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Empowering Teacher-Educators: Initiatives And Challenges In Continuous Professional Development (CPD) In The Alignment With NEP-2020

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Abstract

Education is the key to the growth and development of any nation, and its success depends on the quality of teachers. The knowledge, dedication, professionalism, commitment, and motivation of teachers are pivotal in ensuring quality education and enhancing learner achievement. Within the education system, Teacher-Educators play an essential role in improving the teaching-learning process. In the 21st century, Teacher-Educators need to consistently excel in their profession to prepare effective educators. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is essential for Teacher-Educators, encompassing the ongoing enhancement of knowledge, skills, and competencies beyond initial training. The Continuous Professional Development of teachers has been a central focus of educational policies and commissions in India since independence. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 places teachers at the heart of reforms, emphasizing pedagogy, assessment, and professional growth. The aim of this paper is to examine the concept of Continuous Professional Development, its significance for teachers, the historical development of CPD in the context of NEP-2020. It also identifies the challenges faced in implementing CPD and highlights various practices and initiatives aimed at promoting professional growth and development among teacher-educators. Furthermore, the paper provides strategies and recommendations to address these challenges, enhance the capacity of teacher educators, foster collaboration, and improve teaching and learning outcomes in alignment with the goals of NEP-2020.

Keywords: Teacher-Educators, Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and National Education Policy-2020.

Introduction

"A teacher can never truly teach unless he is still learning himself. A lamp can never light another lamp unless it continues to burn its own flame" (Tagore, 1996). Teachers are the backbone of education and are essential to achieving the goals of both teaching and learning. To fulfill this role, they must be well-equipped with subject knowledge, access to laboratories, innovative teaching methodologies, and proficiency in ICT (Tallvid, 2016). In today's educational landscape, teachers are expected to possess diverse competencies, including subject content knowledge (SCK), innovative pedagogical knowledge (IPK), and the ability to collaborate, support, and think creatively in planning and delivering lessons (Bray-Clark & Bates, 2003). Research highlights that teacher competence is the most significant factor influencing student learning, surpassing social and demographic factors. Specifically, a teacher's depth of subject content knowledge has been found to directly impact students' academic performance and interest in particular subjects (Blazar & Kraft, 2017; Hill et al., 2008; Keller et al., 2017). Every educational institution must have teachers who are up to date on the latest information, techniques, and technology developments in order to adequately prepare students for the modern era. Since classroom practices ultimately affect student learning, an OECD report (2010) states that teachers' professional competence and commitment play a major role in the quality of education. In India, in-service training (INSET) programs sometimes focus on just one aspect of the concept of continuous professional development (CPD). Bolitho and Padwad (2011) highlight that professional preparation typically involves short pre-service teacher training courses supplemented by limited field exposure and practical experiences. The current CPD framework offers restricted opportunities for teachers, operating within a rigid structure. However, in today's rapidly evolving educational landscape, teachers increasingly recognize the need for continuous professional support and guidance to meet the demands of modern teaching and learning (Singh & Gupta, 2021).

Education is a fundamental requirement for a country's development. Teachers must have extensive knowledge of the subjects they teach, along with a deep understanding of how specific technologies can transform those subjects (Nsabayezu et al., 2022). In addition to understanding the dynamic relationship between technology and content, how technology can shape content delivery and, conversely, how content can influence the selection and application of technology, teachers must be able to identify the best technologies for improving subject-specific learning (Schmidt et al., 2014). It is well-recognized that education plays a crucial role in fostering deep awareness, shaping positive attitudes and values, enhancing decision-making abilities, and developing skills that contribute to the welfare of society (Sabar, 2024). Teachers are both the architects of society and the backbone of the educational system. The expertise of an educational institution's teachers has a significant impact on its success. Today's child will be tomorrow's citizen, according to

Srinivasacharlu (2019), and nothing will exceed the essential role that educators play in shaping children's futures. To increase the achievement of students and enhance their own performance, educators must engage in professional development. It serves as a key strategy for educational systems to elevate the effectiveness of teachers. To achieve the greatest impact, professional development must be carefully designed, implemented, and evaluated to meet the specific needs of teachers in diverse educational settings (Guskey, 2003).

