

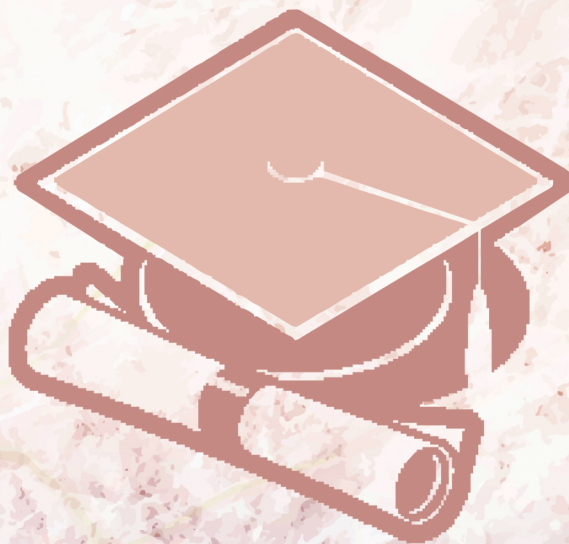
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THE EXPANDING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS DEFINED BY NEP 2020 AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

The National Education Policy, 2020 recommends an exemplary transformation in education in India based on the dynamic changes in global perspectives and employability requirements. The policy proposes the necessity to remodel education in accordance with the emerging needs of the learner and the contemporary worldwide society. A desperate need to develop a new pedagogy and school culture has been felt to make education experiential, flexible and inclusive for building individuals with a sound personality and a wholesome character, furnished with skilled expertise for self-sustenance through employability, fortified with determination and resilience to cope with challenges and reinforced with a compassionate and caring disposition to render support to the society. The present paper discusses the expanding roles and expectations from the teaching fraternity at all levels of education as specified in the various recommendations of NEP, 2020 and the consequential implications related to the responsibilities of teacher education to fulfil the same.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020, NEP 2020, Teacher Education, Challenges in teacher education in India, Future of teacher education in India.

INTRODUCTION

If we go through the National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP: 2020), it comprises of the following sections: Part I- School Education; Part II- Higher Education Part III- Other key areas of focus

Part IV- Making it happen.

The Part I, which deals School Education includes recommendations on early Childhood care and education, issues like foundational literacy and numeracy, reducing dropout rates and increasing universal access to education, modifying the curriculum and pedagogy in schools, providing equitable and inclusive education, generating resourceful teachers and providing adequate facilities to them, building school complexes or school culture through skilful governance, and setting standards and accreditation for school education.

Part II that talks about Higher Education includes recommendations on providing quality holistic education in colleges and universities by restructuring and consolidating institutions, providing optimal support and conducive learning environment, equity and inclusion in higher education; nurturing motivated and capable faculty, revamping teacher education, vocational education and providing multidisciplinary education; promoting good quality academic research, ensuring betterment of institutions through effective governance

and leadership, and finally modifying the regulatory system in higher education. In Part III the Other key areas of focus include adult and lifelong learning, integration and equitable use of technology, online and digital education, and promotion of languages, arts and culture.

Part IV of the policy document suggests concrete steps of implementing and materializing the plans of providing affordable quality education to all - into practice, providing financial support and strengthening the Central Advisory Board of Education to administer the same.

This bird's eye view of the NEP: 2020 has been provided to emphasize on the fact that education in each and every stage can be put into practice only with the help of teachers. It is true that artificial intelligence has made a significant advancement in every field and is trying to take over classrooms with skilled perfection. Nevertheless the all-pervasive role of teachers in the spectrum of implementing a comprehensive educational policy remains indispensable. The basic difference between a man and a machine as a teacher is that a teacher can provide personalized guidance while a machine can provide what is pre-configured into it.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF NEP 2020 FOR IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY OF TEACHERS

NEP 2020 suggests the following measures for improving the quality of teachers:

1. Quality of teacher education must be improved.
2. Scholarships for studying in B.Ed. programmes should be provided to ensure that outstanding students join the teaching profession. Teacher recruitment should be done on merit-basis. Teachers should be encouraged and provided incentives to teach in their local areas, especially rural areas as they know the local language and can reach out better to the students.
3. Excessive teacher transfers should be stopped, except in special circumstances through transparent computerized modes.
4. TETs or Teacher Eligibility Tests should be conducted for selection of eligible candidates in the profession.
5. Teachers can be shared across schools within school complexes or groups particularly in subjects like vocational education, languages, art, physical education, etc.
6. Experts should be hired by school complexes to instruct students in vocational crafts, local arts, entrepreneurship, agriculture, etc.
7. States should conduct subject-wise technology-based planning for vacancies and recruitment and teacher education programmes should align with such vacancies.
8. Positive and inclusive school culture should be created to provide a positive working environment and maximum opportunities to teachers.

