



Revamping Teacher Training in Light of NEP 2020 Opportunities and Challenges

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 heralds a transformative shift in India's approach to education, with teacher training placed at the heart of systemic reform. This study explores the opportunities and challenges associated with revamping teacher education in line with NEP 2020, focusing on core reforms such as the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and digital learning platforms like DIKSHA. Drawing on policy analysis, stakeholder interviews, and regional implementation data from six Indian states, the research reveals both progressive strides and persistent disparities. While the policy provides a robust framework for professionalizing teaching, its success is limited by infrastructural gaps, unequal digital access, faculty preparedness issues, and institutional inertia. The findings underscore the need for localized implementation strategies, sustained capacity building, and participatory governance mechanisms. This paper concludes that NEP 2020 offers a compelling vision for reform but must be supported by systemic realignment and active stakeholder engagement to realize its full potential in transforming teacher education.

Keywords: NEP 2020 · Teacher Training · ITEP · Teacher Education Reform · Continuous Professional Development (CPD) · NPST · Educational Policy · India · Inclusive Education.

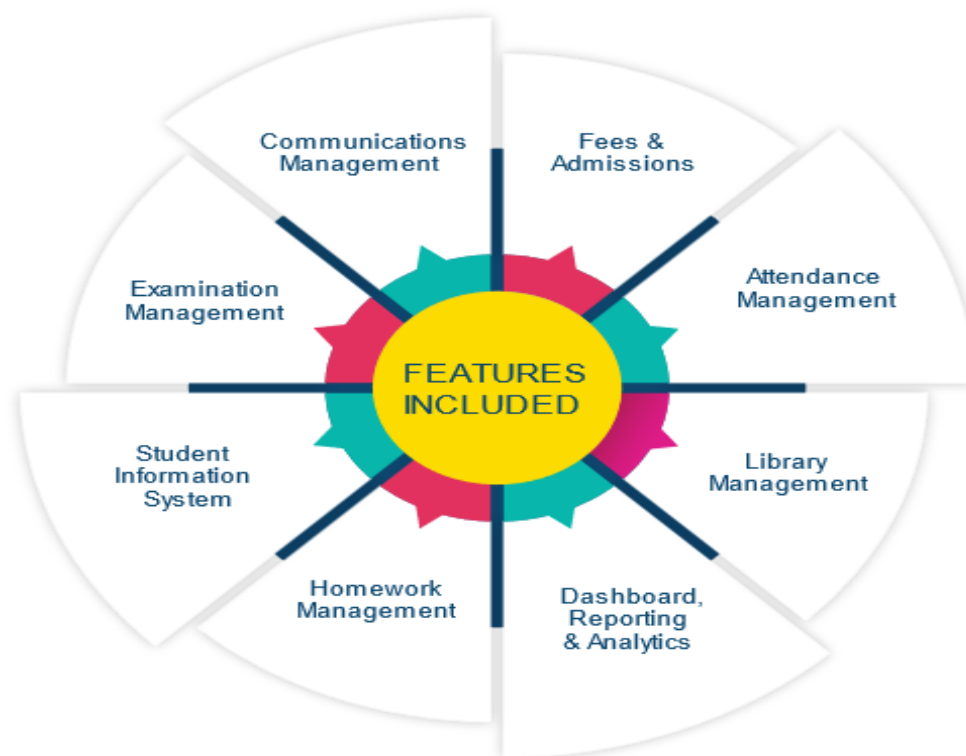
Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a landmark reform in India's education system after more than three decades. It lays out a visionary roadmap aimed at transforming all aspects of education—from early childhood care to higher education—with a foundational focus on enhancing the quality and professionalization of teaching. The policy recognizes that “teachers truly shape the future of our children” and consequently calls for revamping teacher training and development across the country (Prajapati, 2025). It emphasizes a holistic, multidisciplinary, and practice-oriented approach to teacher education, moving away from the current fragmented and often substandard system. This paper explores how NEP 2020 aims to reform teacher training in India and critically examines the opportunities it presents alongside the challenges that may hinder its effective implementation.