Objectives of the Study

- To examines the concept of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), its significance for teachers,
 and their historical development of CPD in the context of NEP-2020.
- To identifies the issues and challenges in the implementing Continuous Professional Development for Teachers.
- To provide strategies and recommendations to address these challenges, enhance the capacity of teacher educators, foster collaboration, and improve teaching and learning outcomes in alignment with the goals of NEP-2020.

Research Methodology of the Study

For the current study, the researcher studied secondary data from a variety of sources, including research publications, theses, and official documents, such as the CPD Guidelines based on NEP 2020, NCERT, New Delhi, and the National Education Policy 2020.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Continuing Professional Development is mainly aimed to improve the quality of educators who are already in the profession. It is a lifelong learning process that begins with an individual's entry into the teaching profession and continues throughout their career (Panda, 2001). CPD is considered a comprehensive and dynamic learning process that encompasses various activities designed to improve teachers' skills, broaden their beliefs and attitudes, and support effective teaching practices. CPD can take both formal and informal forms, enabling teachers to enhance their competencies, expand their knowledge, and refine their professional practices. It plays a vital role in strengthening the educational system by empowering teachers, students, and schools in a tri-polar framework. As therefore, continuing professional development helps teachers improve both their professional and personal lives while also improving the standard of education as a whole. Continuing Professional Development is essential for educators in the rapidly evolving field of education, which has been influenced by rapid innovations in technology. CPD ensures that teachers continue to learn, grow, and enhance their professional skills, enabling them to adapt to evolving educational environments and remain effective in their roles.

Policies and Commissions Recommendations for Continuous Professional Development

After independence, the Indian government recognised that one of the most important ways to raise the standard of education in schools was through professional development for teachers. This recognition has been reflected through various educational commissions, committees, legislation, and initiatives. The following

highlights some of the most important efforts aimed at advancing teachers' professional development (Singh & Gupta, 2020; Misra & Tyagi, 2021; Senapati & Singh, 2022; Mathur & Shukla, 2023; Sabar, 2024).

Policies and	Recommendations for Continuous Professional Development
Commissions	•
University	Highlighted that as a condition of promotion, refresher courses be held for
Education	college and school teachers every four to five years. Instead of focusing only on
Commission	salary and promotion conversations, these refresher courses, which must
(1948-49)	incorporate professional development and vacation time, should aim to increase
	teachers' intellectual engagement.
Secondary	Highlighted the importance of the three distinct types of teacher pre-service
Education	training: (i) basic or primary teacher training, (ii) secondary teacher training, and
Commission	(iii) graduate teacher training. The Commission emphasized the necessity of
(1952-53)	conferences, workshops, professional seminars, short intensive courses in certain
	disciplines, and refresher courses in order to attain long-term professional
	efficiency. In order to keep educators updated of current developments and
	developing issues, the policy also suggested that teacher training schools pursue
	research in every aspect of education.
Kothari	Recommended that throughout the year, universities, education institutions, and
Commission	teacher organizations host seminars, workshops, and refresher courses for
(1964-66)	teachers. Although the Commission's primary focus was on school teachers'
	professional development, it also acknowledged teacher educators and school
4	supervisors as important sources of information. The Commission also
	recommended that, once every five years, all teachers complete at least two to
1	three months of in-service training.
National	Emphasized that "the pre-service and in-service components of teacher education
Policy on	are inseparable, and the process is ongoing." The significance of pre-service and
Education	in-service teacher education for the development of teachers was emphasized in
(NPE)-1986	the policy. It recommended that Institutes of Advanced Studies in Education
and	(IASEs), University Departments of Education, and District Institutes of
Programme	Education and Training (DIETs) in every district nationwide provide financial
on	support for in-service teacher education. The duty to provide teachers with in-
Action (POA)-	service training was also assigned to State Councils of Educational Research and
1992	Training (SCERTs).
National	Emphasized the significance of experiential learning for teachers and encouraged
Curriculum	them to think critically about their methods and become active learners. It also
Framework	suggested that school clusters assume responsibility for teacher in-service
(2005)	training. In order to enable teachers to directly apply what they have learned to
	their teaching practices and pre-service training, the Framework also
	recommended spreading out the required in-service training days throughout the
	year (NCERT, 2005).

