

The Role of Teachers in the National Education Policy 2020 Framework Autonomy, Innovation and Change

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is one of the biggest changes in India's education system, aiming to align education with the needs of the 21st century. It was adopted by the Government of India in July 2020 and provides a new approach to all levels of education—elementary, primary, secondary, and higher education. In NEP-2020, teachers are not only presenters of learning materials but also motivators, guides, and drivers of innovation in the learning process. This comprehensive policy positions teachers as central to self-reliance, innovation, and leadership of change.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Teacher, Autonomy and Innovation

The National Education Policy 2020 is a visionary and comprehensive policy announced by the Government of India on July 29, 2020, aimed at transforming the Indian education system to suit the needs of the 21st century. This policy replaces the National Policy on Education of 1986 (revised in 1992) and emphasizes qualitative improvement at every level of education—from pre-primary to higher education. The primary goal of NEP-2020 is to provide inclusive, equitable, and quality education that develops critical thinking, creativity, ethical values, and life skills in every learner. The policy encourages experiential, multidisciplinary, and skill-based learning over rote learning. This policy emphasizes a new educational structure of 5+3+3+4, primary education in mother tongue/local language, digital and technological innovation, reforms in teacher education, and autonomy and research in higher education. Overall, the National Education Policy 2020 seeks to propel India towards a knowledge-based society and global leadership. The National Education Policy 2020 marks one of the biggest changes in India's education system, aiming to align education with the needs of the 21st century. It was adopted by the Government of India in July

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Overview of NEP 2020: NEP 2020 aims to make education more flexible, inclusive, quality-based, and skill-oriented. It has implemented a new framework, moving away from the traditional curriculum framework, to **Direction of Change in Education:** NEP-2020 aims to make education:

1. Outcome-based and student-centered,
2. Flexible and multidimensional, Modern knowledge and skills-based,
3. Multilingual and inclusive.

Central role of teacher in NEP-2020: NEP-2020 views the teacher not only as a “conveyor of knowledge” but also as a facilitator of learning, mentor, innovator, and agent of social change.

Teacher: Knowledge Sharer to Learning Guide: In traditional education, the primary role of a teacher was to provide answers and

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impart knowledge, but this definition has changed in NEP-2020. Teachers:

- Encourage students' curiosity,
- Guide them toward discovery, analysis, and creative thinking,
- Make learning experiential.

In this shift, the teacher's role expands beyond that of a teacher-student relationship to that of a co-learning guide.

Teacher: (Trainer, Advisor, and Mentor) In NEP-2020, a key role for the teacher is to play in the holistic development of the student:

- Understanding academic challenges,
- Supporting emotional and social needs,
- Assisting students with self-motivation and goal-setting.
- This shifts teaching from simply teaching to a life-guiding role.

Teacher autonomy

NEP 2020, "autonomy" means that teachers can freely choose teaching methods, adapt the curriculum to context, and develop innovation in teaching styles. This means that institutions can develop curriculum, teaching methods, assessment systems, and research activities according to their own needs. The aim of autonomy is to enhance the quality of education, encourage innovation, and make institutions more accountable. This allows teachers and institutions to adopt new teaching methods, tailor programs to local needs, and work more effectively on the holistic development of students. The policy itself says that "Teachers will be given more autonomy in choosing aspects of pedagogy, so that they may teach in the manner they find most effective for the students in their classrooms."

The Impact of Autonomy on the Classroom

Because of autonomy:

- Teachers will be able to modify the curriculum to suit their local needs and students' interests,
- They will adopt innovative teaching methods such as project-based learning,

interdisciplinary work, and the use of digital resources,

- They will increase experiential activities to make learning life-relevant.
- Autonomy creates an environment of trust and creativity between teacher and student.

Innovation and Pedagogical Change

NEP-2020 promotes an innovative mindset in teachers. They:

- Adopt multidisciplinary and project-based learning,
- Incorporate resources such as technology-based learning resources, AI-based learning tools, and interactive platforms,
- Integrate local context, cultural diversity, and solutions to real-world problems into education.
- Here, teachers do not simply copy practices, but create new pedagogical methods.

Innovative learning formats

For example:

- Game-based activities,
- Digital projects and creative presentations,
- Integration of interdisciplinary learning
- NEP-2020 prioritizes learning formats that enable outcome-based learning.

Teachers as Change Agents in NEP-2020:

NEP-2020 views teachers as change agents.

They not only teach lessons, but also:

- Promote values in society,
- Teach students ethics, social justice, inclusiveness, and moral citizenship,
- Foster engagement and partnership between school and community.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Importance of CPD: NEP-2020 clearly states that a teacher should participate in at least 50 hours of CPD every year to stay updated with the latest pedagogical methods, techniques, and learning approaches.

This CPD helps teachers:

- familiarize themselves with the latest pedagogy and learning methods,
- teach digital literacy and the use of technological tools,
- Provide an opportunity to adopt multi-dimensional teaching models.
- They view learning not just as an academic goal but as a means to life-direction.

Challenges

The scope of NEP-2020 is large, but there are several challenges in its successful implementation:

- Lack of training and resources: Many teachers still struggle with traditional teaching methods, and providing training and resources for new methods is not easy.
- Administrative and institutional barriers: Some institutions are still heavily regulated and rely on conservative curriculum frameworks, limiting teacher autonomy.
- Technology and the digital divide: Lack of technological resources in rural and backward areas is also a major barrier, making it difficult for teachers to adopt all aspects of innovation.

It is necessary to continuously work on these challenges so that teachers can perform their role to their full potential.

Suggestions for Successful Implementation of the NEP 2020

- **State-Level Initiatives:** Some states are conducting teacher training programs and experiential learning workshops. For example, in Haryana, experienced teachers have been trained on game-based and interactive learning techniques, which is transforming teaching.
- **School-Based Innovations:** Many schools have adopted interdisciplinary project work and digital learning, which has enhanced creativity and critical thinking in students' learning.

- **Future Directions:** The NEP-2020 aims not to be merely a policy, but a long-term framework for educational transformation. To develop the role of the teacher:
- Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs) must be equipped with the latest curriculum and teaching capabilities.
- Teacher networks with local communities and experts must be strengthened.
- Investments in digital platforms and resources must be increased so that teachers at all levels are equipped with the latest technologies.

Conclusion:

NEP-2020 has transformed the face of teaching. Teachers are no longer mere imparters of knowledge, but also motivators, mentors, innovators, and agents of change. The policy has granted them autonomy, encouraged innovation, and placed their professional development within a clearly defined framework. If teachers embrace its objectives and incorporate them into their everyday practice, a fundamental transformation of the Indian education system is possible, ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

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