



Acharya Devo Bhava: A Paradigm Shift for teachers in the Implementation of National Education Policy 2020

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a transformative shift in India's educational landscape, emphasising the pivotal role of teachers in shaping future generations. Historically, teachers, or gurus, employed diverse pedagogical techniques rooted in ancient scriptures, fostering a holistic learning environment. The NEP aims to revitalise this tradition by equipping teachers with essential skills, promoting learner-centred education, and encouraging innovative teaching methodologies. Key to this initiative is the empowerment of teachers, enabling them to become facilitators and mentors rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. The NEP underscores the importance of continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers, ensuring they remain adept in contemporary pedagogical practices and technology integration. This is crucial in addressing the needs of today's digitally native students, who require guidance in navigating the complexities of modern learning environments. Furthermore, the policy advocates for specialised training programmes that enhance teachers' competencies in diverse subjects, creating a comprehensive educational experience for students. In addition to pedagogical skills, the NEP emphasises the need for teachers to cultivate values such as ethics, compassion, and rationality that align with the broader goals of character development and skill acquisition. The policy envisions a collaborative approach, where teachers actively participate in curriculum development and personalised learning experiences, thereby enhancing student engagement and success. Ultimately, the NEP 2020 seeks to restore the dignity and respect of the teaching profession, positioning educators as key agents of change in society. By investing in teacher education and empowerment, India aspires to create a world-class education system that nurtures knowledge, creativity, and ethical values, paving the way for a brighter future.

Keywords: NEP-2020, empowerment of teachers, learner-centred education, CPD.

TRADITIONAL PEDAGOGY:

The innovative nature of the 'Ancient Indian Education System' (AIES) derives from the peculiarity of the conventional teaching and learning approach rooted in the 'Gurukul System'. Ashram gurus, or teachers, during ancient times used a variety of pedagogical techniques. With the Vedas, Upanishads, and Epics, the AIES possessed a vast treasure store of teaching techniques and approaches, including astrology, astronomy, archery, cuisine, fencing, politics, theology, and therapies. They also describe the ideal image of a teacher, his or her traits, and numerous teaching methodologies using multidimensional techniques known as 'Vidyas' or 'Chakras'. According to the Gurukul system, students were instructed in life skills through rigorous training and challenging examinations. While we acknowledge that not every student can become Arjuna from the Mahabharata, we believe that if we can produce even one Dronacharya, we will have an abundance of Arjuna (Bhupendra Singh & Patanjali Mishra, 2018). There was no formal curriculum for the disciples' future creation in the Ashrama system. However, in order to better equip their students for everyday life, 'teachers'

who went by titles like 'Guru', 'Swami', 'Acharya', etc., implemented innovative procedures. According to ancient scriptures, there was a framework for practice-based teaching and learning. When it came to military tactics, for instance, the 'Chakravyuh' approach was novel from a pedagogical standpoint. In the present day, the classroom is akin to a military training ground, necessitating that teachers implement the most effective and contemporary pedagogical strategies to facilitate enduring learning. The issue of individual variances has always existed, but a true teacher never becomes frustrated and never chooses the path to disappointment. A draft of "National Education Policy (NEP)-2020" addresses these and other questions about the most effective pedagogical approaches for learner-centred education in the current educational institutions.

NEP 2020 – A PARADIGM SHIFT IN EDUCATION:

One of the major areas to be focused on to ensure that the Indian education system is sustainable and meets global standards is the 'quality of education' in terms of teachers, infrastructure, and accreditation (Hiremath, S.S. and Albal, D.R., 2016). The previous "National Education Policy" of India, created in 1986 and last revised in 1992, was superseded by the new one in 2020, prepared by a group presided over by the former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K. Kasturirangan. The draft of the "National Education Policy (NEP)-2020" addresses the most effective ways to teach in today's educational institutions, with an emphasis on making learning the primary goal of each classroom. The draft policy has undergone several deliberations since then, including the latest change on making it ready for an education system that is suited even to the COVID-19 pandemic. NEP-2020 determines to bring transformational reforms to all the educational institutions in the country with the aim of making "India a global knowledge superpower" while stepping towards the embellishment of "Shreshth Bharath".

