



A critical appraisal of NEP 2020 guidelines for enhancing teacher education in India

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Abstract

The National Education Policy 2020 marks a significant shift in the landscape of teacher education in India, aiming to enhance quality, professionalism, and global competitiveness. This study critically appraises the guidelines of NEP 2020 with specific reference to teacher education by analysing its key proposals, examining the evolving role of teacher educators, and identifying major implementation challenges. The policy advocates for a multidisciplinary and integrated approach, including the introduction of a four-year integrated B.Ed. programme, strengthening of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs), and emphasis on continuous professional development. In light of these reforms, the role of teacher educators is undergoing a transformation from traditional knowledge transmitters to facilitators, mentors, and reflective practitioners equipped with digital, pedagogical, and research competencies. However, the study highlights several challenges in effective implementation across India, such as inadequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified faculty, resistance to change, regulatory complexities, and disparities between urban and rural institutions. The paper argues that while NEP 2020 provides a visionary framework for reforming teacher education, its success largely depends on systematic planning, capacity building, institutional support, and contextual adaptation. Thus, a balanced and critical understanding of both the opportunities and constraints is essential for realizing the transformative potential of the policy in strengthening teacher education in India.

Keywords: NEP-2020, teacher education, educational reform, multidisciplinary institutions, itep (integrated teacher education programme), professional development, implementation challenges.

Introduction

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping the social, economic, and cultural progress of a nation, and the quality of any education system largely depends upon the competence, commitment, and professional preparedness of its teachers (UNESCO, 2015). In India, longstanding concerns such as fragmented teacher preparation programmes, variable institutional standards, outdated pedagogical practices, and limited integration of research have adversely affected the overall quality of teacher education (National Council for Teacher Education [NCTE], 2014; Government of India, 2020) ^[14]. Recognizing these systemic gaps, the National Education Policy 2020 ^[14] introduced a comprehensive framework aimed at restructuring and revitalizing teacher education as a foundation for broader educational transformation. The policy places teachers at the centre of reform and envisions them as reflective practitioners, facilitators of holistic learning, and agents of social change (Government of India, 2020) ^[5].

NEP-2020 ^[1] proposes far-reaching structural and curricular reforms designed to enhance teacher quality and professional standards. One of its most significant recommendations is the introduction of the four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) as the minimum degree qualification for school teachers by 2030 (Government of India, 2020) ^[14]. This reform seeks to replace the fragmented Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) model with a multidisciplinary, integrated approach that combines subject knowledge, pedagogical theory, practicum engagement, and research exposure within higher education institutions (NCTE, 2014; Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. Furthermore, the policy advocates the phasing out of standalone teacher training institutions and their integration

into multidisciplinary universities and colleges, thereby promoting academic synergy, research culture, and institutional accountability (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. The policy also emphasizes continuous professional development (CPD), merit-based career progression, technology-enabled teaching, inclusive education, and competency-based curriculum reforms (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2019; Government of India, 2020) ^[5, 11]. By establishing professional standards and strengthening regulatory mechanisms, NEP-2020 ^[1] aspires to restore the dignity, autonomy, and professional identity of teachers. The focus on multidisciplinary learning, research orientation, and innovation reflects a shift from rote-based pedagogy to experiential, learner-centred, and outcome-based education (UNESCO, 2015).

However, while the policy framework is ambitious and visionary, its implementation raises significant concerns. India's vast socio-economic diversity, regional disparities in infrastructure, uneven institutional capacities, and financial constraints pose substantial challenges to uniform execution (World Bank, 2021) ^[18]. Questions also arise regarding faculty readiness, quality assurance during the transition phase, regulatory coordination, and the preparedness of higher education institutions to effectively absorb teacher education programmes (Government of India, 2020) ^[14]. Without systematic planning, adequate funding, and sustained monitoring, the intended reforms risk remaining aspirational rather than operational.