9. Decent and pleasant service conditions and facilities should be provided to teachers in schools.
10. School complexes should be established to promote creation of active teacher communities, shared counsellors, social workers, technical staff etc.
11. Teachers should be involved in the Management committees of school complexes in collaboration with parents and other stakeholders.
12. Teachers should not be engaged in work not directly related to teaching, and stressful administrative activities to help them focus on their teaching learning duties.
13. Schools should develop a caring and inclusive learning environment with explicit roles of teachers and administrators.
14. Teachers should be provided more autonomy in selecting different pedagogical approaches and should focus on holistic socio-emotional learning of students.
15. Teachers should be given opportunities for Continuous Professional Development for self-improvement.
16. School administrators should also participate in leadership workshops to improve their management skills.
17. Teachers providing outstanding services should be duly recognized and rewarded.
18. Career growth opportunities should be available to teachers even within a single school stage.
19. Teachers having leadership and management expertise should be trained to take academic leadership positions in schools and school complexes.
20. National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by NCTE in consultation with NCERT and SCERTs to set standards regarding teacher competencies, which should be modified from time to time.
21. Special educators with cross disability training should be recruited in school complexes for education of *Divyang* children and NCTE and RCI will collaborate to produce more special educators with subject teaching expertise.

The policy is deeply concerned about the quality of teachers that this nation produces because the responsibility of materializing the aspirations of NEP 2020 into real classroom practice lies upon their shoulders. So, the role of the teachers is a thread that evidently weaves through each and every recommendation of the policy either overtly or covertly. As we explore the different recommendations of the policy, we shall also note the underlying responsibilities of the teachers simultaneously. And at the end, we shall analyse the role of teacher education in this regard.

VISION AND GUIDELINES OF THE POLICY VIS-A-VIS ROLE OF THE TEACHERS

The vision of the National Education Policy: 2020 is to inculcate a profound sense of honour and pride among the learners for being Indian. The policy aims to transform India into an equitable knowledge society by developing positive values related to one's duties towards the nation and the society through the curriculum and pedagogy. It intends to develop skills, knowledge, values and temperament to be committed to sustainable living, global welfare and human rights.

NEP: 2020 acknowledges the fact that access to quality education is a basic right of every individual. It upholds an education process that enables the development of a deep attachment with one's Indian identity and its diverse culture, traditions and enriching knowledge system. Respect for diversity and indigenous variety among the students can be inculcated only if teachers have these values in them.

The policy plans to discover and nurture the unique capabilities of each student and promote holistic development in both academic and non-academic areas. To make this happen, teachers need to be sensitized along with parents so that they can identify individual potentials and provide necessary support to help them flourish.

The policy suggests that by Grade 3 all students should achieve Foundational literacy and numeracy. Highest priority will be given to this aim. To help students achieve Foundational literacy and numeracy, an adequate number of trained teachers will be required who can reach out to the learners far and wide, and provide them the necessary learning experience.

According to the policy, learners should be provided flexible opportunities to choose their programmes in accordance with their abilities, interests and talents. A harmonious inter-relation in the curriculum at all levels has been recommended. Curricular and co-curricular, vocational and academic, arts and sciences will be merged to increase the access of the learners. Education will be made multidisciplinary and holistic across all streams and conceptual understanding will be emphasized instead of learning superficially only for scoring well in the exams. Creativity and critical thinking will be encouraged as they pave the way towards rational decisiveness and innovative temperament. In order to make these practicable it will be necessary to modify the conventional education system of teaching, learning and evaluation. So, teachers must be trained in accordance with these transformed ideologies. Inculcation of positive values and ethics among the learners would require value education among the teachers. Life skill education is an integral part of the present school curriculum. It must be intensively included in the teacher education curriculum so that the teachers may be trained to impart the same. Multicultural and multilingual classrooms would require multilingually trained and multiculturally oriented teachers. So, widening the perspectives of both in-service and preservice teachers is absolutely necessary.