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE)-2009 Suggested a number of measures to improve professional growth through inservice teacher education. NCFTE prioritized support for in-service teacher education and ongoing professional development. It also implied that different organizations can be crucial in giving educators chances for professional growth. Teachers could also be given financing support and short-term fellowships (based on proposals) to visit DIET, CTE, IASE, and University Departments or to conduct certain activities for teachers and schoolchildren in their districts.

According to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, educators will have ongoing opportunity to learn about the newest advancements in their field and to better themselves. At the local, state, national, and worldwide levels, these opportunities will be offered in a variety of forms, including seminars and online courses for teacher development. Teachers will also be able to share best practices and ideas on platforms, particularly online. It is anticipated that each educator will participate in a minimum of fifty hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) annually, based on their individual interests and professional development. The most recent pedagogies in competency-based learning, formative and adaptive assessments, experiential learning, arts-integrated, sports-integrated, and Foundational literacy and numeracy will all be covered in particular via CPD opportunities. Furthermore, all teachers' CPD for Career Management and Progression (CMP) will be linked to the NEP (Rahman, 2023). According to the 5+3+3+4 design, the CPD content will incorporate the most recent competency-based, participatory educational approaches that are in line with the interests and developmental needs of students at various stages, including Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, and Secondary, as advised by NEP 2020. Experiential learning, art-integrated learning, sport-integrated learning, toy-based pedagogy, ICT-based pedagogy, vocational skills, and attending to local teaching-learning requirements and professional knowledge during CPD programs are among the pedagogies that should be included. According to CPD Guidelines based on NEP 2020, NCERT, New Delhi, each teacher educator and institutional leader is required to complete 50 hours of continuing professional development, which may include in-person, online, and remote learning.

Face-to-Face Mode: Participants in face-to-face seminars must be physically present. However, because there is little contact between the participants and the teacher or trainer, it is sometimes regarded as a passive learning method.

Online and Distance Mode: Teachers and trainers can reflect on their methods of instruction and training in online learning environments. Reading books or articles, watching lectures, educational movies, or PowerPoint presentations, as well as responding to questions, taking part in group discussions, and other interactive exercises, can all be a part of online courses. Teachers should complete online tasks and self-study as part of their 50 hours of continuing professional development. The DIKSHA portal provides four hours of knowledge and activities in each module under NISHTHA. According to their course hours, CPD should also include the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), CBSE, CIET, NCERT, State Open Schools, Universities (HRDCs), Centers under PMMMNMTT, and MOOCs.

Practices and Initiatives for Continuous Professional Development of Teacher-Educators

Various more tasks and initiatives are carried out for teachers' professional development in addition to online, offline, and remote learning. Among these activities are:

Practices and Initiatives for Continuous Professional Development of Teacher-Educators	
Criteria for Evaluation	Publishing presentation and papers (in respectable journals): • 3 hours (half a day) for a local or regional publication or presentation • 6 hours (1 day) for a nationwide publication or presentation • 12 hours (2 days) for a worldwide publication or presentation
Content Creation and Other Academic Assignments	 12 hours (2 days) for the construction of e-content, modules, books, chapters, and translations (for school education courses, including general subjects, in both Indian and foreign languages) Case studies, creative projects, and action research: 18 hours (3 days) 6-hour (1-day) field visit to an innovative or model school or community
Live Sessions and Discussions	 Three hours (half a day) of live sessions or discussions on the PM e-Vidya channel or others A live session or debate lasting at least an hour on the PM e-Vidya channel or others: six hours (1 day)
Resource/Expert Person	 Resource/Expert in a session (exchanging papers, experiences, or presenting at seminars, workshops, colloquiums, etc.): 3 hours (half a day) Three hours (half a day) are spent setting up papers for a class Assessing answer sheets as an examiner or acting as an outside examiner for practical or project work in accordance with schedules set by the state education board or CBSE: The nature of the work will determine the working hours, which will be determined by the relevant authority.

