



NEP 2020 AND THE NEW PARADIGM : RETHINKING TEACHERS' WELL-BEING IN 21ST CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a transformative shift in India's landscape; placing teachers at the core of the reform process, this paper explore the new paradigm introduced by NEP 2020, with a special emphasis on rethinking teachers, well-being in the 21st century. Recognizing teachers as the fundamental pillars of the education system, the paper underscores how their physical, mental, social emotional and spiritual well-being directly impacts students learning outcomes and the overall educational environment. The multifaceted pressure of modern life, exacerbated by the post pandemic era, have implied the need for systematic support to ensure teachers' holistic development. NEP 2020 addresses this through comprehensive provisions including improved teacher recruitment practices, reduced administrative burdens, professional autonomy, continuous development (CPD), and career progression based on merit. Initiatives like Manodarpan reflect the policy's commitment to supporting teachers' mental health additionally the establishment of National Professional standard for Teachers (NPST) aims to create a framework of accountability and excellence. By fostering a supportive eservice environment, empowering educators and reinforcing their professional identity, NEP 2020 envisions a vibrant, inclusive and equitable education system where teachers' well-being is pivotal to National development.



KEYWORDS: National Education Policy (NEP), continuous development (CPD), National Professional standard for Teachers (NPST).

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of the country depends on its citizen, those responsible, informed citizen are shaped in the classrooms of the Nation-molded by dedicated teachers. Teacher is the key pillar of the entire education system; teachers are the torch bearer of the nation's future. Among all the important factors within educational institutions that affect students, it is the teacher's personality that influences them the most. Some teacher posses a strong personality and inspiring aura that student naturally admire and often try to emulate. The strength of character and positive behaviors stems from the life the teacher leads. Life and work are deeply interconnected each has the power to influence the other, either positively and negatively. The way a teacher perceives themselves is a major determinant of the classroom environment and students academic performance. A good teacher is one who possesses sound mental health and a well-balanced personality. However, with the rapid advancement across various fields and the increasing complexities of modern society, teachers are often under pressure to

adapt. In coping with these changes, the role of a teacher has become more demanding and at a times, overwhelming. These personal and professional complexities can affect a teacher's well-being, which in turn influences the learning atmosphere and may negatively impact student's academic experiences and attitude towards education.

2. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To discuss the importance of teachers well-being .
2. To highlight the recommendations given in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 regarding the well-being of Teachers.

3. TEACHERS' WELL-BEING.

There is adequate evidence from research about the positive impact of teacher well-being directly and indirectly on students learning as well as on a positive and flourishing school and social culture. Teachers well-being has become increasingly important in the wake of elevated levels of stress of modern life, smaller family structure that lacks support from extended family and neighbors' and declining emotional resilience, particularly in post covid-19 times. These factors affect not only the teachers own well-being, but also thrust on them the additional responsibility of dealing with learners who are going through these challenges. If the teachers are not fit to cope up with the changing series of demand and pressure they face moment to moment they will not provide the quality teaching and learning experiences expected of them.

Education is highly emotional career, connected to prominent levels of anxiety, and can lead to work dissatisfaction; mental illness and diminished well-being, so scholars, managers and policy makers are becoming increasingly concerned about the well-being of educators because of this worrisome pattern. Well-being is a holistic concept that encompasses various domains of life, each contributing to the overall quality of an individual's existence. for teachers, whose roles involve not only academic instruction but also emotional nurturing, leadership and social engagement, well-being is foundational to their professional effectiveness and personal fulfillment .the five major domain of wellbeing –physical, mental, social ,emotional and spiritual-play a crucial role in shaping both their personal and professional lives. Ultimately the well-being of teachers' is directly linked to the professional performance, satisfaction and longevity in the education field.

Psychologically healthy people feel comfortable and happy in their lives and enjoy life in all endeavors. According to world Health organization (WHO, 2019) mental Health Is “ A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope up with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Well-being has been linked to success of professional levels with those individuals high in well-being.

