

REIMAGINING THE TEACHER IN NEP 2020: A MULTIFACETED HUMAN CATALYST FOR TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING

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Abstract: The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP-2020) reconceptualizes the Indian education system by placing teachers at the fulcrum of educational transformation. This reflective article explores the teacher's identity as a multifaceted entity, far beyond the conventional role of knowledge transmission. Drawing on NEP-2020, UNESCO's *Reimagining Our Futures Together* (2021), OECD's *Learning Compass 2030* and national frameworks such as NCF-SE 2023 and NCFTE 2009, the reflection highlights how teachers today are expected to be facilitators, mentors, curriculum designers, inclusive practitioners, digital navigators, socio-emotional guides, community leaders, researchers and lifelong learners. NEP-2020 underscores that "teachers will be at the heart of the learning process" (MoE, 2020, p. 22) and international frameworks similarly emphasize their evolving, adaptive and transformative roles. The article elaborates the emerging parameters that define the contemporary teachers: pedagogical innovation, reflective practice, inclusive engagement, technological adaptability, ethical leadership, socio-emotional competence and global citizenship orientation. These parameters reveal that the teacher's role extends across intellectual, emotional, social, cultural and technological domains. The article concludes that teacher preparation and continuous professional development must evolve to cultivate these multidimensional professional capacities, enabling teachers to become catalysts for holistic learning and national development in the knowledge creation and sharing era.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Multifaceted Teacher, Catalyst, Holistic Education, Transformative Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching profession has always held a fundamental place in society, but the demands placed upon teachers in the knowledge driven 21st century have expanded dramatically. The National Education Policy 2020 redefines the teacher as a multidimensional, empowered and autonomous professional responsible for nurturing holistic learners who can thrive in a rapidly changing world. The policy asserts that "no reform is more critical than the transformation of the teaching profession" (MoE, 2020, p. 23), signaling the unprecedented expectations placed upon teachers.

International discourses also echo this sentiment. UNESCO's *Futures of Education Report* (2021) emphasizes that teachers must "navigate complex cultural, ecological and technological contexts," while the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s *Learning Compass 2030* positions teachers as designers of learning ecosystems that develop student agency and global competencies. This expanded identity of the teacher as mentor, facilitator, counselor, researcher, innovator and leader forms the basis of the reflection presented here. The subsequent sections explore the multiple parameters that constitute the teacher as a multifaceted entity in NEP-2020's transformative educational vision.

2. TEACHER AS A MULTIFACETED ENTITY

1. Teacher as a Facilitator of Holistic and Experiential Learning

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strongly emphasizes holistic, experiential, multidisciplinary and inquiry-driven learning. It states, “*Teachers must move away from rote learning and encourage critical thinking, creativity, scientific temper, ethics and social responsibility*” (MoE, 2020, p. 36). Thus, the teacher becomes a guide who creates learning experiences that connect real life with academic content.

Holistic education requires teachers to focus on the intellectual, social, emotional, moral and physical development of each child. The NCF-SE 2023 further highlights the need for experiential learning, proposing that teachers engage learners through projects, field experiences, arts-integration and interdisciplinary pedagogies. The teacher, therefore, must possess the capacity to craft dynamic learning environments that go well beyond the four walls of the classroom and textbook instruction.

2. Teacher as a Reflective Practitioner

Reflection is central to effective teaching. The NCF-SE (2023) emphasizes “continuous reflection on practice” as foundational for teacher growth. A reflective teacher critically evaluates classroom decisions, interactions and outcomes to refine pedagogical strategies.

Internationally, reflective practice is considered a hallmark of professionalism. UNESCO (2021) encourages teachers to adopt reflective habits as they “rethink pedagogies for peace, justice and sustainability.” Teachers are not merely instructors or executors of curriculum; they are thoughtful decision-makers who examine their assumptions, understand learners’ diverse contexts and adjust their instructional methodology accordingly. In this sense, reflective practice becomes both a personal and professional commitment. It shapes the teacher’s identity as an adaptive, open-minded and responsive educator.