Inclusion of socio-economically disadvantaged and the Divyang students by removing all barriers, making education accessible and utilizing all resources including technology requires adequately trained teachers who can put these policies into classroom practice. Equity, not equality is the key word. Identifying what each individual learner requires and

providing the same requires teachers with insight, foresight and a caring concern for the individual learners and their needs.

The evaluation system must be made more formative than summative and the so-called rat race and 'coaching culture' must be eradicated. The policy recommends a continuous record of the progress of each student and assessment by experts. This requires a sea-change in the assessment culture in our country. And teachers must be trained to exercise the same. Too much importance given to marks and grades actually tarnishes the taste of learning as it remains enjoyable no more. Teachers and parents need to be steered out of the conventional temperament related to assessment and more stress should be given on development of basic concepts and foundational knowledge.

The need for taking special measures for managing teacher recruitment, their ongoing professional development, provision of constructive work environment and viable employment conditions - have been felt by the policy as teachers play an indispensable role at all levels of education. The policy recommends a 'light but tight' regulatory body to administer an effective education system and innovative research to enable improvement and development in education nationwide. It encourages investment in the public education system and philanthropic private and social participation.

The present policy has been framed keeping in view that education must meet employment needs both at local and global levels. It is essential to reduce the content and increase the strategies to teach children how to learn, solve problems, nurture creative thinking, and practice innovative ideas. Consequently, pedagogy should evolve. The approach to teaching learning should be flexible, enjoyable, experiential, discovery-based, and holistic. The curriculum should integrate humanities, games, crafts, languages, culture, values, literature and so on. All round development in the learner's character and personality is essential besides inculcation of delicate values like compassion, care, empathy, ethics in them. Thus, education should serve all purposes and not just prepare individuals for satisfactory employment.

SCHOOL EDUCATION

School education begins at the pre-primary stage and ends in the higher secondary stage. The policy proposes that teachers at all stages should be adequately trained to fulfil their responsibilities in accordance with the transformation in the curriculum and pedagogical approaches.

The policy sets a goal to provide universal access to good quality early childhood care and education throughout the nation in a phased manner. Special priority would be given to those areas which are inhabited by socio-economically disadvantaged populations. Preparatory classes or *Balvatikas* would be set up for children below five years of age. More *Anganwadis* with developed infrastructure, play equipment and trained staff would be set up and co-located with primary schools to be integrated into school complexes..

They would appoint specially trained teachers or workers who can handle the curriculum and pedagogy. Accordingly, the policy plans to prepare high-quality teachers for early childhood care of children in Anganwadis and *Balvatikas*. They should be trained as per the curriculum prepared by the NCERT. *Anganwadi* employees with qualifications of 10+2 and above will receive a six-month certificate programme and the ones with lower qualifications shall be given a one-year diploma programme including numeracy; literacy and other relevant ECCE related training. These programmes run through digital channels and smart phones shall be made accessible to these employees while engaging in their present works. They would be guided by Cluster Resource Centres of the School Education Department through monthly face to face classes. In the long run, professionally qualified educators would be prepared and their Continuous Professional Development would be facilitated. *Ashramshalas* would be opened in tribal-dominated areas along with all forms of alternative schooling for integration and implementation of ECCE. At the elementary level, teachers appointed in *Anganwadis*, *Balvatikas* and *Ashramshalas* would be specially trained to work in collaboration with social workers, counsellors, parents, students, and local communities in order to encourage all the students to enroll to pre-primary education and preparatory schools and attend them regularly.

FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY

The policy mentions that it is an urgent national mission that every child should attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3, that is the ability to read and write and perform basic operations with numbers. This is a prerequisite for achieving the rest of the goals in the policy.

