

Continuous Professional Development of School Teachers under NEP 2020: From Policy to Practice

Dr. Jaki Mumtaj¹, Dr. Abdul Raheem²

¹Associate Professor, MANUU-CTE-Bhopal

²Professor, MANUU-CTE-Bhopal

Email: jaki.mumtaj09@manuu.edu.in

Abstract

The quality of school education depends not entirely on the existing competencies and motivations but on the continuous growth of the teachers. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) places teachers at the centre of educational reform and underscores the need for structured and continuous professional development throughout a teacher's career. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) refers to the sustained, lifelong process of learning and skill-building that enables teachers to remain updated with innovations in pedagogy, curriculum, assessment, technology and learner diversity. In the context of NEP 2020, CPD is not simply optional but is a strategic imperative for actualising the Policy's vision of holistic, future-ready education. This paper explores the need of CPD for school teachers, outlines its importance, discusses benefits, and situates the discussion in the context of NEP 2020 including its provisions, implementation, challenges and implications for teachers, institutions and policy-makers. Recommendations for effective CPD under NEP 2020 are also presented.

Key Words: Professional Development, School Teacher, National Education Policy 2020, Teacher Training, Educational Reform

Introduction: Teachers are the key agents in any educational ecosystem. For schools to flourish, for learning outcomes to improve and for students to thrive in a rapidly changing world, teachers must themselves continually learn, adapt and grow. Historically, teacher education in many jurisdictions has had a discrete "initial training" phase, followed by occasional in-service workshops. However, the pace of change in curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment, digital technology, learner profiles and globalisation demands that teachers engage in continuous professional development (CPD) – a lifelong, responsive and reflective process.

In India, the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) recognises this imperative explicitly. The policy states that teachers “will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their profession,” (para 5.15). Further, the policy articulates that each teacher is expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year, driven by their own interests. Thus, CPD is woven into the very fabric of NEP 2020 as a lever for quality improvement in school education.

In the context of school teachers in India, CPD has become crucial not only because of evolving policy aspirations but because of the changing demands of the profession. The teachers are required to navigate multi-grade classrooms, integrate the technology into classroom practices, strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN), and adopt competency-based, inclusive, experiential and arts integrated teaching-learning approaches. Emphasis on storytelling, adaptive pedagogy and formative assessment further expands the range of skills and practices expected of teachers. NEP 2020 acknowledges these changing demands and positions CPD as a key mechanism and core support for strengthening teachers’ professional capacity and meaningful improvement in teaching-learning practices.

The present paper examines the need for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) among school teachers in the context of NEP 2020, its significance and potential benefits and the way through which it can be effectively implemented. It further explores key implementation challenges, the implications for teacher and educational institutions, and the recommendations for strengthening CPD as a sustainable and meaningful component of teachers’ professional development in the NEP 2020 era.

The Need for CPD for School Teachers under NEP 2020:

1. **Rapid Changes in Curriculum and Pedagogy:** NEP 2020 introduces a number of foundational shifts: the 5+3+3+4 curricular structure, emphasis on foundational literacy & numeracy, flexibility, multidisciplinary learning, vocational integration, competency-based education and the use of technology. Teachers must update their knowledge and skills to align with these changes. Without CPD, many teachers may continue to rely on traditional methods, making it difficult to implement the new pedagogical approaches mandated by the policy.
2. **Emerging Technologies and Digital Pedagogy:** As schools increasingly integrate digital learning platforms, blended and hybrid modes, and tools for formative assessment, teachers must build capacity in digital pedagogy, online resources, student engagement online and adaptive technologies. NEP 2020 emphasises that teachers must become facilitators in digital and hybrid environments.
3. **Diverse Learner Profiles and Inclusive Education:** India’s classrooms are becoming more diverse—linguistically, culturally, socio-economically, and in terms of learning needs (including children with special educational needs). Teachers need ongoing knowledge of inclusive pedagogy, differentiated instruction, multilingual education, socio-emotional learning and culturally responsive teaching. CPD helps them develop these competencies. NEP 2020 emphasises inclusive and joyful learning environments.

4. **Assessment Reforms and Competency-Based Learning:** Traditional high-stakes, rote-based assessment is being replaced with formative, adaptive and competency-based assessment. Teachers need to understand how to design and use formative assessments, track learning outcomes, adapt teaching, give feedback, and use data to guide instruction. NEP 2020 highlights the need for teacher training in these areas.
5. **Professional Autonomy and Leadership Roles:** With NEP 2020 granting greater autonomy to schools and teachers, school leaders and principals are expected to engage in CPD (50 hours annually) for leadership and management skills, pedagogy content knowledge and for mentoring others. This need arises because teacher leadership and distributed leadership models are becoming more central.
6. **Lifelong Learning and Renewal of the Profession:** The teaching profession cannot remain static rather it is very much dynamic. For increasing teacher motivation, retention, innovation and professional identity, CPD is indispensable and crucial. NEP 2020 positions teacher professional development as lifelong, moving beyond one-off workshops to continuous renewal. For example: “teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their profession.”