3. Teacher as an Innovator and Curriculum Designer

As per NEP-2020, teachers should have “greater autonomy in choosing aspects of pedagogy and curriculum” (MoE, 2020, p. 22). This autonomy demands creativity, research-based decision-making and an innovative mindset. Teachers today are expected to customize learning materials, adapt syllabi to local contexts and experiment with flexible instructional strategies. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2019) asserts that teachers must be “co-creators of curriculum innovation,” actively contributing to curriculum development at the school, college, university and system levels. In India, this aligns with the NEP vision of decentralized curricular planning and the reinforcement of teacher leadership in academic processes.

Teachers who innovate ceaselessly bring fresh perspectives into the classroom, integrate contemporary issues and engage students in relevant and meaningful learning. Their curriculum design role highlights their multidimensional identity, not as passive implementers but as active intellectual contributors.

4. Teacher as an Inclusive Practitioner

Inclusion is a central pillar of NEP-2020, which advocates for “equitable and inclusive education for every learner, including children with special needs, socio-economic disadvantages or linguistic diversity” (MoE, 2020, p. 25). Teachers must, therefore, be equipped with competencies in differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and cultural sensitivity.

UNESCO’s *Guide for Ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education* (2017) emphasizes that teachers play the most critical role in creating inclusive classrooms that welcome all students. This requires empathy, patience, classroom management skills and knowledge of individualized approaches. The teacher as an inclusive practitioner recognizes learner diversity as an asset rather than a challenge. Inclusion expands the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that all students feel valued and supported in the educational ecosystem.

5. Teacher as a Digital Navigator

Technology has reshaped the educational landscape. NEP-2020 promotes digital empowerment through the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) and encourages teachers to integrate technology into pedagogical practices. The

teacher must now be a “digital navigator” someone able to harness digital tools for personalized learning, assessments, communication and enrichment. Teachers must develop competencies in blended learning, cyber-safety, digital ethics and use of educational platforms. They must also bridge the digital divide by supporting students with limited access.

International policies echo this expectation. UNESCO’s ICT Competency Framework for Teachers states that teachers should “use technology creatively to improve learning outcomes, foster collaboration and promote innovation.” Thus, digital competence becomes a defining characteristic of the multifaceted teacher.

6. Teacher as a Socio-Emotional Guide

The teacher’s role extends into fostering emotional well-being and resilience among learners. The NCF-SE 2023 integrates Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), requiring teachers to cultivate empathy, communication skills, conflict resolution and emotional regulation.

With continuous rising mental health concerns among school children, the teacher becomes a mentor and caregiver who helps students navigate challenges. UNESCO (2021) notes that education systems must “foster relationships of care and belonging,” placing teachers at the center of socio-emotional development. Teachers must therefore balance academic responsibilities with compassionate support, making them integral to students’ well-being and holistic growth.

7. Teacher as Researcher and Knowledge Producer

The NEP-2020 encourages teacher research through Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and school complexes. Teachers must engage in action research, classroom investigations and evidence-based practices to improve teaching-learning processes.

The National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 stresses that “teachers must be reflective practitioners and researchers capable of engaging with theory and practice.” Teachers who conduct research become contributors to the broader educational knowledge world. This dimension enhances professional autonomy and elevates teaching to a knowledge-producing profession.

8. Teacher as a Community Leader and Nation-BUILDER

Teachers serve as bridges between schools and communities. The NEP-2020 envisions teachers as “role models who uphold constitutional values and promote social cohesion” (MoE, 2020, p. 17). Teachers lead community initiatives, strengthen parental engagement and support local development.

UNESCO (2021) highlights the civic and ethical responsibilities of teachers in building sustainable societies. Teachers influence students’ values, citizenship and identity, thereby shaping social and national development. This civic dimension underscores the teacher’s multifaceted role beyond academics, grounding education in cultural, ethical and social contexts.

3. CONCLUSION

The teacher of the NEP-2020 era is a multidimensional professional, i.e. an educator, innovator, mentor, researcher, digital navigator, inclusive practitioner and community leader. Their work spans intellectual, emotional, social and technological domains, positioning them as central figures in transforming India’s education system. To realize this vision, teacher education programmes and continuous professional development (CPD) must equip teachers with holistic competencies, reflective capacities and ethical leadership skills. The multifaceted teacher is not only a facilitator of learning but a catalyst for national transformation and international brotherhood

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