For teachers to re-emerge as 'Vishwa Guru' and revolutionise Bharat (India), they will need a mix of conceptual, practical, personal, and social skills. "Teachers are the key to the implementation of NEP 2020," says Shri. Ramesh Pokhriyal, a former minister of education. For education to have an impact, he has been advocating the principle of "Acharya Devo Bhava," which states that teachers need to be empowered first, paved the way for in-depth discussions on modernising the teaching profession and implant the "vision of the teacher" for the classroom, as per the 21st century. Until now, teachers mostly focused on clerical tasks, following the curriculum, and conducting prescribed exams. However, with the NEP 2020, classrooms will change and teaching will now focus on understanding concepts rather than just passing on information. It will also encourage hands-on learning in real-life situations and help build important values and skills for the digital age. As part of the new curriculum, which aims to educate and empower the country, teachers will be trained in areas such as basic arts and crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture and values, and mathematics and science. This will help students develop their full potential and make their education more comprehensive, practical, and satisfying. The overarching goal of this strategy is to equip students for successful and satisfying careers while also developing their character traits of ethics, rationality, compassion, and care. Teachers have a responsibility to learn about and practice skill development, integrated and multidisciplinary approaches. While implementing the NEP at the ground level, it becomes imperative for the teaching fraternity to have strong coordination, cooperation, and the motivation to transform students' lives through skill and character building.

WHAT IS TEACHER EDUCATION?

The objective of teacher education is to develop the attitudes, abilities, and knowledge necessary for them to meet the demands of their positions. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) defines teacher education as "a program of education, research, and training for professionals to teach from pre-primary to higher education levels." A well-rounded teacher education includes classroom skills, pedagogical knowledge, professionalism, and the following:

- **Teaching Skills:** Teachers must get training and practice in a range of methods, approaches, and tactics to enhance their capacity to plan and carry out instruction, provide suitable reinforcement, and conduct successful assessments. This competency's essential components are effective lesson planning and execution, classroom management skills, and successful student communication.
- **Sound Pedagogical Theory:** This idea, which is based on philosophy, sociology, and psychology, gives teachers a solid foundation for their lessons because it specifically addresses the needs and conditions of different stages of development.
- **Professional Skills:** It includes the techniques, processes, and tactics that can help teachers improve their careers and contribute to the development of the teaching profession as a whole. The ability to empathise with others, counsel them, engage them, use technology effectively, obtain and manage data, and never stop learning are all considered "soft skills."

- **NEP 2020's Teacher Education Overview:** With the goal of completely revamping India's educational system, the NEP 2020 emerged from extensive national discussions and debates. In keeping with modern principles and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the policy's lofty objective is to reform the educational system in India in such a way that it promotes modern knowledge while also enhancing the country's illustrious cultural heritage and traditional values. To ensure that the next generation is prepared for the future while also honouring India's rich cultural past, this reform aims to improve education administration while simultaneously rethinking the system's fundamental framework.

STRATEGIES FOR EMPOWERING TEACHERS AND REFORMS IN TEACHER EDUCATION:

According to Bogler and Nir (2012), empowerment suggests “real changes in one’s professional expertise, rising autonomy, and involvement in decision making processes”. Similarly, Bolin (1989) emphasises that “empowerment is participating in decisions about school goals and practicing these decisions in the educational field”. Kimwarey, Chirure and Omondi (2014) assert that “an empowered individual has the skills and knowledge to act or improve in a positive way”. Through teacher empowerment, teachers develop their own competence and self-discover their potential and limitations. Empowering teachers is a key aspect of the NEP, which aims to provide teachers with the necessary training and support to help them adapt to the changing needs of the education system. According to the NEP 2020, teachers will be expected to become facilitators, mentors, and guides, rather than just traditional lecturers. The NEP also emphasises the importance of “continuous professional development” (CPD) for teachers, which will help them stay updated with the latest teaching methods and technologies. This will enable them to provide high-quality education to their students and keep pace with the rapidly changing world. Teacher education is another critical area of focus in the NEP, which aims to improve the quality of teacher training programmes and make them more relevant to the needs of the 21st century. It is widely acknowledged that when teachers work together, it leads to higher student performance and according to Aydin Balyer et al. (2017), highlights the ‘centrality of teachers’ jobs to society and institutions.’ Administrators’ responsibilities in fostering teacher agency have evolved in response to increased emphasis on student achievement (Crum, Sherman, & Myran, 2009). This is why, according to Bogler and Nir (2012), creating a supportive school or college climate and giving teachers more autonomy are seen as beneficial ways to fix issues with educational efficacy. So, there's a lot of buzz in the area of teacher education about teacher empowerment. The NEP-2020 offers teachers the freedom to choose the pedagogy that works best for their students and encourages them to focus on their students' social and emotional development, two important parts of a well-rounded education (Rashmi Chari, 2020).