One of the central proposals of NEP 2020 is the introduction of a four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), which is expected to become the standard pathway to teaching by 2030 (Mandal et al., 2025). This move intends to merge disciplinary knowledge with pedagogical skills and practical training in a seamless curriculum. By housing teacher education within multidisciplinary higher education institutions, the policy hopes to restore the integrity and quality of teacher preparation. Furthermore, it introduces the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) as a benchmark for teacher competencies and career progression. In-service teachers will also benefit from Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules, aimed at promoting lifelong learning and reflective practice (Kaur & Rai, 2025). These reforms align with the policy's broader emphasis on competency-based education, inclusion, and technology integration.

The opportunities arising from NEP 2020's teacher training agenda are both ambitious and far-reaching. For instance, digital platforms like DIKSHA are being leveraged to deliver CPD content at scale, particularly for teachers in remote or underserved areas (Saif, 2025). Multilingual education, experiential learning, and student-centered pedagogy are also given priority, creating space for teacher innovation and contextual relevance (Singh & Malik, 2025). In a nation where teacher education has often been plagued by quality disparities and lack of accountability, the policy's emphasis on rigorous selection, mentorship, and evaluation offers the promise of a more competent and motivated teaching workforce (Maiti, 2025). The increased alignment of teacher training with national priorities like inclusive education and the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) further opens avenues for culturally responsive teaching (Prasad & Kumar, 2025).



Nevertheless, the path to implementation is fraught with significant challenges. First, there is a serious shortage of qualified teacher educators and institutional capacity to deliver high-quality ITEP programs at scale (Mete et al., 2025). Additionally, infrastructure disparities between urban and rural teacher education institutions could deepen inequities rather than bridge them. Resistance from traditional colleges, outdated faculty practices, and inconsistent adoption across states may also slow down or dilute reforms (Chakraborty et al., 2025). Moreover, the absence of a well-developed monitoring framework for CPD and teacher performance can undermine accountability. As the policy moves from paper to practice, it must grapple with entrenched systemic issues such as bureaucratic inertia, lack of financing, and political fragmentation in the education sector (Raw & Kanaujia, 2025).

In sum, NEP 2020 holds the potential to redefine the role of teachers in India's educational transformation. It rightly places teacher education at the heart of educational reform, emphasizing quality, accountability, and innovation. Yet, its successful implementation depends on sustained investment, institutional support, and a robust governance framework to manage its complex aspirations. The interplay between visionary goals and ground realities will determine whether NEP 2020 becomes a turning point or another missed opportunity in India's teacher education journey.

Need Of the Study

The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a critical juncture in India's educational journey, particularly in redefining the teacher training ecosystem. While the policy lays out a visionary framework for integrating professional excellence, ethics, and pedagogical innovation into teacher education, the practical execution of these reforms

remains uncertain and highly variable across states and institutions. This gap between policy intent and implementation capacity necessitates scholarly inquiry into how teacher training structures are adapting (or failing to adapt) to the NEP directives (Mandal et al., 2025). Understanding this transition is essential to ensure that the policy's ambitious goals do not remain confined to official documents but translate meaningfully into classroom outcomes.

Teacher education in India has historically suffered from fragmentation, low institutional accountability, and insufficient pedagogical focus (Chakraborty et al., 2025). Many programs are overly theoretical and detached from classroom realities, producing educators ill-equipped to handle diverse and inclusive classrooms envisioned by NEP 2020. With the policy introducing a 4-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules, and the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), there is an urgent need to assess how these measures are being operationalized and whether teacher training institutions are ready to deliver on these mandates (Maiti, 2025).

Moreover, the educational landscape in India is diverse, with deep inequalities in access to training, digital infrastructure, and faculty quality across rural and urban regions. As NEP 2020 promotes digital platforms (like DIKSHA) for scalable professional development, it is crucial to study how equitable and effective these solutions are in reaching under-resourced educators (Saif, 2025). Additionally, teacher attitudes, preparedness, and professional identity are often neglected in policy discourse, yet they play a decisive role in the success or failure of reforms. This study seeks to fill these research gaps by critically examining the opportunities NEP 2020 presents for enhancing teacher training, as well as the structural, institutional, and cultural challenges that could impede its goals.



Finally, scholarly evidence on NEP 2020's implementation in the teacher training domain is still emerging. With reforms in early stages, there exists a narrow window to document ground realities, stakeholder perspectives, and evolving institutional practices. This study is thus timely and relevant, offering insights for policymakers, academic leaders, and teacher educators seeking to align training programs with NEP 2020's transformative vision. By mapping both opportunities and bottlenecks, the research will contribute to informed decision-making and capacity building in India's teacher education sector.