In nutshell, the need for CPD emerges from the dynamic and ever changing demands of the teaching profession under NEP 2020. Without sustained continuous professional development, teachers cannot deliver the true vision of the policy effectively.

Importance of CPD for School Teachers: Given the needs outlined above, the importance of CPD can be articulated at different levels—teacher level, school/institution level and system/ regulatory level:

1. At the Teacher Level

- **Skill Enhancement and Currency:** Teachers need to update their subject knowledge, pedagogical techniques, digital skills and classroom management practices. CPD enables them to keep pace with change and remain effective.
- **Professional Confidence and Motivation:** Ongoing learning builds teachers’ confidence and fosters a sense of professional growth. It signals that their career and competence matter.
- **Reflection and Improvement:** CPD provides opportunities for reflective practice, peer exchange, mentoring and adaptation of new ideas. This allows teachers to critically examine and improve their own practice.
- **Career Progression:** Under NEP 2020, career management and progression (CMP) for teachers is tied to performance, CPD hours, peer review and innovation in teaching.

2. At the School/Institution Level

- **Quality of Teaching and Learning:** A well-trained and continually developing teaching staff is key to improved student outcomes, particularly for foundational literacy and numeracy and other complex competencies.

- **Innovation and Change Readiness:** Schools implementing NEP 2020 reforms (multi-age learning, flexible curriculum, integration of arts/sports, experiential learning) require teachers who are ready and capable of innovation. CPD is the mechanism to build this readiness.
- **Leadership & Distributed Capacity:** Schools need teacher-leaders, mentors and complex leaders who can support peers, lead change and model best practices. CPD for principals and teacher leaders is critical.

3. At the System/Policy Level

- **Scalability of Reforms:** The success of NEP 2020 ultimately depends on teacher capacity across states/UTs. CPD is essential for scaling up reforms consistently.
- **Standardisation and Quality Assurance:** Through CPD, regulatory bodies (such as National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)) can ensure common baseline competencies, better alignment with policy objectives and standard frameworks for teacher development.
- **Adaptation to Future Needs:** Continuous professional development ensures that the system remains adaptive—capable of responding to emerging educational trends, technologies, socio-economic shifts and global challenges.

Thus, CPD is not just a “nice-to-have” but a foundational pillar for realizing the NEP 2020 vision of quality, inclusive and future-ready schooling.

Benefits of CPD for School Teachers under NEP 2020: When effectively implemented, CPD offers multiple tangible and intangible benefits. These can be grouped as follows:

1. Improved Teaching Practice and Student Learning Outcomes

- Teachers who engage in CPD develop stronger pedagogical content knowledge, are more adept at designing learner-centred activities, integrating arts and sports, applying experiential methods and differentiated instruction (all emphasised in NEP 2020). This leads to improved student engagement, deeper learning and better outcomes in foundational literacy, numeracy and higher-order thinking.
- CPD that focuses on formative assessment, adaptive assessment and feedback strengthens teachers’ ability to track student progress and respond appropriately-leading to better learning trajectories.

2. Capacity to Implement NEP 2020 Reforms

- Through CPD, teachers acquire competencies needed for NEP 2020 – such as multilingual pedagogy, competency-based education, use of digital platforms, experiential and inclusive approaches. Without CPD, implementation risks are superficial or inconsistent.
- Teachers become agents of change; rather than being a passive recipients of reform, they become active participants in shaping the learning environment. This aligns with NEP 2020’s emphasis and thrust towards teacher agency, professional autonomy and recognition of the teachers as key for educational transformation.

3. Professional Growth and Recognition

- The CPD of teachers also contributes to their career advancement. NEP 2020 links CPD hours, peer review and professional contribution with career management and progression. This provides teachers with incentives and a sense of professional path.
- Through CPD, the teachers gain opportunities for networking, collaboration, international exposure and sharing of best practices through workshops, seminars and symposia. This also enhances professional identity, self-esteem and motivation of the engaged teachers.

4. Innovation and Reflective Practice

- The CPD enables teachers to experiment with new pedagogies, integrate technology in meaningful ways, reflect on their best practices and iterate. Over time, this fosters a culture of continuous meaningful improvement rather than stagnation.
- The schools that actively engage teachers in CPD, contribute to broader communities of practice, fostering peer learning, collaboration and knowledge sharing. This creates a multiplier effect, extending the benefits of professional development beyond individual classrooms and strengthening the wider school community.

5. Adaptability to Change and Resilience

- In an ever growing world, where education is increasingly disrupted by technology, pandemics, socio-economic shifts, and changing job markets, the CPD helps teachers stay resilient and adaptable in and outside the classrooms.
- Teachers who engage in CPD feel more confident in handling hybrid learning, remote teaching, mixed ability classrooms and new curricula – which NEP 2020 emphasises.

6. Improved School Culture and Institutional Strength

- When CPD is embedded across the school, it elevates the culture of learning among teachers. Schools become centres of professional growth, reflective practice, collaboration and innovation. This aligns with NEP 2020's vision of schools as vibrant learning organisations.
- Principals and school administrators who themselves actively engage in CPD can lead more effectively – the improving governance, resource management, school-community linkages and teacher mentoring. NEP 2020 emphasises CPD for principals and school complex leaders (50 hours minimum) under para 5.16.