Celebrating the 'Acharya Devo Bhava' legacy, the new education strategy places a heavy emphasis on the importance of teacher education. Investing in teacher preparation programmes is critical for ensuring that future generations have access to qualified teachers. The instructors will be equipped with the abilities to simultaneously reform, transform, and perform. Keeping up with the demands of the modern day in teacher training calls for a wealth of information and understanding from a variety of fields, as well as the cultivation of personal beliefs, values and practical skills under the guidance of exemplary educators. Thus, there has to be a complete change to the way teachers are prepared for the profession. To that end, universities with a focus on many disciplines will offer a "Bachelor of Education" degree programme that is structured around four years of integrated coursework in various subjects.

Teachers will believe that in order to change and re-emerge as 'Vishwa Guru', one must possess a combination of conceptual, practical, personal, and social abilities. Therefore, teachers have a heavy burden to uphold the NEP's ideals of accessibility, quality, and equity while ensuring that their lessons are reflective of the programmes five "I's" Indian, Internationalism, Impactful, Interactive, and Inclusive. In order for pupils to undergo transformational changes and acquire 21st century abilities, teachers must actively participate in them. Teachers, however, are first and foremost responsible for keeping themselves abreast of information relevant to their profession.

TEACHERS AS A DRIVING FORCE:

NEP-2020 gives importance to the vital role of teachers in teaching all the students through the adoption of the inclusive mode in the regular classroom environment. It focuses on the need for specialised teacher training programmes for teachers to equip them with the knowledge, skills, competencies, and mastery in the strategies required to meet the diversified. Teachers will be expected to play a key part in curriculum development, implementing new teaching methods, and creating an environment of innovation and creativity in the classroom. They will also be responsible for identifying the individual interests and needs of their

students and providing personalised learning experiences. Additionally, teachers will be expected to inculcate lifelong skills and knowledge in their students, which will help them navigate the challenges of the 21st century. The policy has placed an emphasis on re-establishing teachers at all levels and has also expanded on transparently recruiting excellent teachers to offer autonomy while simultaneously making sure that every teacher knows they are accountable for their actions (Biren Das, 2021). Teachers need to collaborate effectively and stay motivated to positively impact their students' development of skills and character (Sunil Shrivastav, 2020). NEP has greatly emphasised teachers' contributions, sacrifices, and efforts to maintain the respect, dignity, and honour of their profession.

An educational institution performs a significant function of providing learning experiences to lead their students from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. Teachers are primarily responsible for carrying out the educational process at all levels in any educational programme that plays a significant role in bringing about this transformation. This highlights the importance of investing in teacher preparation to ensure a secure future for the nation (Hiremath, S.S., 2019). A critical examination of previous education policies reveals that there are voids in implementation and inadequate preparation for educators and instructors, which impacts the role of teachers in the implementation process. However, NEP-2020 should not lead individuals to delay realising their full potential, thereby impeding the country's progress. It suggests reorganising the entire Indian subcontinent. Literacy, numeracy, and skill education are the cornerstones of this plan to equip India for the problems of the modern day. Furthermore, the opinions and actions of the teaching community determine whether education policies are successful (Sunil S., 2020).

TEACHERS SKILLS IN THE DIGITAL AGE:

In addition to being cognisant of the digital divide, NEP-2020 understands the importance of utilising technology for its benefits while also being cognisant of the risks and hazards that come with it. One positive development towards the goal of increasing the use of technology in classrooms is the establishment of the "National Education Technology Forum" (NETF). Being able to reflect on one's own learning and grow via personal experience is the most crucial competency for a modern educator to have. Teachers are in high demand and must possess knowledge of technology. Members of "Generation Z" and "Generation Alpha" make up the present student body, and it is imperative that teachers recognise this. Each of these two generations has grown up with an abundance of technology that has never been seen before. Students grew up with computers and smartphones, so pupils can use applications and code together with their teachers as they turn pages. Therefore, it is crucial for instructors to embrace technology and put themselves in the shoes of today's "digital native" pupils. It is important to use technology in a smart way that helps kids, encourages them to learn on their own, and highlights its positive aspects rather than constantly focusing on its negative ones (Sanjhee Gianchandani, 2020). Teaching students how to use technology appropriately is another crucial component. Making a good online impression is also very important. One of teachers' most important responsibilities is to influence students' social media behaviours. Social media has disturbed everyone's life in recent years and has an extremely high effect on young, vulnerable brains. According to Kathy Cook, director of educational technology at the University of Phoenix's College of Education, it is reasonable to utilise these technologies for instruction and learning because students already use them in their daily lives. The opportunity to teach our students the importance of maintaining an appropriate social media profile is also fantastic.