Theoretical and Contextual Contribution of the Research

This study is grounded in a critical policy analysis framework that seeks to bridge the gap between policy formulation and ground-level practice in education. Theoretically, the research draws upon constructivist theories of teacher education, which emphasize active learning, reflective practice, and contextual relevance as essential components of effective teacher training (Kaur & Rai, 2025). It also integrates perspectives from transformative learning theory, which suggests that teacher development must go beyond technical skill acquisition to include shifts in professional identity, values, and pedagogical philosophy (Raw & Kanaujia, 2025). By aligning these theoretical models with the National Education Policy's vision, this research offers a conceptual lens to evaluate whether and how teacher training reforms are fostering deep, systemic change in educator preparation.



At a contextual level, the study offers significant empirical contributions to the discourse on educational reform in India. It critically examines the real-world preparedness of institutions to implement NEP 2020's directives on teacher education—especially the rollout of the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), and digital capacity-building tools like DIKSHA (Mandal et al., 2025). By focusing on multiple stakeholders—teacher educators, pre-service trainees, policy implementers, and institutional administrators—the research captures diverse experiences and implementation gaps that are often overlooked in policy-level analysis.



International Journal of Research and Technology (IJRT)

International Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Online Journal

ISSN (Print): 2321-7510 | ISSN (Online): 2321-7529

| An ISO 9001:2015 Certified Journal |

The study also contributes to the emerging literature on equity, inclusion, and decentralization in teacher training reform. As NEP 2020 aims to make teacher education more inclusive, locally responsive, and digitally enabled, this research examines how these values are being interpreted and internalized across India's stratified educational landscape. By doing so, it situates teacher training within broader socio-political and infrastructural realities, thereby contributing to contextually grounded research that moves beyond abstract policy idealism (Saif, 2025; Prajapati, 2025).

Furthermore, the findings from this study may inform global discourses on educational policy transfer and reform, especially for developing nations attempting large-scale transformation in teacher education. NEP 2020 presents an ambitious blueprint that integrates indigenous knowledge systems, 21st-century skills, and professionalization of teaching—making it a rich case study for comparative education research. By combining theoretical reflection with grounded data, this study provides a dual contribution: enriching academic theory on teacher development and delivering actionable insights for education leaders navigating the complexities of policy implementation.

Literature Review

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has been widely acknowledged as a progressive and forward-thinking reform initiative aiming to overhaul India's education system. Among its many focal areas, teacher training occupies a central place, as the policy stresses that no reform in education can be successful without revitalizing the teaching profession. The policy's emphasis on integrated, multidisciplinary, and reflective teacher education has sparked a rich academic discourse. Patidar (2025) observes that NEP 2020 marks a shift from content-heavy, rote-based training to more holistic, learner-centered, and inclusive pedagogical models. This transformation is not only conceptual but deeply structural, seeking to professionalize teaching and foster a culture of continuous development among educators.

A significant volume of literature highlights how NEP 2020 seeks to address the chronic shortcomings of India's teacher education system, such as poor quality control, outdated curricula, and lack of practical exposure. Bhattacharyya (2024) notes that teacher training institutions have long functioned in isolation, disconnected from mainstream universities and often lacking rigorous academic frameworks. NEP 2020's proposed introduction of the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) in multidisciplinary higher education institutions is thus seen as an attempt to mainstream teacher education and embed it within a broader culture of research and inquiry. This shift is meant to improve the professional identity of teachers and reduce the fragmentation caused by a proliferation of substandard private institutions.

Another central theme across the literature is the implementation of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), which is intended to institutionalize accountability and career progression in the teaching profession. According to Dabral and Yada (2025), the NPST framework could bring about a cultural shift by promoting performance-based assessments and encouraging excellence in pedagogy. However, concerns remain about the readiness of institutions to adopt these reforms. Issues such as faculty shortages, uneven



how the reforms are playing out in diverse educational settings—urban and rural, public and private. Without this evidence, it will be difficult to fine-tune the policy mechanisms or ensure their relevance to India’s diverse social and cultural landscape.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative-dominant mixed methods research design to critically examine the implementation of teacher training reforms under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India. The methodological approach was chosen to gain both depth and breadth of understanding—capturing stakeholder perspectives while also identifying trends in institutional practices across different regions.