Against this backdrop, the present study undertakes a critical appraisal of the NEP-2020 ^[1] guidelines for enhancing teacher education in India. It seeks to examine the philosophical foundations, structural reforms, quality dimensions, and professional development mechanisms

proposed under the policy while also analysing the practical challenges associated with its implementation. By offering a balanced evaluation of both opportunities and constraints, the study aims to contribute to the broader academic discourse on educational reform and provide insights into the prospects of building a robust, equitable, and future-ready teacher education system in India.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant as it critically examines the guidelines of the National Education Policy 2020 [14] with a focus on strengthening teacher education in India. This study emphasizes reforms that strengthen teacher professional preparation, foster ongoing development, and promote accountability within the education system. It provides insights for policymakers on the strengths, limitations, and practical implications of the reforms, while guiding teacher education institutions to align with structural, pedagogical, and curricular changes. By identifying potential gaps between policy and practice, the research contributes to improving educational quality and preparing teachers for the needs of 21st-century learners.

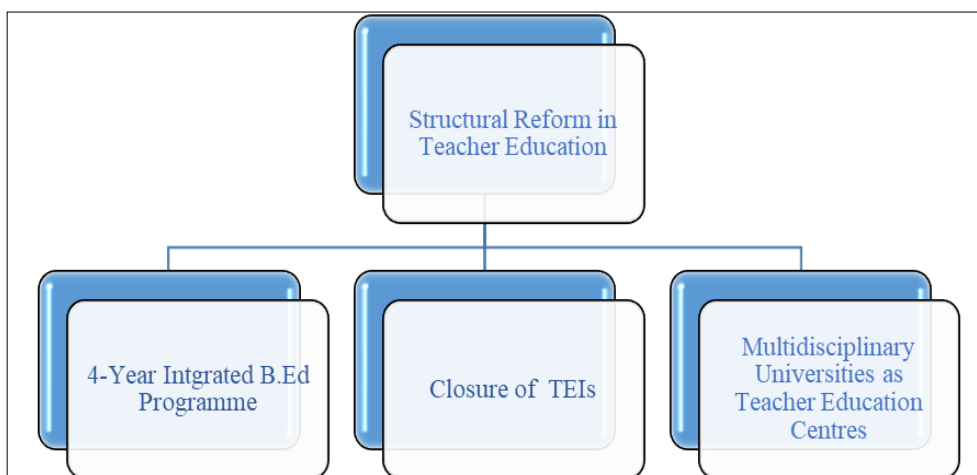
Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the key proposals of NEP 2020 [1] related to teacher education.
2. To discuss the Changing Role of Teacher Educators in view of NEP 2020 [1].
3. To identify and analyse the key implementation challenges of NEP 2020 [1] in teacher education programmes across India.

Methodology

This research follows a qualitative approach, utilizing document analysis to critically examine the guidelines of NEP 2020 [1] related to teacher education in India. The study thoroughly reviews NEP 2020 [14] policy documents, government reports, and academic articles to understand the underlying principles, proposed reforms, and envisioned transformations in teacher education. The Data was gathered from various secondary sources such as the official NEP 2020 [14] document, reports from the Ministry of Education, publications by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), and peer-reviewed articles from educational journals.

Structural Reform in Teacher Education



Key Proposals of NEP 2020 [1] Related to Teacher Education

NEP 2020 [1] emphasizes enhancing teacher education quality in India, recognizing teachers as key influencers of student learning outcomes (Government of India, 2020 [14]; UNESCO, 2015). It proposes reforms to strengthen professional preparation, development, and accountability through an integrated, multidisciplinary approach (Government of India, 2020) [5]. The four-year Integrated Teacher Education Programme (ITEP) combines subject knowledge, pedagogy, practicum, and research into a single framework (Government of India, 2020 [5]; National Council for Teacher Education, 2014). The policy also establishes rigorous training standards, continuous professional development, and merit-based career progression to improve teacher quality and motivation (Government of India, 2020) [14]. Further, it promotes technology integration, inclusive teaching, and competency-based curricula to address diverse learner needs (UNESCO, 2015; OECD, 2019). Collectively, these measures aim to prepare competent, motivated teachers for 21st-century education (UNESCO, 2015).

