learning, art-integrated education, and competency-based pedagogy (MoE, 2020). Teachers must therefore adopt innovative teaching methods that encourage curiosity, exploration, reflection, and problem-solving.

Experiential learning enables students to connect classroom knowledge with real-life situations (Dewey, 1938). Teachers are required to design activities such as fieldwork, simulations, collaborative projects, and case studies that foster meaningful learning experiences. In this context, teachers become facilitators of intellectual inquiry and practical engagement rather than authoritarian figures.

The promotion of joyful learning at the foundational and preparatory stages further requires teachers to adopt child-centered pedagogical approaches. Play-based learning, storytelling, activity-based instruction, and creative expression become essential components of teaching practices.

### **Teachers as Mentors and Emotional Support Providers**

The modern educational environment increasingly recognizes the importance of emotional well-being, mental health, and socio-emotional learning (Woolfolk, 2013). NEP 2020 emphasizes nurturing empathy, resilience, ethical values, and emotional intelligence among students.

Teachers are expected to act as mentors and counselors who guide students through academic and personal challenges. This role becomes especially important in contemporary society, where students frequently experience stress, anxiety, social pressure, and identity-related concerns.

The mentor-mentee relationship envisioned under NEP 2020 goes beyond formal instruction and focuses on building trust, motivation, and confidence among learners. Teachers are required to create inclusive and emotionally safe classrooms where students feel respected and valued.

Such responsibilities demand strong interpersonal skills, emotional sensitivity, and professional ethics. Teachers must cultivate compassion, patience, and cultural understanding while supporting diverse student populations.

### **Teachers and Multidisciplinary Education**

The rigid separation between academic disciplines has long limited creativity and intellectual flexibility in Indian education. NEP 2020 addresses this issue by promoting multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary learning across all levels of education.

Under the new framework, students are encouraged to combine subjects from sciences, humanities, arts, commerce, and vocational education according to their interests and career aspirations. This shift significantly alters the role of teachers.

Teachers must now collaborate across disciplines and help students understand the interconnected nature of knowledge. For instance, environmental studies may involve scientific analysis, ethical reasoning, economic

considerations, and sociological perspectives simultaneously.

Multidisciplinary education also requires teachers to become lifelong learners who continuously update their knowledge beyond narrow subject specializations. Teachers must cultivate flexibility, creativity, and openness toward diverse intellectual traditions and pedagogical approaches.

This shift aligns with global educational trends emphasizing innovation, adaptability, and problem-solving abilities necessary for twenty-first-century societies.

### **Teachers and Inclusive Education**

Inclusive education constitutes one of the major commitments of NEP 2020. The policy emphasizes equitable access to quality education for all learners regardless of caste, class, gender, language, disability, geographical location, or socio-economic background.

Teachers are central to implementing inclusive education practices (Government of India, 2020; United Nations, 2015). They must accommodate diverse learning needs and create equitable classroom environments that respect cultural and social diversity.

Inclusive teaching requires differentiated instruction, flexible assessment strategies, multilingual pedagogies, and sensitivity toward marginalized communities (NCERT, 2023). Teachers must also identify learning barriers and support students with special educational needs through individualized approaches.

The emphasis on mother tongue or regional language instruction during foundational learning stages further enhances the role of teachers in preserving linguistic diversity and improving conceptual understanding. Teachers must therefore possess multilingual competencies and culturally responsive pedagogical skills.

Inclusive education under NEP 2020 is not limited to physical access to schooling; it also seeks meaningful participation, dignity, and equal opportunities for all learners.

### **Teachers and Technology Integration**

Technological transformation has profoundly influenced educational systems worldwide. NEP 2020 strongly advocates the integration of digital technologies into teaching-learning processes through online education, virtual laboratories, smart classrooms, and

digital learning platforms.

Teachers are now expected to function as technologically competent educators capable of integrating digital tools into pedagogy effectively (Mishra and Koehler, 2006). The COVID-19 pandemic further demonstrated the necessity of digital literacy and flexible learning models.