Significance of Continuous professional development (CPD) for strengthening the Capacity of Teacher-Educators

For teachers to improve their teaching strategies, stay current with the most recent developments in education, and expand their skills, they must engage in continuous professional development, or CPD. According to Srinivasacharlu (2019), Singh & Gupta (2020), Misra & Tyagi (2021), and Sabar (2024), the following are some reasons why CPD is important for teachers:



Figure 1. Significance of Continuous professional development (CPD)

- Improving Teaching Skills: Teachers can improve their teaching methods, classroom management skills, and instructional techniques with the support of CPD programs. Teachers must modify their teaching strategies in response to changes in learner understanding, technology, material, and new pedagogical paradigms. Continuous professional growth is essential for integrating these new pedagogies successfully.
- Staying Updated: Teaching strategies are constantly changing due to innovation in research and technology. Teachers can stay up to date on the newest developments and trends in their subject areas with the support of CPD. Professional development is crucial for continuous learning since it's critical for educators to stay updated of new ideas and current material as knowledge in every field rises.
- *Enhancing Subject Knowledge*: CPD helps teachers become more knowledgeable about the areas they teach, which helps them explain difficult ideas and give more thorough and understandable answers to students' queries.
- *Encouraging Lifelong Learning*: Through CPD, educators foster an atmosphere in the classroom where curiosity and a search for knowledge are respected and encouraged by setting an example for their students about the significance of lifelong learning.
- Addressing Diverse Learning Needs: To ensure that every student has the chance to succeed, CPD assists teachers in creating ways to address the many learning needs of their students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities.
- *Increasing Confidence and Motivation:* Teachers gain confidence in their ability to teach as they develop their skills via continuing professional development. Their motivation, joy, and general satisfaction with their work all increase as a result of this confidence.

- *Promoting Reflective Practice:* Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their classroom experiences and teaching strategies through CPD. Through introspection and feedback from mentors or peers, educators may identify areas for development and refine their pedagogical approaches.
- Strengthening Professional Networks: Teachers can interact with peers, share ideas, and work together
 on projects at CPD activities like conferences and workshops, which promote resource sharing and
 professional collaborations.
- Learn New ICT Skills: Both digital and traditional media are essential to contemporary schooling. Teachers must adjust to circumstances where students may be better educated, but not always with high-quality knowledge, as the flow of information grows. Teachers need to acquire new ICT skills and learn how to successfully manage synchronous and asynchronous online learning settings in order to deal with this. The key to staying up with these developments is professional growth.
- Enhancing Student Performance: The improvement of student outcomes is the primary objective of Continuous Professional Development. A teacher who possesses current information and good teaching techniques foster an environment where students are more likely to succeed academically and acquire the skills they will need in the future.

Issues and Challenges in implementing Continuous Professional Development for Teachers

The following are some of the primary issues and challenges in implementing Continuous Professional Development for Teachers into practice:

- Insufficient infrastructure, such as inadequate training facilities, outdated technology, and limited access to digital resources, can hinder the effective implementation of professional development programs. Without the necessary physical and technological support, teachers may struggle to engage with training materials, limiting the success of CPD initiatives and their ability to foster meaningful change in classroom practices (Yaqub et al., 2020; Pasique & Maguate, 2023).
- Lesson planning, grading, and other administrative duties are common burdens for teachers, providing little free time for professional growth. Low participation or minimal involvement in training programs can result from the difficulty of balancing classroom duties with continuing professional development (CPD) (Tyagi & Misra, 2021; Pasique & Maguate, 2023).
- Limited financial resources can restrict access to high-quality CPD opportunities, particularly in underfunded schools. This affects the ability to hire expert trainers, organize workshops, and provide necessary materials or technology for effective learning (Yaqub et al., 2020; Zindi & Sibanda, 2023).
- Accessing CPD might be difficult for teachers in rural or remote areas because of factors including program availability, difficulty of transportation, or geographic remoteness. As a result, opportunities for professional development vary by region.