Restructuring Qualifications: The 4-Year ITEP

The ITEP under NEP 2020 [1] aims to professionalize teacher education by replacing fragmented pathways with a comprehensive, multidisciplinary framework (Ministry of Education, 2020) [10]. By 2030, a four-year integrated B.Ed. will be the minimum qualification, combining subject knowledge, pedagogy, and practical teaching (Ministry of Education, 2020) [10]. Standalone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) will gradually integrate into multidisciplinary colleges and universities, fostering broader intellectual perspectives (Government of India, 2020) [5]. Flexible alternatives remain, including a two-year B.Ed. for three-year graduates and a one-year B.Ed. for four-year graduates or postgraduates, allowing subject experts to enter teaching efficiently (Kumar, 2021) [6]. The multidisciplinary approach envisions the gradual integration of teacher education into multidisciplinary colleges and universities, encouraging standalone Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) to transform into holistic academic ecosystems, thereby enhancing educational quality, research integration, and institutional excellence (Ministry of Education, 2020 [10]; National Council for Teacher Education, 2021) [7].

National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)

The National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), developed by NCTE under NEP 2020^[14], provides a quality framework to shift teacher career progression from seniority-based to competency-based (NCTE, 2021)^[6]. It defines four career stages: Pragammi Shikshak (Beginner), Praveen Shikshak (Proficient), Kushal Shikshak (Expert), and Vishesh Shikshak (Lead) with benchmarks for knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions at each level (NCTE, 2021)^[15]. NPST is organized around three domains: Professional Knowledge, Professional Practice, and Professional Engagement, covering content mastery, effective teaching, and continuous professional development (NCTE, 2021)^[18]. By 2026, it will guide promotions, salary increments, and tenure, linking career growth to demonstrated competencies and evidence-based practices (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. This approach enhances teacher accountability and overall professional quality (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) under NEP 2020^[1] shifts teacher training from one-time workshops to a lifelong learning process, requiring every teacher and school leader to complete at least 50 hours annually (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[14]. This self-directed framework allows educators to choose modules on foundational literacy, techno-pedagogy, and inclusive education via platforms like DIKSHA and NISHTHA (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. Aligned with the National Professional Standards for Teachers, CPD links professional growth to career advancement, including salary increments and promotions based on demonstrated competencies (NCTE, 2021). By promoting action research, reflective practice, and digital integration, CPD fosters continuous professional improvement, enhancing teaching effectiveness and overall educational quality (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

Teacher Training and Development

Teachers play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of educational reforms. NEP 2020^[14] emphasizes continuous professional development, requiring teachers to undergo training to upgrade their skills in contemporary pedagogical practices (Kapoor, 2021)^[7]. Mandatory teacher training programs and the integration of research-backed teaching methods are expected to enhance the quality of education and drive positive learning outcomes (Das, 2022).

Admission is controlled through a National Level Test

NEP 2020^[1] introduces a standardized National Common Entrance Test (NCET) to ensure that capable and motivated candidates enter the teaching profession through the four-year ITEP (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. Conducted by the National Testing Agency, the NCET replaces fragmented admission processes with a rigorous computer-based assessment of subject knowledge, teaching aptitude, reasoning, and language skills (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. This centralized exam, modelled on professional course admissions, promotes quality, transparency, and uniformity across multidisciplinary institutions, including IITs, NITs, and Central Universities (Government of India, 2020)^[5]. High NCET performance is linked to merit-based scholarships and incentives, especially for rural and disadvantaged students, attracting quality candidates to the teaching profession (Kumar, 2021)^[6].

Special Emphasis on Research Work in The Field of Teacher Education

Under NEP 2020^[1], research in teacher education is now a central focus, aiming to develop teachers as “reflective practitioners” who base teaching on evidence and systematic inquiry (Government of India, 2020)^[5]. The National Research Foundation provides competitive funding to individuals and institutions for high-quality research in areas such as educational psychology, sociology, and techno-pedagogy (Government of India, 2020)^[5]. At the pre-service level, the four-year ITEP includes mandatory action research, field internships, and practical engagement, enabling future teachers to address classroom challenges with data-driven solutions (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[14]. The policy mandates that all PhD scholars’ complete credit-based courses in teaching and educational research, thereby integrating research with pedagogy, and by institutionalizing this approach, NEP 2020^[1] promotes continuous research–teaching–learning cycle that enhances innovation, contextual relevance, and evidence-based practices (University Grants Commission, 2021).