Domains of well-being :

- 1) **Physical well-being:** it is the first component of well-being which means state of good health, a higher level of physical well-being is a basic essential of excellent or intellectual well-being means accepting new ideas and thoughts i.e changing according to the change in life.
- 2) **Mental well-being:** mental well-being can be defined as the wholesomeness of mind, analogous to the wholesomeness of body implicit in physical health. World health organization (1973) defines mental health as a condition, which permits optimal development of physical intellectual and emotional of the individual”. Shrinivasa K. Rao (2000) is of the opinion “physical fitness is very important to be mentally responsive. It is equally important to have healthy pursuits to recharge our minds. Further the social environment are deeply intertwined the mental well-being of individuals.
- 3) **Social well-being:** includes relationship with family, friends and others. It comes from being connected, sense of belongingness through social interaction. This gives meaning of the individual. Nourishing a healthy support system in relationship is essential for health.

- 4) **Emotional well-being:** it focuses on the ability of the individual to express their emotional appropriately the person with emotional well-being can cope even in unpleasant circumstances, emotional well-being is not the absence of emotions, but it is the ability to understand the value of your emotions and use them to move your life forward in positive direction.
- 5) **Spiritual well-being:** means joy, peace, happiness and higher value of life. According to Paloutizian and Elli's (1982) "spiritual well-being is the affirmation of life in a relationship with God, self, community and environment".

4. NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is the key to India's continued ascent and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation.

The national education policy 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and aims to address the many growing development imperatives of our country. This policy proposes the revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance, to create a new system that is aligned with the aspiration goals of 21st century education, including SDG4, while building upon India's traditions and value systems

National education policy lays particular emphasis on the development of the creative potential of each individual; it is based on the principle that education must develop not only cognitive capacities, such as critical thinking and problem solving-but also social, ethical and emotional capacities and dispositions.

The teacher must be at the centre of the fundamental reforms in the education system. The new education policy must help re-establish teachers, at all levels, as the most respected and essential members of our society, they truly shape our next generation of citizens. It must do everything to empower teachers and help them to do their jobs as effectively as possible. the education policy must help recruit very best and brightest to enter the teaching profession at all levels, by ensuring livelihood, respect, dignity and autonomy while also instilling in the system of basic methods of quality control and accountability.

The new education policy 2020, announced after 34 long years has brought about a monument change in the new educational policy of our country. It has placed high priority and high importance for physical and mental health for students as well as for teachers.

5. THE VISION OF THIS POLICY

This National Education policy envisions on education system rooted in the Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The policy envisages that the curriculum and pedagogy of our institution must develop among the students a deep sense of respect towards the fundamental duties and constitutional values, bonding with one's country and a conscious awareness of one's roles and responsibilities in a changing world. The vision of the policy is to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in the thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values and disposition that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

In tune with the policy and curriculum frameworks' emphasis on mental well-being of teachers,' Manodarpan' an initiative by the ministry of education (MoE) under Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, was launched by the Hon'ble Minister of Education , Government of India, on 2^{1st} july 2020.Manodarpan creates and maintains a repository of resources to support the mental well-being of all school stakeholders. To provide psycho social support to teachers, students and parents, Manodarpan runs a National Toll-Free Helpline (8448440632). Manodarpan also periodically develops reading materials, and advocacy content for school which is readily available on the Manodarpan webpage

[h://manodarpaan.education.gov.in/..](https://manodarpaan.education.gov.in/) in order to address contemporary concerns of mental well-being among students and to promote a positive school culture, live interactive session “Sahyog” and “Paricharcha” are organized by Manodarpaan on a regular basis. These sessions are telecast on PM e-Vidya channels and are also available on the “NCERT official” Youtube channel. Through national and regional conferences and consultations on mental well-being in the school system, Manodarpaan also encourages and facilitates stakeholder engagement in its efforts towards promoting mental well-being in schools.

Keeping in view the significance of teachers in educating the child and their pivotal role in classroom transactions, the National education policy (NEP) 2020 has laid down several recommendations to ensure and enhance teachers professional well-being.

6. Provisions for Teachers Mental Health and Professional Well Being in National Education Policy 2020:

The National education Policy 2020 recognizes that teachers are the heart of the education system, and their overall well being-physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual –is essential for the creation of a strong, equitable, and vibrant educational ecosystem.

NEP 2020 provides key recommendations to promote the professional and personal wellbeing of teachers, focusing on what can be called their professional wellbeing.

National education policy 2020 places a strong emphasis on attracting the best and brightest students into the teaching profession, especially from rural and underrepresented backgrounds. It understands that for quality education we need quality teachers and to ensure that NEP2020 lays down some strategic recommendations including merit based scholarships and local employment support.