To achieve this purpose, teacher vacancies will be urgently filled up especially in the disadvantaged areas and areas with high levels of illiteracy and disproportionate student-teacher ratio. Local teachers will be preferred for employment or those who know the local languages. Ideal teacher-student ratio aimed for would be 30:1 at each school level, and those areas inhabited by SEDGs will aim for a student-teacher ratio of 25:1. Teachers will be provided with continuous professional development to disseminate foundational literacy and numeracy. Teachers will be provided with adequate resources on the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) portal. All technological support systems and resources to overcome language barriers will be provided to teachers. Trained teachers can supervise peer tutoring as it is often effective for fostering learning.

REDUCING DROPOUT RATES AND INCREASING ACCESS TO LEARNING

The policy proposes to take two chief initiatives to reduce dropout rates, namely - providing effective school infrastructure and regular trained teachers in all levels. For careful tracking of students' progress teachers will be required to record the details about each child's performance. Teachers will work with students and parents in cooperation with counsellors or trained social workers and community support systems to motivate students

to attend schools. Teachers with knowledge of the local language will have to be deployed in specific areas with high dropout rates and the curriculum should also be modified to make learning more relevant and useful.

MODIFYING THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

NEP: 2020 recommends a school curriculum that makes learning holistic, integrated, enjoyable and engaging. So, it proposes to modify and restructure the school curriculum and pedagogy. It proposes that the curriculum content should be reduced and instead critical thinking and conceptual learning should be focussed upon. Inquiry-based, problem solving, analysis and discussion oriented, discovery-based learning are suggested. Classroom transactions should be competency-based, collaborative, creative, exploratory and interactive. Hands-on training, experiential learning, story-telling pedagogy are recommended. Learning should be more experiential and integrated with sports, art, etc. It should aim at the holistic development of the learners. Students should be provided with more flexibility in course choices and teaching techniques should be changed. The policy recommends curricular integration of essential subjects, skills and capacities- rational and evidence based thinking, innovations, coding in the middle stage, vocational courses through hands-on experience (NCFSE). Increasing popularity of subjects like Global Citizenship Education, Artificial Intelligence, Holistic Health, etc. necessitate more teachers to attain expertise in these contemporary areas. Teachers should be trained to handle such cross-curricular pedagogical approaches.

MULTILINGUALISM AND EXPERIENTIAL LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY

Multilingualism should be encouraged and the all pervasive power of language should be realised across the curriculum. Wherever possible, home language or mother language or regional language should be the medium of instruction until Grade 5 but preferably till Grade 8 both in public and private schools. High quality textbooks should be made available in regional languages. Teachers should use a bilingual approach to teaching and use relevant teaching learning materials which the area-specific learners can understand. Children will be exposed to a multilingual environment from the preliminary stage as it is beneficial for their intellectual development. Language teaching and pedagogy should be joyful, interactive, technologically supported and communication based. A large number of language teachers should be appointed in all regional languages, especially those mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. Study of Indian languages should be encouraged and popularized through the use of technology. And the enriching cultural aspects of languages should be blended into the teaching learning experience such as theatre, music, poetry, films, storytelling, etc. And drawing close connections of languages with different subjects and real life experiences should be infused in the language pedagogy.

A large number of Sanskrit teachers will be appointed as the policy recommends the revival of classical languages. Other classical Indian languages like Tamil, Telugu, Odia,

Malayalam, Kannada, Pali, Prakrit, Persian that preserve rich cultural and literary heritage should be made widely available in schools as options and taught preferably online through innovative experience based approaches. Accurate inclusion of tribal and other local languages should be made in the curriculum as per relevance. Besides Indian languages and English, foreign languages like Portuguese, Russian, German, French, Spanish, Korean, Thai and Japanese languages will also be offered at the secondary level to enrich the Global knowledge and enable the fulfillment of aspirations of the students.

Under language learning, the policy also mentions about Indian Sign Language to be standardized across the country and need to develop curriculum materials in ISL. So, it is expected that teachers should learn Sign Language to be able to handle inclusive classrooms deftly.

The policy suggests that the teaching of languages should be conducted through games and apps blending the same with the cultural aspects and connecting with real life experiences. Thus experiential learning pedagogy will be used for teaching of languages. So, skilled language teachers need to be trained and appointed in order to improve language teaching to make it more effective for communication and interaction and not just focus on the literature vocabulary and grammar related to the languages famous extensively used for conversation and teaching learning.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

NEP 2020 plans to provide exposure to vocational education in the middle and secondary school stages along with development of academic and other capacities in a phased manner, in order to emphasize the dignity of labour. This will be smoothly integrated into higher education. The development of vocational capacities will go hand-in-hand with the development of 'academic' or other capacities. The secondary schools will set up skill labs and collaborate with ITIs, polytechnics, local industry to provide adequate training and exposure. Thus, an ample number of teachers skilled in vocational training will be required in all the schools.