Institutional & Regulatory Reforms

NEP 2020^[1] introduces institutional and regulatory reforms in teacher education to reduce fragmentation and ensure professional integrity through a “light but tight” framework (Government of India, 2020)^[5]. The Higher Education Commission of India will streamline regulation by subsuming bodies like NCTE into four verticals: NHERC for regulation, NAC for quality assurance, HEGC for funding, and GEC for academic standards (Government of India, 2020)^[5]. Substandard standalone TEIs will be phased out and integrated into multidisciplinary HEIs by 2030, fostering a research-oriented academic environment (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. Continuous revision of NCFTE aligned with NPST ensures a transparent, merit-based system for recruitment, career progression, and evaluation through measurable standards and technology-driven processes (National Council for Teacher Education, 2021)^[7].

Recruitment and Service Environment

NEP 2020^[1] reforms teacher recruitment and service conditions to enhance efficiency, transparency, and equitable access to quality education (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. It introduces teacher sharing within school complexes, allowing specialized teachers to serve multiple schools and address shortages, especially in rural areas (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. The policy also includes Master Instructors, enabling skilled local individuals to contribute to vocational and traditional knowledge education (Government of India, 2020)^[5]. Additionally, technology-driven systems for recruitment, postings, and transfers ensure transparency and merit-based selection (Kumar, 2021)^[6]. These measures create a flexible and supportive service environment, improving teacher deployment, community participation, and overall educational quality (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

Changing Role of Teacher Educators in view of NEP 2020^[14]

NEP 2020^[1] transforms the role of teacher educators from mere knowledge transmitters to mentors, facilitators, and innovators in multidisciplinary, technology-integrated, and learner-centred education (Ministry of

Education, 2020) ^[10]. They are responsible for promoting critical thinking, research orientation, and value-based education among trainee teachers to meet contemporary and global standards (Government of India, 2020) ^[14]. This evolving role enables them to prepare competent, reflective, and socially responsible teachers for the changing educational landscape (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

Changing Role of Teacher Educators in view of NEP 2020 ^[14]



Facilitator of Experiential and Practical Learning: NEP 2020 ^[1] envisions teachers as facilitators of experiential learning, promoting active engagement over rote memorization (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. They encourage “learning by doing” through activities such as projects, experiments, and real-life problem-solving, linking theory with practice (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers also foster critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills in line with competency-based education (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. By integrating local resources and interactive methods, they make learning meaningful, contextual, and skill-oriented, preparing students for real-world challenges (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

Research-Oriented Mindset: NEP 2020 ^[1] expects teachers to develop a research-oriented mindset to improve teaching and learning processes (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. They use methods like observation, experimentation, and action research to address classroom challenges and enhance instructional strategies (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers also promote inquiry, critical thinking, and active learning among students instead of rote memorization (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. By engaging in continuous professional development and keeping pace with emerging pedagogical approaches and educational technologies, teachers enhance their instructional effectiveness and contribute to improved student learning outcomes (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2017).

Integrating Technology in Education: According to the National Education Policy 2020 ^[8], teachers play a crucial role in integrating technology in education to enhance the effectiveness of the teaching–learning process. They are expected to utilize digital tools, online resources, and multimedia platforms to make learning more interactive, engaging, and accessible for students (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Through the use of smart classrooms, e-learning platforms, virtual laboratories, and blended learning approaches, teachers can not only improve conceptual understanding but also promote digital literacy among learners, which is essential in the 21st century (Government of India, 2020) ^[5].

Through knowledge provider to facilitator of learning: NEP 2020 ^[1] shifts the teacher’s role from a knowledge provider to a facilitator of learning, promoting a learner-centred approach (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers now guide students in actively constructing knowledge through discussions, activities, and collaborative learning instead of passive listening (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. They foster curiosity, critical thinking, and independent learning within an inclusive classroom environment (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. As mentors and facilitators, teachers enable meaningful and experiential learning aligned with the vision of NEP 2020 ^[1] (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

Promote for Competency-Based Education: NEP 2020 ^[1] emphasizes the teacher’s role in promoting competency-based education, focusing on students’ knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes beyond rote memorization (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers design learning experiences and assessments aligned with clear outcomes, enabling real-life application of knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. They foster higher-order skills like critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving through interactive methods (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. By employing formative and performance-based assessment strategies, teachers monitor student progress and offer ongoing feedback, thereby fostering continuous improvement, lifelong learning, and holistic development (Black & Wiliam, 2009).