6.1. Recruitment and Deployment

Merit based Scholarships for B.Ed. Program

- To attract outstanding students into the teaching profession. The NEP recommends the introduction of merit-based scholarship
- These scholarships will be reduce financial barriers, especially for students from rural ,disadvantaged, or economically weaker sections.
- Scholarships are aimed at encouraging students to pursue the new 4-year integrated B.ED degree, which will become the minimum qualification for teaching by 2030.

Focus on Rural and Local talent

- Special emphasis is placed on recruiting teachers from local communities, especially in rural and remote areas, where teacher shortages and attrition are high.
- Preference will be given to scholarship recipients to be employed in their local areas after they complete their B.Ed., Promoting community based education.
- This is expected to enhance teacher accountability, reduce teacher absenteeism and increase culture and linguistic relevance in the classroom.

Four-year integrated B.ED program

- The NEP envisions a high-quality, integrated teacher education program which blends pedagogy with strong content knowledge, classroom practices and community engagement.
- This program will be offered in multidisciplinary institutions, ensuring that teacher education is at par with other professional programs.

Strengthening Institutional support

- Institutions offering B.Ed degrees will be rigorously regulated and accredited to maintain quality.
- National professional standard for teachers (NPST) will guide training ,performance and professional growth, ensuring consistency across the country.

6.2. Halting Harmful Practices of excessive Teacher Transfers.

Excessive or arbitrary teacher transfers have long disrupted students' learning environments and affected teachers morale. NEP 2020 strongly discourages frequent transfers, recognizing that students need continuity and consistency in their education, teachers build trust and connection in communities over time. Transfer will now occur only in special, justified cases, based on clearly defined norms laid down by state/UT governments. All transfers will be conducted through a centralized, online and computerized system to ensure: Transparency, Fairness, prevention of favoritism or political interferences. to allow teachers to focus on long-term student development, particularly in rural or hard-to-staff schools, and to foster a stable learning environment.

6.3. Teacher Eligibility Tests (TETs) Reform and Teacher Recruitment Enhancement.

Teacher eligibility test will be strengthened to include better test material, both in terms of content and pedagogy. TET will also be extended to cover teachers across all stages (foundation, preparatory, middle and secondary) of school education. For subject teachers, suitable TET or NTA test scores in the corresponding subjects will also be taken into account for recruitment. To gauge passion and motivation for teaching and, a classroom demonstration or interviews will become an integral part of teacher hiring at school and school complexes. These interviews would also be used to assess comfort and proficiency in teaching in the local language, so that every school /school complex has at least some teachers who can converse with students in the local language and other prevalent home languages of students. Teacher in private school also must have qualified similarly through TET, a demonstration/interview, and knowledge of local language(s).

6.4. Hiring enough Teachers for All Subjects

- To make sure there are enough teachers in all subjects-specially in art, physical education, vocational subjects and languages-teacher can be hired for a group of schools (school complex), not just one school.
- These teachers can be shared between schools in the group, depending on how states and union territories organize their schools.

6.5. Involving experts in schools

School and school complexes will be encouraged to hire local experts as 'master instructors' these experts can teach subject like-tradition local arts, vocational crafts, Entrepreneurship, agriculture, any subject with local knowledge or skills. This will benefit students and help preserve local tradition and professions.

6.6. Planning for Future teacher needs

- Each state will use technology to plan and predict how many teachers will be needed in each subject over the next 20 years.
- The recruitment and posting strategies mentioned earlier will be expanded as needed to : fill all teacher vacancies with qualified teachers (including local ones), provide incentives to support teacher growth and career development
- Teacher education programme will be updated to match the future demand for future.

6.7. Service Environment and Culture.

- At the heart of this transformation is the belief that when teachers are empowered, supported and valued, students benefit most. The primary goal of overhauling the service environment and culture of schools will be to maximize the ability of teachers to do their jobs effectively and to ensure that they are part of vibrant, caring and inclusive educational communities where all stakeholders - teachers, students, parents, principal and other support staff, are united by shared mission: to ensure that our children are learning and thriving.