VALUE-BASED EDUCATION

NEP 2020 recommends that students ought to be taught positive values and the ability to take ethical decisions through a logical frame of mind. Ethical reasoning, traditional Indian and basic human values should be inculcated in them. Children should be exposed to stories of Jataka, Panchatantra, Hitopadesh and other fables to be taught morals and values. They should be made to read excerpts from the Indian Constitution and receive proper health training in the curriculum. Teachers should prepare themselves accordingly to transmit value education among the children.

PROVIDING EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION TO ALL

The policy encompasses a wide variety of people under the umbrella term socio-

economically disadvantaged group of people. It clearly states that inclusion and equity would be a guiding principle for teacher education and training of administrators and school personnel.

The policy identifies those with benchmark disabilities and offers them the freedom to choose regular special schools and for those with severe or multiple disabilities, it recommends the provision of resource centres along with special educators to help parents to develop their skills through home-schooling. It recommends appointment of additional special educators for specific aspects of middle and secondary levels of school education like teaching school subjects to children with specific learning disabilities. The policy specifies that such special educators should not only have knowledge and understanding of various subjects but also the expertise to handle the needs of the disabled children. Further, general teachers should be able to identify students with learning disabilities so that through assessment certification, they may be educated with a flexible curriculum using appropriate strategies and technological help, at a flexible pace. The policy recommends that school complexes will be provided resources to educate differently abled children, appoint special educators with cross-disability training and establish resource centres especially for those with severe or multiple disabilities. As per the policy, even general teachers should be able to identify students with specific talents and abilities and following the guidelines of NCERT and NCTE provide enrichment and facilitate specialization in their fields of aptitude. Teachers should use digital resources in smart classrooms and provide supplementary materials, online resources and collaborative support systems to them. They should also be provided with ample opportunities to participate in online assessments, competitions, Olympiads, and scope to use helpful apps through extensive availability of tablets and smartphones.

For the gifted and talented children the policy suggests that teachers should be trained to identify the potentials of each student and their diverse aptitudes and interests. Children who have specialized talents should be given enriching experiences beyond the conventional curriculum. Teacher education should train the teachers to recognise and nurture such talents among the students. The NCERT and NCTE would formulate guidelines for educating the gifted students. Besides, Project clubs and circles may be formed to mature diverse creative abilities. Olympiads, scopes for participation in competitions, enrichment materials etc. should be available across the country even for the SEDGs to provide meritorious students with opportunities to develop their talents.

The new policy also recommends that the teachers should be trained to teach in alternative forms of schools and teach school subjects like science, mathematics, social studies, and languages using new pedagogical practices. Alternative forms of schools include non-formal education, distance education and open learning system, vocational training centres, and so on. Such schools help to cater to the needs of disadvantaged children by providing a wider choice of educational programmes and a 'safety-net' to school dropouts. They

provide flexible educational opportunities to children at risk, persons with disabilities and those who cannot attend or complete conventional schools. (Gupta, J. & Alam, S., 2019) All such schools are administered in India under National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) established by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1989. Teachers employed in such schools need to be more versatile and innovative. They need to learn much more than conventional teaching strategies in order to meet the diverse needs of the students and the high expectations of the parents and school authorities.

TRANSFORMING ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Students' school-based assessment portfolio would be redesigned by states with the guidelines given by National Assessment Centre, NCERT and SCERTs. This progress report would provide detailed information about the child's development in cognitive, affective as well as psychomotor domains and include peer assessment as well as self-assessment. AI based software would be used to keep track of their progress and teachers and parents would collaborate to help each child reach his/her optimum potential and prepare them to make prudent career choices.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The policy proposes that a basic infrastructure should be present in all HEIs. HEIs should disseminate multi-disciplinary, value-based education, inculcate a scientific temperament, provide environmental education, Global citizenship education and internship facilities with local industry to increase employment skills. The policy suggests a flexible curriculum and credit transfer, research and innovation, job oriented vocational education and skill development, online education, inclusiveness and equity, internationalization, multiple entry exit points, comprehensive teacher training and development. It proposes that degree courses should be developed bilingually and be available in Indian languages to enable accessibility for educationally deprived students. If mentoring facilities are to be given to students, then teachers in higher education should devote more time and energy to guide their mentees both within and beyond class hours.