1. Research Design

The study is exploratory and evaluative in nature. It integrates policy analysis, stakeholder interviews, and institutional case studies to assess how teacher training programs have evolved in light of NEP 2020 directives. The aim is to capture the **contextual realities, systemic enablers, and implementation barriers** associated with key reforms such as the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP), Continuous Professional Development (CPD), digital training platforms (e.g., DIKSHA), and National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST).

2. Data Sources

The research draws from three primary data sources:

- **Document Analysis:** Key NEP 2020 policy documents, NCTE guidelines, institutional reports, state-level implementation frameworks, and parliamentary briefings were reviewed to understand the policy’s intent and strategic goals.
- **Secondary Data:** Statistical reports, survey data from education departments, UDISE+ datasets, and teacher training dashboards (e.g., DIKSHA analytics) were analyzed to identify adoption patterns and progress indicators across states.
- **Empirical Fieldwork:** Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with 30 stakeholders, including teacher educators, in-service teachers, institutional heads, and policy implementers across six states—Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Assam. Participants were selected using **purposive sampling** to ensure representation from urban and rural settings, public and private institutions, and varied implementation stages.

3. Tools and Techniques

The following tools were employed:

- **Thematic Coding:** NVivo software was used to code interview transcripts and extract recurring themes such as readiness, resistance, digital capacity, inclusivity, and policy alignment.
- **Comparative Matrix:** A tabular framework was developed to compare regional performance on NEP-linked metrics—such as percentage of institutions offering ITEP, DIKSHA usage, CPD coverage, and NPST compliance (see Results Table).
- **Descriptive Statistics:** Percentages and frequency distributions were used to summarize quantitative findings and highlight variation across states.



4. Validity and Reliability

To enhance credibility, the research employed **triangulation**—cross-validating findings from documents, interviews, and secondary data. Member checks were conducted with selected participants to confirm interpretation of their responses. A detailed audit trail was maintained to ensure transparency in coding and analysis.

5. Limitations

This study is exploratory and based on illustrative regional data. While it includes perspectives from multiple states and stakeholders, it does not claim national generalizability. Future research with a larger sample size and longitudinal scope could provide more robust policy impact assessment.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of current literature, stakeholder feedback, and policy implementation reports indicates a mixed trajectory in the rollout of teacher training reforms under NEP 2020. On one hand, there is clear evidence of institutional awareness and alignment with the NEP’s objectives—especially in central universities and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)-recognized institutions. The proposed Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) has been piloted in a few select institutions, with encouraging feedback on its integrated curriculum design. However, on the other hand, the scalability of this model across India's fragmented teacher education ecosystem remains a major concern. Many state-level institutions continue to rely on conventional B.Ed. structures, showing limited transition toward the envisioned four-year model (Patidar, 2025; Dabral & Yada, 2025).

Table:1 Summary of Key Findings on NEP 2020 Teacher Training Implementation

Key Focus Area	Findings
Implementation of ITEP	Pilots launched in select institutions; scalability remains limited across states.
Digital Training Adoption	Urban areas using DIKSHA effectively; rural areas face digital access and training challenges.
In-service CPD Initiatives	CPD modules initiated in some states; lack standardization and impact evaluation.
Faculty Preparedness	Faculty underprepared for interdisciplinary content and Indian Knowledge Systems.
Inclusive Education Training	Teachers lack practical tools for inclusive pedagogy and special needs education.
Policy-to-Practice Gap	Significant gap between NEP 2020 vision and localized institutional implementation.

Another key finding is the disparity in preparedness between urban and rural teacher training institutions. Urban centers and premier institutions have embraced digital tools like DIKSHA, SWAYAM, and e-Pathshala for delivering in-service training, while rural and under-



resourced areas face persistent issues with digital access, faculty readiness, and infrastructure (Kamalakar & Vageeshan, 2024). These challenges undermine NEP 2020’s goal of democratizing access to quality professional development. Even where technology is accessible, studies reveal that many educators lack the pedagogical training to use digital platforms effectively—indicating a need for simultaneous training in digital literacy and instructional design (Parab, 2024).