- A vision for safe, inclusive and inspiring school environment, the first requirement in this direction will be to ensure decent and pleasant service conditions at schools. Adequate and safe infrastructure, including working toilets, clean drinking water, clean and attractive spaces, electricity, computing devices, internet, libraries, and sports and recreation. these provisions are not just amenities but essential elements for fostering a safe, valued and motivated to learn and that every teacher is equipped and inspired to teach. In this vision equity and accessibility are central, special attention will be given to meet the needs of children with disabilities fostering that no one is left behind in our educational spaces.
- Strengthening School Education through school complexes: A path toward equity, efficiency and excellence. State/UT Government may adopt innovative formats, such as school complex, rationalization of schools, without in any way reducing accessibility for effective school governance, resource sharing and community building. The creation of school complexes could go a long way towards building vibrant teacher communities. The hiring of teachers to school complexes could automatically create relationship among schools across the school complexes; it would also help ensure excellent subject-wise distribution of teachers, creating a more vibrant teacher knowledge base. Teacher at very small schools will not remain isolated any longer and may become part of and work with larger school complex communities, sharing best practices with each other and working collaboratively to ensure all children are learning. School complexes could also share counselors, trained social workers, technical and maintenance staff etc. to further support teachers and help create an effective learning environment. In collaborations with parents and other key local stakeholders, teachers will also be more involved in the governance of schools/school complexes, including as members of the school management committees/school complex management committees, thereby ensuring that educational decisions are informed by those directly involved in the teaching-learning process.
- In collaborations with parents and other key local stakeholders, teachers will also be more involved in the governance of schools/school complexes, including as members of the school management committees/school complex management committees, thereby ensuring that educational decisions are informed by those directly involved in the teaching-learning process.
- Teachers are often diverted from their primary responsibility of delivering quality education due to engagement in activities that, while important, are not directly related to teaching and learning. to prevent the large amount of time spent currently by teachers on non-teaching activities, teacher will not be engaged any longer in work that is not directly related to teaching in particular, teacher will not be involved in strenuous administrative tasks and more than a rationalized minimum time for mid-day meal related work, so that they may fully concentrate on their teaching –learning duties.
- To support positive learning environment, the defined role expectations of both principals and teachers will explicitly include the responsibility to foster a caring, inclusive and respectful school culture. This commitment is essential to promoting effective learning and ensuring the well-being of all students, staff and stakeholders. By embedding these expectations into professional practice, school will be better positioned to create supportive environments that reflect equity, belonging, and academic success for every learner.
- 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. Teachers will also focus on socio-emotional learning- a critical aspect of any student's holistic development. Teacher will be recognized for novel approaches to teaching that improve learning outcome in their classrooms.

6.8. Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

To ensure the sustained growth and effectiveness of educators, all teachers will be provided with continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to stay abreast of the latest innovations and advances in their professions. These professional development opportunities will be made available

through multiple modalities, including local, regional, state. National and international workshops as well as online teacher development modules.

- Specialized platforms, particularly online will be developed and enhanced to facilitate the exchange of ideas, resources and best practices among teachers. Every teacher will be expected to engage in a minimum of 50 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) annually. These CPD opportunities will be self directed and aligned with teachers' individual interests and professional goals. The CPD programs will systematically address cutting edge pedagogical practices, especially in areas such as:
 - Foundational literacy and numeracy
 - Formative and adaptive assessment of learning outcome
 - Competency –based education
 - Experiential learning
 - Arts integrated, sports integrated and storytelling –based teaching approaches.

Such comprehensive and multifaceted professional learning frameworks aim to foster a culture of lifelong learning and innovation among teachers.

Leadership development for school Principals and complex Leaders. In parallel ,school principals and school complex leaders will also be provided with structure and modular CPD opportunities to strengthen their leadership and management capabilities. This opportunities' will be offered through workshops, leadership training programs and online development module. Leaders will be encouraged to collaborate and shared best practices through dedicated platforms, fostering a community of effective educational leadership. each school leader will be expected to complete at least 50 hours of CPD annually, focusing on Areas such as

- Educational leadership and school management
- Competency –based curriculum planning and implementation
- Pedagogical leadership and content knowledge

This approach will ensure that school leaders are well-equipped to lead innovation,support teacher development and drive the successful implementation of competency –based education strategies across school system.