Higher education also includes a wide variety of professional education courses like - vocational education, legal education, healthcare education, teacher education, technical education, adult and lifelong education. And cutting across all streams is online digital education and promotion of Indian language, art and culture through various streams of education. To teach in all these courses and programmes an excellent array of trained teachers would be required. More streams like Archaeology, Artefact conservation, graphic design, art and museum administration, translation and interpretation, Web design etc. are also proposed to be created. Technologically adept teachers are necessary who have area specific expertise as well. Teachers need suitable training to become online educators. All faculty members in higher education institutions should be motivated and duly engaged and there should be ample scope for their professional development. Faculty recruitment should be

fair and transparent. Excellent faculty with high academic and service records should be rewarded and be given scope for fast track promotion and leadership opportunities. The policy proposes to transmit the Indian Knowledge System for which more faculties with proper training in this area would be required.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Maphosa, C. and Mashau, S.T. (2014) suggest that 21st century aims at holistic education to develop global citizenship qualities, collaborative learning, problem-solving approaches and development of the 4C's namely - critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity and innovation, requiring a common understanding of language in the classroom. Hence teacher education curriculum should be learner-centered and in keeping with the 21st century skills.

Upadhay, S. (2018) suggests that teacher education of the 21st century should be linked with manpower planning, resource development and economic growth. And exchange programmes of teachers and students should be promoted through international collaboration. TE21, A teacher education model for the 21st century, A report by the National Institution of Education, Singapore (2009), states that teacher education should focus on inculcating knowledge, skills and values in trainee teachers. And one of the core skills recommended under attributes of 21st century teaching professionals is communication.

PREPARING TEACHERS FOR HANDLING SCHOOL EDUCATION

Teacher education should encapsulate training of teachers right from Pre-primary level. Staff appointed at Anganwadis, Balvatikas and Ashramshalas should be properly trained in the modified approach to early childhood care and education based on the curriculum prescribed by NCERT. In order to impart training on foundational literacy and numeracy and reduce dropout, teachers should be provided with adequate knowledge and resources as well as training to make the learning joyful and motivating to children. They should also be trained to supervise peer tutoring and work in collaboration with parents, social workers, and local residents. Teachers should also be taught local languages to get better access to the students and local community.

The school curriculum is heading for a vast transformation in approach and pedagogy. So, teachers should be trained based on new pedagogical approaches which are inquiry-based, analytical, collaborative, creative, discovery-oriented and most importantly - joyful. The focus on developing critical thinking and problem solving through conceptual learning should be considered while planning lessons. Experiential, hands-on training approach should be followed through integration of academic learning with skills and capacity building.

Handling multicultural classrooms and teaching with a multilingual approach using multilingual teaching learning materials should be taught to all teachers. The policy

states that pedagogy of language teaching should be joyful, interactive, technologically supported and communication based. So, language teachers must be trained to work on new approaches to teaching so that learning becomes enjoyable. Teachers should also be taught to introduce the cultural aspects of language into the teaching learning experience such as theatre, music, poetry, films, storytelling into their pedagogy and relate the lessons with real life experiences. More teachers need to be prepared to teach tribal languages, foreign languages and Indian classical languages experientially. Language teachers should be trained to improve the communication skills in students in different languages. Since Braille and Indian Sign Language are also forms of expression, hence teachers should be willing to learn at least one of the two so that they may communicate with differently abled children in their classrooms and teacher education should provide opportunities to attain expertise in these areas.

As NEP: 2020 plans to introduce vocational education in the middle and secondary school stages there is a need to have skilled teachers who can provide hands-on vocational training to school students in accordance with their aptitude.