- Some educators may be unwilling to adopt new teaching approaches, technological advancements, or educational changes since they are addicted to using more conventional methods. Fear of the unknown or insecurity when using new abilities are common causes of this unwillingness.
- CPD programs frequently lack follow-up activities, mentorship, or coaching to reinforce learning. Without continuous support, teachers may struggle to implement new strategies effectively, leading to minimal long-term impact on classroom practices (Yaqub et al., 2020; Zindi & Sibanda, 2023).
- CPD sessions frequently focus on theoretical information without offering useful strategies that
 educators can use right away in the classroom. Professional development initiatives become less
 relevant and effective as a result of these inconsistencies (Singh & Gupta, 2020; Leonardi et al., 2022).
- The increasing shift towards online CPD requires reliable technology infrastructure, which may not be available to all teachers. Limited digital literacy, poor internet connectivity, and a lack of access to devices can hinder participation and engagement in online learning (Yaqub et al., 2020; Pasique & Maguate, 2023).
- In order to make sure that training programs stay in line with their goals and meet the various needs of learners, effective monitoring is an ongoing activity. Frequent evaluation makes program implementation more efficient and flexible to changing educational demands by tracking progress, identifying gaps, and facilitating timely changes (Zindi & Sibanda, 2023).

To overcome these obstacles, policymakers, educational leaders, and practitioners must work together to develop adaptable, situation-specific, and long-term CPD models.

Strategies and Recommendations to address CPD Challenges in Alignment with NEP-2020

To address the challenges related to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers in alignment with the National Education Policy 2020, it is important to adopt strategies that support teacher growth and enhance their skills in a way that aligns with the policy's objectives. Here are some key strategies and recommendations:

- Make use of digital resources for CPD to offer accessible, individualized, and adaptable learning opportunities. As envisioned in NEP-2020, encourage the use of e-learning modules, online webinars, and virtual workshops to assist teachers in acquiring new skills, particularly in areas like digital literacy and artificial intelligence.
- Adopt customized CPD plans based on teachers' needs and career stages instead than using one-size-fits-all methods. To ensure that teachers are ready for the new competences and pedagogies described in the NEP-2020, create individualized development pathways that meet their needs at various levels.
- To guarantee continued improvement, CPD activities should include regular assessment and feedback. Use feedback tools, such as peer evaluations and self-assessment, to gauge CPD success and make sure it aligns with NEP-2020 goals and teacher requirements.

- CPD should emphasize holistic teacher development, which is an essential component of NEP-2020, in addition to academic or subject-specific training. To make sure that teachers help children become well-rounded, integrate modules that foster critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and leadership.
- The pedagogical strategies described in NEP-2020, including competency-based education, experiential learning, and the development of 21st-century skills, should to be reflected in CPD. Make sure teachers are prepared to implement active learning, project-based learning, and formative assessment strategies in the classroom by providing seminars on these topics.
- In order to support CPD at the institutional level and create the educational environment, head teachers and principals should receive more leadership training. School leaders should have access to focused CPD programs that highlight NEP-2020 implementation, particularly in areas like digital literacy, inclusive education, and curricular modifications.
- Establish a comprehensive national CPD framework that offers a consistent structure for quality assurance and directs teachers' professional development. In maintain with the objectives of NEP-2020, the framework will establish specific guidelines for the accreditation, certification, and acknowledgment of CPD activities.
- To assist teacher professional development, schools and higher education institutions should strengthen their relationships with one another. To help teachers keep updated with the changing educational landscape, collaborate with colleges and universities to create CPD programs that are in line with the most recent pedagogical trends and research in education.

By implementing these strategies and suggestions, CPD programs will more accurately reflect the goals and objectives of NEP-2020, ensuring that educators have the skills and knowledge needed to revolutionize the educational system.

Conclusion

CPD is vital for enhancing education quality by strengthening teacher educators' capacity. It improves teaching skills, updates subject knowledge, fosters lifelong learning, and enhances student performance, aligning with NEP 2020 goals. As highlighted, CPD plays a pivotal role in improving teaching skills, updating subject knowledge, fostering lifelong learning, and ultimately enhancing student performance. In line with the objectives outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, it gives teachers the resources they need to meet a variety of learning demands, adopt new technology, and adjust to changing paradigms in education. However, there are a number of obstacles that must be overcome for CPD to be implemented successfully, such as a lack of resources, time limits, reluctance to change, and technological barriers. A multifaceted strategy involving practitioners, educational leaders, and policymakers is needed to address these issues. In the conclusion, CPD is crucial for ensuring high-quality education, assisting with national development, and training teachers to meet the demands of the twenty-first century.

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