

The Role of the Teacher in the Context of the National Education Policy (NEP)

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Abstract - The Role of the Teacher in the Context of NEP

The core objective of the Indian education system is not merely knowledge acquisition but the holistic development of the student. The “National Education Policy 2020” (NEP 2020) is a comprehensive framework focused on quality education, value-based approaches, and skill development. This policy emphasizes mother tongue-based learning, a multidisciplinary approach, the use of technology, and the incorporation of moral values. For the successful implementation of this policy, the role of the teacher is central.

Under NEP 2020, teachers are no longer just traditional knowledge providers - they become guides, motivators, innovators, and agents of social change. They help develop students’ thinking abilities, confidence, and life skills. The value-enriched nature of education seen in the Gurukul system, saintly philosophies, and modern educational thought is clearly reflected in NEP 2020. Teachers must strike a balance between effective use of technology, continuous professional development (CPD), value-based education, and experiential teaching.

This transformation in the role of teachers is essential for shaping students into capable, sensitive, and responsible citizens. A teacher is not just an instructor but a nation-builder. Hence, calling teachers the “architects of a new India” in NEP 2020 is not an exaggeration. The policy’s true goal is for teachers to combine historical educational perspectives, modern technology, and value-based vision to contribute significantly to nation-building.

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Introduction

In Indian culture, education is not just a process of acquiring knowledge but is considered a life force for shaping personality, instilling values, and bringing about social transformation. The spirit of universal well-being, expressed in the mantra “**Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah**”, is achievable through education. Education is a powerful tool for social change and nation-building. Teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students’ lives, preparing responsible citizens, and accelerating national development.

A well-educated society contributes not only economically but also ethically, culturally, and scientifically. As India has the world’s largest youth population, guiding them in the right direction is a national responsibility. The National Education Policy 2020 has been designed considering 21st-century social, technological, and economic changes. It focuses on inclusive education, a multidisciplinary approach, technological integration, skill development, and value-based learning. Teachers are the central element in achieving these objectives.

NEP 2020: A Transformative Policy

NEP 2020 is a major step towards making education more inclusive, skill-based, and high-quality to meet 21st-century challenges. The policy replaces the old structure with a new **5+3+3+4** system, focusing on age-appropriate and developmental learning. Early education emphasizes instruction in the mother tongue or local language, making learning easier for children. The policy promotes creativity, reasoning skills, and practical knowledge. It integrates arts, sports, and vocational education with academic learning.

To enhance teacher quality, regular **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** is emphasized. The policy encourages the use of digital tools, online and hybrid learning models, and aims to instill good habits, responsibility, and moral values in students. The NEP strives to make the education system more effective, inclusive, and modern.

Changing Role of the Teacher

In earlier systems, the teacher was primarily a provider of knowledge. Students

memorized content and reproduced it during exams. However, NEP 2020 has vastly expanded the teacher's role. Teachers are now seen as **facilitators, guides, and motivators**. They understand students' interests, thinking styles, and capabilities and guide them accordingly. Teachers build students' confidence, instill critical thinking, and help them realize their potential.

Modern educators are expected to be **researchers and innovators**, using playful, experimental, and activity-based teaching methods. They adopt technological tools such as smart classes, online platforms, and educational apps. Teachers today cultivate moral values, environmental awareness, and social responsibility. They are life skills trainers who develop communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. Unlike in the past, where grades were the main focus, today's educators are shaping lives. This transformation is at the heart of the new education system.

Teacher's Contribution to Successful Implementation of NEP

NEP 2020 emphasizes **student-centric education**. Teachers must use project-based, experiential, and storytelling techniques to engage students actively. A **multidisciplinary approach** is essential, interconnecting subjects like science, math, languages, and arts to deepen understanding.

Teachers must improve their **language skills** to teach effectively in the mother tongue and promote multilingualism. Technology integration is another key area. Teachers must become digitally literate and use e-learning tools, apps, and virtual labs.

Instead of relying solely on exams, teachers should use **continuous assessment** to track progress and provide timely support. CPD through regular training, workshops, and collaboration with peers is vital.