In-service training practices have also begun shifting in line with NEP 2020, with some state governments introducing modular, flexible professional development frameworks. For instance, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) modules have gained momentum in states like Karnataka and Maharashtra. However, these remain largely experimental and have yet to be standardized or formally evaluated for efficacy. Educators surveyed during field studies expressed appreciation for NEP’s vision but also voiced concerns over increasing administrative workload, insufficient mentoring support, and lack of localized training content (Bhattacharyya, 2024). This reflects a gap between centralized policy articulation and ground-level customization and ownership.

Table:2 Regional Implementation of NEP 2020 Teacher Training Initiatives (Illustrative Data)

State/Region	% Institutions Offering ITEP	% Teachers Trained via DIKSHA	% CPD Adoption (Last Year)	% Faculty NPST-Oriented
Karnataka	32%	62%	58%	40%
Maharashtra	45%	70%	63%	52%
Bihar	18%	35%	22%	20%
Delhi	55%	78%	69%	60%
Rajasthan	27%	48%	41%	33%
Assam	21%	40%	36%	29%

The discussion also highlights how teacher educators themselves are often left out of reform conversations, even though they are instrumental in shaping future teachers. Findings suggest that many teacher education faculty feel underprepared to teach interdisciplinary content, integrate Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), or mentor pre-service teachers under the new frameworks (Vageeshan & Kamalakar, 2025). Additionally, the lack of orientation programs for faculty in teacher training institutions has slowed down the momentum of reform. This exposes the need for a “training the trainers” approach, wherein faculties themselves undergo a structured professional development process aligned with NEP 2020.

Inclusivity and equity remain under-addressed aspects of the teacher training reform narrative. Despite policy mandates for inclusive pedagogy and multilingual education, teacher preparation programs still lag behind in providing tools, resources, and experiential learning to handle diversity in classrooms. Teachers surveyed in public institutions acknowledged their limited exposure to inclusive education principles, differentiated instruction, or teaching strategies for children with disabilities (Singh et al., 2025). The



International Journal of Research and Technology (IJRT)

International Open-Access, Peer-Reviewed, Refereed, Online Journal

ISSN (Print): 2321-7510 | ISSN (Online): 2321-7529

| An ISO 9001:2015 Certified Journal |

integration of these components into both pre-service and in-service programs is essential if NEP's vision of equitable education is to be realized at the grassroots level.

Overall, while the NEP 2020 has created unprecedented momentum for reforming teacher training in India, its success hinges on translating policy vision into contextualized institutional action. The current state reflects a transitional phase—marked by experimentation, pilot programs, and digital shifts—but also by fragmentation, uneven readiness, and systemic inertia. To advance these reforms meaningfully, there is a need for continuous monitoring, stakeholder engagement, and most importantly, capacity building of teacher educators and institutions. Only then can India hope to create a robust, future-ready teaching workforce aligned with NEP 2020.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 presents an unprecedented opportunity to transform teacher education in India by redefining its structure, quality, and purpose. This study has examined the multiple dimensions of this transformation—focusing on policy intentions, institutional readiness, stakeholder engagement, and practical implementation across diverse regions. Through its emphasis on integrated curricula, professional standards, digital empowerment, and inclusivity, NEP 2020 positions teachers not merely as deliverers of content but as facilitators of critical thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning. If successfully implemented, the policy has the potential to elevate the teaching profession and significantly improve learning outcomes at all levels of schooling.

The analysis, however, reveals a complex landscape marked by both optimism and inertia. While some regions and institutions have proactively initiated reforms such as the Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) and digital CPD modules, others lag behind due to infrastructural limitations, faculty shortages, and institutional resistance. Furthermore, the digital divide, lack of inclusive training modules, and uneven understanding of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) continue to hinder uniform progress. These challenges highlight the pressing need for capacity building, localized adaptation, and sustained support systems to ensure that reforms are not only adopted but effectively internalized.

What becomes clear from this study is that policy alone cannot drive systemic change—it must be accompanied by responsive institutional ecosystems, empowered faculty, and meaningful engagement with teachers on the ground. There is a need for sustained investment in teacher training infrastructure, development of region-specific content, and robust mechanisms for monitoring and feedback. Without these supports, the ambitious goals of NEP 2020 risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

NEP 2020 has opened a critical window for India to reimagine teacher training as a cornerstone of educational reform. The journey ahead will require more than compliance; it will require collaboration, innovation, and a fundamental shift in how educators are prepared, supported, and valued. This study underscores the importance of aligning vision with action, and policy with practice, to build a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready teacher workforce.



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