Mentor and Professional Guide: NEP 2020 ^[1] envisions teachers as mentors and professional guides who support students’ holistic development beyond academics (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. They provide guidance in personal growth, career awareness, and value development, helping students build confidence and responsibility (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers create a supportive environment that promotes emotional well-being and active participation (Government of India, 2020) ^[10]. Through mentoring and guidance, teachers foster critical thinking, essential life skills, and a positive disposition toward lifelong learning among students (Vygotsky, 1978).

Important to develop multi-disciplinary knowledge: NEP 2020 ^[1] highlights the need for teachers to develop multidisciplinary knowledge to provide holistic and integrated learning experiences (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers are encouraged to connect concepts across subjects like science, social science, arts, and technology rather than teaching them in isolation (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. This approach fosters creativity,

critical thinking, and problem-solving by enabling students to apply knowledge in real-life contexts (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. It also enhances the meaningfulness, flexibility, and contextual relevance of learning, in alignment with the transformative vision of National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[8, 10].

Promote for Inclusive and Holistic Education: NEP 2020 ^[1] emphasizes the teacher's role in ensuring inclusive education by providing equal learning opportunities for all students, regardless of background or ability (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers create supportive and diverse classrooms using flexible strategies and appropriate resources (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. They also focus on holistic development, including social, emotional, ethical, and physical growth (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. Through inclusive practices, teachers help build confidence, empathy, and well-rounded personalities, aligning with NEP 2020 ^[1]'s vision (Sharma & Gupta, 2022).

Curriculum Developer: NEP 2020 ^[1] envisions teachers as curriculum developers who actively design and adapt learning experiences rather than merely follow a fixed syllabus (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. They tailor content to students' diverse needs while integrating multidisciplinary, skill-based, and local contexts (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. Teachers also plan learning objectives, pedagogy, and assessments aligned with competency-based education (Government of India, 2020) ^[5]. This role facilitates the development of a flexible, relevant, and responsive curriculum that aligns with the transformative vision of National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[8, 10].

7.Challenges of NEP 2020 ^[1] In Teacher Education Programmes Across India: The National Education Policy 2020 ^[8] has introduced transformative reforms in teacher education to enhance quality, innovation, and inclusivity. However, its effective implementation across India faces several challenges related to infrastructure, resource availability, faculty preparedness, and overall systemic readiness (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. These constraints hinder the smooth transition towards the modern, competency-based, and multidisciplinary framework envisioned by the policy (Government of India, 2020) ^[5].

Inadequate Infrastructure in Teacher Education Institutions: Inadequate infrastructure remains a major barrier to implementing NEP 2020 ^[1] in teacher education institutions (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[14]. Many colleges, especially in rural and semi-urban areas, lack essential facilities such as classrooms, digital resources, libraries, laboratories, and reliable internet (University Grants Commission, 2021). This limits the adoption of technology-integrated teaching and experiential learning emphasized by NEP 2020 ^[1] (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020) ^[14]. As a result, the quality of instruction, practical training, and access to updated resources is affected (University Grants Commission, 2021). Consequently, institutions struggle to adopt innovative pedagogies, reducing the effectiveness of NEP 2020 ^[1] implementation (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10].

Shortage of Qualified Teacher Educators: The shortage of qualified teacher educators is a major challenge in

implementing NEP 2020 ^[1] reforms in teacher education (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[14]. Many institutions lack faculty with expertise in modern pedagogy, interdisciplinary teaching, and educational technology (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020). NEP 2020 ^[14] requires skilled educators to implement competency-based and experiential learning approaches effectively (University Grants Commission, 2021). However, limited recruitment, inadequate professional development, and uneven distribution of faculty—especially in rural areas—affect training quality (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020) ^[14]. This shortage hampers the preparation of future teachers and slows the effective implementation of NEP 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[1, 14].