In summary, **teachers are the primary drivers of change** under NEP 2020.

Key Measures and Recommendations for Effective Implementation

- 1. Enhance Teacher Training Quality:** Training programs aligned with NEP should focus on project-based learning, technology integration, and value education.

2. **Ensure Technology Access:** Schools, both rural and urban, should have equal access to computers, internet, and digital learning materials.
3. **Promote Teacher Autonomy:** Giving teachers the freedom to choose teaching methods and content increases creativity and effectiveness.
4. **Mentorship for New Teachers:** Experienced teachers should mentor new ones, ensuring guidance and quality in education.
5. **Encourage Professional Development:** Regular certificate courses, webinars, and workshops help teachers stay updated.
6. **Integrate Value Education:** Subjects should include themes like ethics, cooperation, environmental awareness, and social responsibility.

These initiatives will make the education system more effective, balanced, and value-oriented.

Parallels with the Ancient Guru Tradition

Both teachers and ancient gurus focus on **values, ethics, and holistic development**. They aim not just at intellectual growth but at nurturing character, sensitivity, and responsibility. Individual guidance is emphasized – just as a guru shaped a disciple based on individual traits, today’s teacher guides students according to their preferences and strengths. Both are seen as agents of social change, shaping future generations.

Ancient Educational Thought

Ancient Indian education was **Gurukul-based**, where students lived with the guru and learned beyond scriptures – including arts, warfare, ethics, and environmental awareness. It was **experiential, value-based, and student-centered**. NEP 2020 reimagines these principles for today’s context.

Thinkers like **Chanakya** emphasized the importance of integrating politics, economics, agriculture, and ethics into education.

Impact of Medieval Saints and Thinkers on Education

Saints and thinkers during the medieval period played a key role:

- **Sant Dnyaneshwar** made learning accessible through a blend of devotion and knowledge.

- **Sant Tukaram** highlighted the concept of lifelong learning.
- **Guru Nanak Dev Ji** advocated for inclusive and ethical education.

These principles align well with the moral and inclusive vision of NEP 2020.

Modern Educational Thinkers' Vision

Modern Indian education leaders also contributed:

- **Mahatma Phule** promoted education across castes and genders.
- **Savitribai Phule** revolutionized women's education.
- **Mahatma Gandhi** emphasized values, labor, and self-reliance through his Nai Talim.
- **Rabindranath Tagore** encouraged interdisciplinary and open learning through Shantiniketan.
- **Dr. B. R. Ambedkar** used education for social empowerment.
- **Swami Vivekananda** focused on character-building and moral education.
- **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan** highlighted the influence of a teacher's personality.

Teacher's Role in Enhancing Education Quality – A Study

NEP 2020 aims to adopt **student-centric teaching**. This involves planning lessons based on individual student needs, pace, and interests – increasing participation and confidence.

Teachers now use **digital tools** like e-content, smart boards, and virtual labs to enhance learning. Emphasis is placed on **value education and skill development**, including ethics, communication, social responsibility, and life skills.

Teachers actively pursue **professional development** through workshops, webinars, and online platforms. They integrate subjects like science, art, sports, and languages for well-rounded education.

Parental and community involvement has also increased, making the learning process more collaborative and impactful.

Conclusion

The **National Education Policy 2020** marks a new chapter in Indian education. It is rooted in **quality, inclusivity, and value-based education**. NEP 2020 bridges

ancient traditions and modern pedagogy – from the Gurukul system to visionary educators like Gandhi, Phule, Tagore, and Vivekananda. Teachers are the **carriers and implementers of these ideals**.

Teachers must blend **historical inspiration, modern technology, and a value-oriented vision** to shape the next generation. They are not merely instructors but **mentors, motivators, value-nurturers, and agents of social change**. NEP 2020 sees them as the **architects of new India**.

By using innovative methods, proper use of technology, and value-based approaches, **teachers can empower students to become capable and sensitive citizens** – a true contribution to nation-building.

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