

Conceptual Article

The Role of NEP 2020 in Reshaping Pre-Service Teacher Education: A Policy-Practice Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) represents a landmark reform in India's education paradigm, signalling a transformational shift in preservice teacher education. The article examines the policy's major thrusts such as restructuring teacher preparation, emphasizing foundational pedagogies, promoting technology integration, and nurturing inclusive practices and analyses how these are being translated into practice. Drawing from the policy document, recent implementation reports, and emerging practices across teacher education institutions, the study assesses the successes, challenges, and prospects. Key findings reveal that while NEP 2020's comprehensive vision promises to elevate preservice teacher quality, systemic bottlenecks like faculty readiness, infrastructural constraints, curriculum redesign pace, and stakeholder alignment constraint effective realization. The paper offers strategic recommendations to close the gap between policy and practice, while recognizing NEP 2020's promise to shape a future where teacher education is dynamic, grounded in research, responsive to local contexts, and centred on equity.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, Perspective Teacher Education, Policy-Practice

INTRODUCTION

Pre-service teacher education stands at the heart of educational transformation. It shapes the outlook, skills, and pedagogical efficacy of future teachers who, in turn, shape generations of learners. Recognizing this, the Government of India introduced the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) the first comprehensive education policy of the 21st

century to overhaul all education levels from foundational to higher education. A foundational pillar of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on revamping teacher education to ensure high-quality, equitable, and future-ready schooling across the nation. Historical models rooted in rote learning, rigid curricula, and theory-heavy programs have long constrained teacher readiness. NEP 2020 rejects such legacy structures, favouring integrated pedagogical studies, early clinical practice, critical reflection, and use of technology in both teaching and administration. The policy also underlines continuous professional development, autonomy of teacher education institutions, and alignment with global and local needs through research, diversity, and inclusive pedagogy. The article explores how NEP 2020 reimagines pre-service teacher education (policy), how these reforms are being implemented (practice), what challenges persist, and what strategic measures may help bridge the policy-practice divide.

NEP 2020: VISION AND PRINCIPLES FOR PRESERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION

❖ Integrated Pathways & Holistic Pedagogy

NEP 2020 proposes a four-year integrated Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree, replacing the traditional two-year model. This integrated model encourages embedding teacher preparation within broader undergraduate study, enabling deeper pedagogical grounding, subject mastery, and reflective practices across multiple disciplines.

❖ Foundational Pedagogies: Praktik and Reflective Practice

NEP mandates early and continuous **clinical internships** in real classroom contexts. These experiential components—teaching under supervision, reflective journaling, peer collaboration—are essential to develop adaptive pedagogical judgement, “praktik” oriented skills, and context-specific strategies.

❖ Technology-Enabled Teacher Preparation

With digital tools now indispensably woven into modern learning, NEP underscores technology integration: from using ICT in teaching methods courses, to providing access to digital content, to training preservice teachers in e-pedagogy, blended learning, and EdTech tools.

❖ **Continuous Professional Development and Licensure**

NEP envisages **Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs)** integrating with continuous professional development checkpoints. An envisaged **professional regulatory framework** would ensure quality through accreditation, tracking, and teacher performance systems.

❖ **Inclusion, Equity, and Multilingualism**

Consistent with NEP's broader thrust on equity, pre-service curricula must infuse **inclusive education** training addressing needs of children with disabilities, regional and linguistic diversity, gender sensitivity, and socio-economic disparities.

❖ **Research, Autonomy, and Institutional Strengthening**

Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) under NEP 2020 are encouraged to gain autonomy in academic design, governance, and finances, while strengthening internal **research and innovation** capacity to inform practices, monitor outcomes, and adapt locally.

TRANSLATING POLICY INTO PRACTICE: EMERGING TRENDS

1. Pilot Rollout of Integrated B.Ed. Programs

Some universities and state governments have initiated the four-year integrated B.Ed., often in collaboration with National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). These programs are structured to integrate subject knowledge with pedagogical, psychological, and sociocultural domains, rather than isolating them in discrete semesters.