Insufficient Funding and Resource Allocation: Insufficient funding is a major barrier to implementing NEP 2020 ^[1] reforms in teacher education (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[14]. Key initiatives like the four-year integrated B.Ed., institutional strengthening, and digital integration require significant financial investment (University Grants Commission, 2021). However, many institutions lack resources to upgrade infrastructure, recruit faculty, and support professional development (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020) ^[14]. Limited budget *et al* location at central and state levels further delays reform implementation (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10]. As a result, institutions struggle to provide quality teacher training aligned with NEP 2020 ^[1] goals (University Grants Commission, 2021) ^[7].

Resistance to Pedagogical and Structural Changes: Resistance to change is a key challenge in implementing NEP 2020 ^[1] reforms in teacher education (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[14]. The policy promotes learner-centred, interdisciplinary, competency-based, and technology-integrated approaches, requiring a shift from traditional practices (University Grants Commission, 2021). However, many institutions and educators remain attached to lecture-based and exam-oriented methods (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020) ^[14]. Institutional rigidity, lack of training, and reluctance to adopt innovations further hinder this transition (University Grants Commission, 2021). As a result, the shift to modern teaching practices remains slow and uneven, limiting the effectiveness of NEP 2020 ^[1] implementation (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10].

Digital Divide and Technology Integration: The digital divide is a major challenge in implementing NEP 2020 ^[1] reforms in teacher education (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[14]. The policy promotes digital tools, online platforms, and blended learning, requiring strong infrastructure and digital skills (University Grants Commission, 2021). However, many institutions, especially in rural areas, lack internet access, digital resources, and modern devices (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020) ^[14]. Limited digital literacy among educators and trainees further restricts effective technology use (University Grants Commission, 2021). As a result, the adoption of innovative, technology-based teaching practices remains limited, slowing NEP 2020 ^[1] implementation (Ministry of Education, 2020) ^[10].

Challenges in Language Policy and Multilingual Education: Language policy and multilingual education

pose challenges in implementing NEP 2020^[8] reforms in teacher education (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[14]. The policy promotes mother tongue instruction and multilingual learning, requiring specialized pedagogical skills (University Grants Commission, 2021). However, many institutions lack trained educators proficient in multilingual teaching (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020)^[14]. The shortage of teaching materials and resources in regional languages further complicates implementation (University Grants Commission, 2021). These issues hinder the preparation of teachers for linguistically diverse classrooms, affecting the realization of NEP 2020^[1]'s multilingual vision (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10].

Weak Monitoring and Regulatory Framework: Weak monitoring and regulatory mechanisms hinder the implementation of NEP 2020^[1] reforms in teacher education (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[14]. Despite efforts to improve governance and accountability, the system faces issues like inadequate supervision, slow processes, and poor coordination among regulatory bodies (University Grants Commission, 2021). Many institutions operate with limited oversight, leading to inconsistent training quality and standards (National Council for Teacher Education, 2020)^[14]. Delays in regulatory restructuring further affect effective monitoring and enforcement (University Grants Commission, 2021). Consequently, the absence of a robust and transparent regulatory framework constrains the effective and consistent implementation of the National Education Policy 2020 across the country (Tilak, 2021)^[7,8].

Discussion

The analysis of the provisions of the National Education Policy 2020^[8] highlights a transformative vision for teacher education in India, addressing long-standing concerns related to quality, relevance, and effectiveness of teacher preparation programmes (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[14]. The policy recognizes teachers as central agents of educational change and emphasizes restructuring teacher education along with continuous professional development to enhance the status and competence of the teaching profession (University Grants Commission, 2021). One of the most significant reforms is the introduction of the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme as the minimum qualification for teachers, aiming to integrate disciplinary knowledge with pedagogical training and bridge the gap between theory and classroom practice.

Another key dimension of NEP 2020^[1] is the emphasis on continuous professional development (CPD), with a recommended minimum of 50 hours of annual training to ensure that teachers remain updated with pedagogical advancements and technological changes (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. This aligns with global trends that promote lifelong learning and reflective teaching practices (University Grants Commission, 2021). The policy also underscores the integration of technology in teacher education, encouraging the use of digital platforms, online modules, and virtual learning environments, which became particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. However, the effectiveness of such initiatives depends largely on the availability of adequate infrastructure and digital resources. NEP 2020^[1] further redefines the role of teacher educators, expanding their responsibilities beyond traditional lecture-

based instruction to include mentoring, research, curriculum development, and professional guidance (University Grants Commission, 2021)^[15]. This shift reflects a move from a transmission-oriented model to a facilitative and reflective approach, where teacher educators guide student teachers in adopting innovative pedagogies and addressing diverse learner needs.