6.9. Career Management and Progression

Teachers doing outstanding work must be recognized and promoted, and given salary raises to incentivize all teachers to do their best work. Therefore, a robust merit-based structure of tenure , promotion and salary structure will be developed with multiple levels within each teacher stage that incentivize and recognize outstanding teachers. A system of multiple parameters for proper assessment of performance will be developed for the same by state/UT Government that is based on peer reviews, attendance, commitment, hours of CPD and other forms of service to the school and the community or based on NOST given in para 5.20 .in this policy ,in the context of careers,' tenure'; refers to confirmation for permanent employment after due assessment of performance and contribution, while 'tenure track' refers to the period of probation preceding tenure.

Further, it will be ensured that career growth (in terms of tenure, promotion, salary increases, etc.) is available to teachers within a single school stage (i.e foundational, preparatory, middle or secondary) and that there is no career progression-related incentive to move from being teachers in early stages to later stages to later stages or vice versa(though such career moves across stages will be allowed, provided the teacher has the desire and qualification for such move).this is to support the fact that all stages of school education will require the highest-quality teachers, and no stage will be considered more important than any other.

Vertical mobility of teachers based on merit will also be paramount; outstanding teachers with demonstrated leadership and management skills would be trained over time to take on academic

leadership positions in schools, school complexes, BRCs, CRCs, BITEs, DIETs as well as relevant government departments.

6.10 Professional standard of teachers

A common guidance set at National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by 2022, By the National council for Teacher education in its restructured new form as a professional standard setting body (PSSB) under the general Education Council (GEC), in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert organization in teacher preparation and development, expert bodies in vocational education and the higher education institutions. The standard would cover expectations of the role of the teacher at different levels of expertise/stage and the competencies required for the .it will also comprise standards for performance appraisal for each stage that would be carried out on a periodic basis. The NPST will also inform the design of pre-service teacher education programs. This could be then adopted by states and determine all aspects of teacher career management, including tenure, professional development efforts, salary increases, promotions and the other recognitions. Promotions and salary increases will not occur based on the length of tenure or seniority, but only on the basis of such appraisal. The professional standards will be reviewed and revised in 2030 and thereafter every ten years, on the basis of rigorous empirical analysis of the efficacy of the system.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.

The National education policy 2020 (NEP 2020) has emerged has a transformative document, ushering in a paradigm shift in Indian education. one of its most progressive and urgently needed emphases is on teacher well-being, recognizing that the quality of education cannot surpass the quality of its teachers'. for the first time in decades. a policy places holistic teacher development- physical, mental, emotional and professional at the core of educational reform.

NEP's focus on teachers as central agents of change is not merely symbolic; it is substantiated through a host of systematic reforms from merit based scholarships, recruitment of local talent, reduction in non teaching duties and transparent transfers, to career advancement based on performance rather than tenure. these changes are essential to restore the dignity, autonomy and professional satisfaction that the teaching profession deserves.

Moreover, the policy highlights the interconnectedness between teachers' personal well-being and professional effectiveness. it rightly acknowledges that a teacher's ability to inspire, nurture and guide learner depends not only on training or qualifications but on their mental resilience, emotional balance and physical health. Stress, burnout and emotional fatigue- prevalent issues in the teaching community, particularly in the post-COVID era are directly addressed through initiatives like Manodarpan, ongoing CPD (continuous professional development and structured leadership training).

Another critical insight from this policy is the move towards student-centred and inclusive pedagogy, which indirectly demands more from teachers- not only in skill but also in adaptability and mental strength. As facilitators of learning rather than mere transmitters of knowledge, teachers must now embody compassion, creativity and cultural sensitivity. for them to take on this new role they must be mentally and emotionally prepared. thus, the emphasis on creating safe, motivating and well-equipped environment is not only about infrastructure- its about creating conditions where teachers can thrive.

However, realizing the vision of NEP 2020 will require consistent implementation, political will and collaborative efforts across all levels of government and society. Policies, unless accompanied by resources and accountability mechanism, risk remaining aspirational. The mental health and professional satisfaction of teachers cannot be improved through isolated initiatives, they require sustained investments, community support and cultural change in how we perceived and treat educators.

In conclusion, The NEP 2020 provides a comprehensive roadmap for rethinking teacher well-being as the foundation of educational excellence. Teachers are no longer to be viewed as passive executors of curriculum, but as creative professionals who deserve support, recognition and the

opportunity for lifelong learning. Investing in their well-being is not a luxury but a necessity for the future of education depends on the minds and hearts of those who lead our classrooms.

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