2. Clinical Practice and Internships

TEIs are establishing **school partnerships** to facilitate practicum. This includes extended school immersions, peer-teaching, microteaching laboratories, and lesson reflections though extent and quality vary across urban and rural settings.

3. ICT in Curriculum and Delivery

Adoption of online platforms, digitized resources, simulation tools, and hybrid teaching approaches is rising especially post-pandemic. Some institutions offer modules in digital pedagogy, resource creation, and flipped classroom strategies; yet disparities exist in access to devices and connectivity, particularly in remote regions.

4. Capacity Building and Faculty Development

State education departments, SCERTs, and NCERT have begun orienting teacher educators in NEP 2020's new mandates. Workshops, MOOCs, and refresher courses target shifts in pedagogy, assessment, technology, and inclusion. However, these trainings are often **one-off and variable in depth**.

5. Accreditation and Quality Assurance

NCTE is working to revise its norms and standards to align with NEP's integrated B.Ed., promoting peer review, outcome-based evaluation, and performance metrics. Yet institutional **autonomy** and implementation timelines remain uneven.

6. Inclusive and Multilingual Pedagogy

Some TEIs now include modules on **multi-lingual education**, local languages, barrier-free instructional design, and sensitivity training for disabilities—especially in states promoting mother-tongue instruction. However, uniform coverage across the diverse nation is patchy.

STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN NEP 2020 IMPLEMENTATION IN PRESERVICE EDUCATION

1. Infrastructure Enhancement and Resource Mobilization

Allocate grants to upgrade physical and digital infrastructure—model schools, pedagogy labs, EdTech studios, inclusive learning centers. Encourage PPPs (public-private partnerships) to augment resources where state capacities are limited.

2. Sustained Faculty Development Ecosystem

Design multi-tiered, ongoing professional learning programs for teacher educators—blending in-person workshops, peer observation, communities of practice, MOOC modules, and micro-credentials in pedagogy, inclusion, assessment, and technology.

3. Curriculum Co-creation and Localization

Promote participatory curriculum design—engaging faculty, schools, local communities and students. Emphasize locally relevant content—regional languages, community histories, and inclusive examples—alongside foundational pedagogical theories.

4. Digital Equity Initiatives

Distribute devices/tablets to pre-service cohorts from underserved backgrounds, subsidize affordable internet, build offline digital repositories, and train students in digital literacy to ensure equitable EdTech access. Use low-bandwidth tools adapted for remote contexts.

5. Governance Alignment and Policy Synergy

Foster joint task forces across NCTE, NCERT, UGC, state SCERTs, and university bodies to synchronize curriculum guidelines, accreditation norms, funding cycles, and evaluation frameworks. Set clear milestones and timelines for integrated B.Ed. rollout.

6. Monitoring, Research, and Continuous Improvement

Institutionalize feedback loops student performance tracking, graduate outcomes, employer satisfaction, mentor reports, community input. Establish research units in TEIs to conduct action research, document classroom innovations, assess interventions, and iterate practices.

7. Promoting Equity and Inclusion

Mandate dedicated credits in programs for disability studies, gender sensitivity, multilingual practice, and social equity. Facilitate field placements in diverse schools including those serving marginalized communities to deepen pre-service exposure.

CONCLUSION

NEP 2020 sets forth a transformative vision for pre-service teacher education in India one rooted in integration, reflective practice, technology, inclusion, autonomy, and research. Its potential to elevate teaching standards and prepare adaptive, empathetic, and skilled educators is immense. However, success requires bridging distinct challenges from infrastructure deficiencies and faculty readiness to governance coordination and digital inequities. Achieving the envisioned outcomes demands not only policy clarity but also pragmatic, locally contextualized strategies, sustained investment, capacity building, and systemic alignment across institutions and stakeholders. If effectively enacted, NEP 2020 can catalyse a new generation of reflective, research-oriented, and inclusive teachers equipped to nurture India's diverse learners in the rapidly evolving educational landscape.

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