Despite these progressive reforms, several implementation challenges persist. Structural changes such as the transition to multidisciplinary universities and the phasing out of standalone teacher education institutions require significant institutional transformation and resource allocation (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. Many institutions continue to face constraints related to infrastructure, qualified faculty, and funding, leading to disparities in implementation, particularly between urban and rural areas (University Grants Commission, 2021). The shortage of qualified teacher educators further complicates the effective delivery of the revised curriculum and innovative teaching approaches.

Moreover, effective coordination between central and state governments is essential, as education in India is a concurrent subject requiring aligned policy execution across different administrative levels (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10]. Variations in administrative capacity, financial resources, and regional priorities may influence the uniform implementation of NEP 2020^[1] reforms (University Grants Commission, 2021). Overall, while NEP 2020^[17] provides a comprehensive and forward-looking framework for strengthening teacher education, its success depends on strategic implementation, institutional readiness, and sustained investment. If these challenges are systematically addressed, the policy has the potential to significantly enhance teacher professionalism and contribute to the broader transformation of the Indian education system (Ministry of Education, 2020)^[10].

Suggest Recommendations for Strengthening Teacher Education

Strengthening infrastructure: Strengthening infrastructure in teacher education institutions is essential for the effective implementation of the National Education Policy 2020^[8], and the government should invest in improving both physical and digital facilities, including smart classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and reliable internet connectivity to support technology-based and experiential learning approaches.

Recruitment and Capacity Building: The recruitment and capacity building of teacher educators must be prioritized through regular professional development programmes, workshops, and training initiatives to enhance their competencies in modern pedagogy, digital tools, and competency-based teaching methods.

Increased funding and financial support: Increased funding and financial support from both central and state governments are crucial to ensure the successful implementation of reforms, including the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme, faculty development, infrastructure improvement, and research in teacher education.

Promoting Digital Literacy and Effective Technology: Promoting digital literacy and effective technology

integration is necessary to bridge the digital divide by providing training, affordable devices, internet access, and digital learning resources for both teacher educators and trainees.

Multilingual Education: The effective implementation of multilingual education requires specialized training in multilingual pedagogy along with the development of teaching-learning materials in regional languages to address linguistic diversity in classrooms.

Monitoring and Regulatory System: Strengthening monitoring and regulatory systems through transparent policies, regular evaluation, and better coordination among regulatory bodies is also essential to ensure quality and accountability across institutions.

Institutional Collaboration: Encouraging institutional collaboration and innovation among universities, teacher education colleges, and research institutions can facilitate the sharing of best practices and the development of innovative teaching strategies.

Finally, ensuring uniform implementation across states requires strong coordination and policy alignment between central and state governments, considering education as a concurrent subject, so that the reforms of NEP 2020^[1] are executed consistently across diverse regions of India.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020^[8] represents a landmark initiative aimed at transforming teacher education in India by recognizing teachers as the backbone of the education system and proposing comprehensive measures to enhance the quality, professionalism, and effectiveness of teacher preparation and development. The policy introduces several progressive reforms, including the four-year integrated B.Ed. programme, a new National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, continuous professional development for teachers, and the integration of technology in teacher training, all designed to equip future teachers with strong subject knowledge, effective pedagogical skills, and the ability to address diverse learner needs. Additionally, NEP 2020^[1] redefines the role of teacher educators, emphasizing their responsibilities as mentors, facilitators, researchers, and innovators, thereby promoting a more dynamic and reflective teacher education system capable of meeting twenty-first-century educational demands. Nonetheless, the successful implementation of these reforms depends on addressing critical challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, shortage of qualified teacher educators, digital divide, and disparities in policy execution across states, requiring collaborative efforts among policymakers, institutions, and stakeholders to ensure sufficient resources, capacity building, and continuous monitoring. If these challenges are effectively managed, NEP 2020^[1] has the potential to significantly enhance the professional status of teachers, improve teaching practices, and contribute to the development of a more equitable, high-quality, and future-ready education system in India.

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