The NEP-2020 suggests that in order to close the digital gap, educational programmes should be accessible at all times in several languages to meet the diverse needs of students. The inclusion of content in all Indian languages will be given special attention and is mandatory. Digital content should ideally reach both teachers and students through the medium of instruction. The policy will explore and develop ways to ensure that students and instructors from "Socially Economically Disadvantaged Groups" (SEDG) have sufficient access to digital resources, such as tablets that come preloaded with educational materials. It ensures that our educational system has access to teachers who are both technically competent and entrepreneurial. Developing one's skills as a teacher is the overarching goal. In accordance with NEP-2020, a group of knowledgeable individuals is working to create a sample course outline and curriculum. A teacher who is self-aware will be able to fulfil NEP 2020's emphasis on value-based education. Their attendance at the higher education ministry's communication programmes that include orientations, refresher courses, faculty development programmes, short courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences is mandatory. The ever-changing natures of higher education around the world necessitates that educators be adaptable and take advantage of new possibilities to "up-skill" and "re-skill" in order to remain competitive in the classroom and beyond. Research is only one more area that will improve society and the standard of education.

Educators have a responsibility to foster innovation, creativity, and a patent culture by engaging in and advocating for research within and across disciplines. The teachers' role will be crucial in helping schools become top-notch resource centres for learning so that they can meet the information needs of all members of society, particularly students from low-income and socially disadvantaged families. Teachers have a crucial role in moulding the brains of the next generation. Teachers should therefore have a strong interest in their subject matter, strong motivation to succeed, and extensive knowledge of both theory and practice in the classroom. Beyond this, the new paradigm places a premium on the multiple responsibilities of the educator. Knowing the value of education, especially higher education, in the Indian and global contexts is the first and most important quality. Important steps in the educational sector include teachers planning, drafting, developing, generating, managing content, implementing the content; and evaluating the various programmes. The teacher has a responsibility to stay current in their area of expertise and to train future educators to do the same. Furthermore, they should work on honing the craft of contemporary pedagogical approaches. Their human resource management should prioritise promoting opportunities for lifelong learning and inculcating ethical and moral values. In all aspects of the teaching and learning process—from pedagogy to content to presentation to classroom management—teachers should advocate for the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) and multimedia tools, such as interactive multimedia, 3D animation, and virtual reality approaches. Educators must understand their place in the larger system and act accordingly. In order to improve the quality of higher education, instructors should focus first and foremost on themselves, but they should also endeavour to increase networking across institutions by promoting and expanding programmes for other colleges, states, governments, and corporate sectors.

TO SUM UP:

Society is transitioning into a new era where individuals have more opportunities to explore diverse career paths over their lifetimes. In India, educators hold the highest regard for the important work they do in the classroom. As a whole, society supplied educators with the resources they needed to impart wisdom, expertise, and moral principles to the next generation. As envisioned by Shri. Narendra Modi ji, the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, the National Education Policy-2020 will establish the foundation for India in the 21st century. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping the future of our nation through their influence on children. The document will provide teachers in India more agencies and outline numerous changes for their hiring, CPD, working environment, and more. Indians will be more empowered and drawn to opportunities as a result of this strategy. Teachers will need training in both pedagogy and high-quality content, according to NEP-2020, which acknowledges and designates teachers as the process's central figure. These structural changes would pave the way for "teaching" to become a more appealing career option for brilliant and gifted youth. In the long run, NEP-2020 hopes that by restoring the profession's high regard and standing and giving instructors more agencies, it would be able to recruit the brightest and greatest students (Rashmi Chari, 2020). Therefore, NEP-2020 is designed with the idea that instructors should constantly be learning with new skills. Further, the multidisciplinary colleges and universities will progressively take over teacher education by 2030. If we want our children and our country to have the best future possible, we must encourage and support our teachers. Everyone is now aware that new actions are necessary in light of the new circumstances and reality brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. If and when face-to-face instruction is not an option, educators must be prepared to provide students with high-quality alternatives. Overall, the role of teachers in the NEP 2020 is multifaceted and critical to the success of the policy. By empowering teachers and providing them with the necessary support and training, the NEP aims to create a world-class education system that will help India become a knowledge-driven society.

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I (the author) declare that there is no conflict of interest.