However, technological integration is not merely about using devices or software. Teachers must critically evaluate educational technologies and ensure that digital learning remains pedagogically meaningful and socially inclusive.

The Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework proposed by Mishra and Koehler (2006) becomes particularly relevant in this context. Teachers must integrate technological knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and subject content effectively to enhance learning outcomes.

At the same time, the digital divide remains a significant challenge in India, particularly in rural and economically marginalized regions. Teachers often face infrastructural limitations, inadequate training, and unequal student access to digital resources.

### **Continuous Professional Development and Teacher Autonomy**

NEP 2020 strongly emphasizes continuous professional development (CPD) as an essential component of teacher quality enhancement. The policy recommends regular workshops, training programmes, peer learning, and academic engagement to ensure that teachers remain updated with evolving pedagogical practices.

Professional development under NEP 2020 extends beyond technical skill acquisition. It includes reflective practice, action research, curriculum innovation, and collaborative learning among educators.

Teachers are also expected to become active contributors to educational research and policy discourse (Schön, 1983). This approach elevates teaching from a routine occupation to a dynamic professional practice grounded in inquiry and innovation.

Furthermore, NEP 2020 advocates greater teacher autonomy and reduction of excessive administrative burdens. Teachers should have freedom to adapt pedagogical methods according to classroom needs while maintaining accountability and professional ethics.

Empowering teachers institutionally and

professionally is essential for ensuring long-term educational transformation.

### **Challenges in Implementing the New Roles of Teachers**

Despite its transformative vision, the implementation of NEP 2020 faces numerous practical challenges.

#### ***Inadequate Teacher Training***

Many teachers in India continue to rely on traditional lecture-based teaching methods due to insufficient exposure to modern pedagogical practices. Effective implementation of competency-based and multidisciplinary learning requires large-scale teacher training initiatives.

#### ***Infrastructural Deficiencies***

Numerous schools lack adequate classrooms, internet connectivity, laboratories, digital equipment, and teaching resources. Such infrastructural limitations hinder innovation and technology integration.

#### ***Digital Inequality***

The unequal distribution of technological resources creates barriers to equitable digital education. Teachers in rural areas often struggle with limited access to devices, connectivity, and technical support.

#### ***Administrative Burden***

Teachers are frequently assigned non-academic duties related to elections, census work, surveys, and administrative activities. Excessive workload negatively affects teaching quality and professional development.

#### ***Resistance to Pedagogical Change***

Educational systems often resist change due to deeply entrenched examination cultures, institutional rigidity, and societal expectations. Transforming classroom practices therefore requires sustained policy support and stakeholder awareness.

### **Conclusion**

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a transformative vision for Indian education that seeks to align learning with the needs of the twenty-first century. Teachers occupy the central position in this

transformative agenda and are expected to perform diverse and dynamic roles as facilitators, mentors, innovators, counselors, researchers, and nation-builders.

The policy redefines teaching as a reflective, collaborative, and socially responsible profession that contributes not only to academic achievement but also to democratic citizenship, ethical development, and social inclusion. Teachers are expected to foster creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, digital literacy, and lifelong learning among students.

However, the realization of these objectives depends upon substantial investment in teacher education, professional development, infrastructure, and institutional support. Educational reforms cannot succeed merely through policy declarations; they require empowered and motivated teachers capable of translating policy ideals into classroom realities.

Ultimately, teachers remain the most significant agents of educational and social transformation. Strengthening the teaching profession is therefore essential for achieving India's broader goals of equity, quality education, sustainable development, and global competitiveness.

## **REFERENCES**

- Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. Macmillan.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Government of India (2020). *National Education Policy 2020*. Ministry of Education.
- Mishra, P. and Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological pedagogical content knowledge: A framework for teacher knowledge. *Teachers College Record*, **108**(6) : 1017–1054.
- Piaget, J. (1972). *The psychology of the child*. Basic Books.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.
- Woolfolk, A. (2013). *Educational psychology* (12th ed.). Pearson Education.
- National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2023). *National curriculum framework for school education 2023*. NCERT.
- United Nations (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development*. United Nations.
- Schön, D. A. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic Books.

\*\*\*\*\*