As the policy recommends that students should be taught positive humanitarian values and ethics, teacher education should provide peace and value education to all trainees. Peace and value education along with gratitude practice are particularly instrumental in generating inner peace which can help in learning to live together and transform oneself and society at large. Teachers being the nurturing hands of the society, can also be immensely benefited through such practices. Peace and gratitude practice not only enhance emotional intelligence but also gives us a positive zest for life, which teachers can transfuse into students. (Sen, S., 2022)

To fulfil the goal of providing equitable and inclusive education to all, teachers should be trained to reach out to all categories of SEDGs categorized by the policy. On one hand, teacher education should train the teachers to recognise and nurture the potentials of the gifted and talented students, and on the other hand, they should be able to identify and educate children with benchmark disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Cross disability trained special educators should also be prepared with various subject knowledge and expertise for handling the *Divyang* children both in classrooms and under homeschooling. Teachers should learn to use digital resources in inclusive smart classrooms and provide supplementary materials and resources in different forms as per the needs of the students. They should also learn to prepare learning designs specifically for inclusive classrooms. Teachers should also be trained to teach in alternative forms of schools using innovative pedagogical practices. They need to learn much more than conventional teaching strategies in order to meet the diverse needs of the students and the high expectations of the parents and school authorities. Teacher education should also include specific knowledge and skills to furnish teachers with strategies to work in alternate schools both for the socio-economically deprived students and those belonging to socio-economically opulent families. The policy encourages the appointment of teachers and leaders from socio-economically

disadvantaged groups of people as teachers of superior quality so that they may act as inspiration for students. So, teacher education institutions should also provide ample opportunity to meritorious candidates from disadvantaged sections so that they may be trained to meet the challenges and expectations of the evolving school culture. The policy mentions that curriculum prescribed by NCTE and RCI may be combined into a new trend of teacher education programme. Such recommendations indicate that there is a significant need to modify regular B.Ed. training as well as B.Ed. training in special education and minimize the conventional system of segregating the two courses.

The policy plans to modify school-based assessment from conventional report cards to students' portfolio providing detailed information about the child's development in cognitive, affective as well as psychomotor domains. So, teachers should be taught to prepare such progress reports and use digital skills wherever required. They should also be taught to collaborate with parents to help students develop their potential and make effective career choices.

PREPARING TEACHERS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

NEP: 2020 recommends a flexible, multi-disciplinary, value-based higher education. Faculties in higher education should be upskilled to learn new approaches to teaching, learning and evaluation in higher education. They should learn to teach bilingually and in local languages. Teachers need to undergo rigorous training to handle online education, digital infrastructure, online teaching platform and tools, online content creation, use of digital repository and dissemination and use of virtual labs, blended models of learning, online assessment and examinations and a variety of rich software training and incentives for teachers. Professional education courses like - vocational education, legal education, healthcare education, teacher education, technical education, adult and lifelong education, online digital education need experts specialized in these fields to act as teachers. Contemporary disciplines like Archaeology, Artifact conservation, graphic design, art and museum administration, translation and interpretation, Web design, Global Citizenship training, Indian Knowledge system, etc. require technologically adept and trained teachers. Teachers need suitable training to become online educators. So, teacher education should not just be limited to preparing school teachers. It should cut across all streams and programmes because trained teachers are required to teach all these courses.

The policy places a strong emphasis on faculty development and training. Besides the basic competency building, an adequate number of Faculty Development programmes, Faculty orientation programmes and Refresher courses are required to train teachers for the wide variety of higher education courses. Several e-learning platforms like SWAYAM, DIKSHA, SWAYAM PRABHA etc. have been created to assist and train teachers.

NEP 2020 states that teacher education needs multidisciplinary inputs and its content and pedagogy must be of high quality. So, all teacher education programmes should be

carried out within composite institutions. The policy aims to close down all stand-alone Teacher Education Institutions and convert them into multidisciplinary institutions. Flexible choices of one year, two years, and four years integrated teacher education programmes are to be provided.

CONCLUSION

Teacher education should not be limited to school education. Teachers at all levels of education need to undergo some type of capacity building. They need to refurbish their knowledge and skills from time to time to keep themselves informed about the evolving trends in learning. Teachers play a phenomenal role in making any policy successful because they put policies into classroom practice. The nation intends to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. And the teacher is the fulcrum upon which the colossal responsibility of implementing fundamental reforms into educational practice rests. “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” (Nelson Mandela). And teachers are the most powerful instruments that facilitate that change.

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