7. Greater Equity and Inclusion

- With CPD geared towards inclusive pedagogy, multilingual education, socio-emotional learning and learner diversity, teachers become better equipped to serve disadvantaged, marginalised and multilingual learners. This helps the educational systems to become more equitable and directly aligned with NEP 2020 goals.
- The teachers trained professionally covering wider range of skills pertaining to arts, sports, storytelling, experiential learning, bring richer and more engaging learning environments - benefiting all the learners, including those who may otherwise struggle in conventional models.

Thus, the benefits of CPD for school teachers under NEP 2020 are substantial and multi-layered—impacting classroom practice, teacher motivation, institutional culture and system-wide reform.

Provisions, Implementation and Challenges - CPD in NEP 2020:

Provisions under NEP 2020: The policy lays out clear provisions for Continuous Professional Development:

- Paragraph 5.15: “Teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their professions. These will be offered in multiple modes ... Each teacher will be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year for their own professional development, driven by their own interests.”
- Paragraph 5.16: “School Principals and school complex leaders will have similar modular leadership/management workshops ... Such leaders will also be expected to participate in 50 hours or more of CPD modules per year, covering leadership and management, as well as content and pedagogy ...”
- The policy emphasises multiple modes – local, regional, state, national, international workshops and online teacher development modules; development of online platforms for sharing best practice; and systematic coverage of latest pedagogies regarding foundational literacy & numeracy, formative and adaptive assessment, competency-based learning, experiential learning, arts-integrated, sports-integrated, storytelling-based approaches.

Implementation Efforts: Some of the implementation steps include:

- The digital infrastructure platform DIKSHA has been used to deliver CPD modules for teachers and school heads.
- The integrated teacher-training programme NISHTHA (National Initiative for School Heads’ and Teachers’ Holistic Advancement) delivers CPD for elementary teachers via NCERT, emphasising continuous professional development.
- States and UTs are encouraged to build local platforms, networks, mentoring systems and communities of practice for teacher CPD.

Challenges and Barriers: Despite the strong policy framework, several challenges remain in implementing CPD effectively:

1. Infrastructure and Access

- Many schools, especially in rural and remote areas, face inadequate digital connectivity, lack of devices, irregular power supply; this hampers online CPD delivery.
- Teachers may not have sufficient time or organisational support to devote themselves to the required 50 hours/year of CPD.

2. Awareness and Motivation

- Some teachers may not be sufficiently aware of CPD requirements or may perceive CPD as a formality rather than a meaningful opportunity for growth.

- Lack of incentives, recognition or career linkage may reduce motivation to engage deeply in CPD.

3. Relevance and Quality of CPD Programmes

- The quality of CPD modules (content, methodology, relevance to classrooms) can vary; there may be mismatch between training and actual classroom needs or contexts.
- One-size-fits-all modules may not address local languages, cultures, learner diversity or multi-grade classrooms effectively.

4. Time and Workload Constraints

- Teachers already have substantial workloads; finding sustained time for CPD, reflection, peer collaboration and follow-through can be difficult.
- Schools may not allocate sufficient time for CPD within the academic calendar or the teacher's schedule.

5. Institutional Culture and Support

- CPD is effective when embedded within a culture of continuous learning and peer support. Many schools may lack such supportive culture, mentoring arrangements, leadership commitment or monitoring mechanisms.
- The linking of CPD to career progression, recognition and professional status remains a challenge in many states.

6. Monitoring, Recognition and Sustainability

- Monitoring the completion of 50 hours CPD and the impact of CPD on teaching practice is complex.
- Sustaining high-quality CPD programmes, updating them, contextualising them and maintaining platforms (such as DIKSHA) require ongoing funding and institutional commitment.

7. Localization and Language Issues

- Given India's linguistic and cultural diversity, CPD modules need to be available in regional languages, adapted to local contexts, and cognizant of multilingual classrooms. Not all modules may presently meet these requirements.

Thus, while NEP 2020 articulates CPD demands clearly, translating them into meaningful practice across India's varied school contexts is a major task.

Recommendations for Effective CPD Implementation under NEP 2020: To maximise the need, importance and benefits of CPD, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Develop a Structured CPD Framework with Flexibility

- State/UT-level education departments should develop CPD frameworks that align with the 50-hour minimum but allow teachers choice in content (subject matter, pedagogy, digital, inclusive education etc.), delivery mode (online, offline, blended), duration and timing. This aligns with NEP 2020's call for teacher-driven CPD.

- Modularisation is key: short micro-modules, peer learning groups, reflection sessions, in-class action research, should complement longer workshops.

2. Ensure Quality & Contextual Relevance

- CPD modules must be aligned to classroom realities: multi-grade instruction, regional language contexts, foundational literacy/numeracy needs, blended learning, inclusive pedagogy.
- Peer review, feedback loops, mentoring and communities of practice should be built into CPD programmes so teachers can reflect and adapt their own practice.
- Content should be updated regularly to reflect new research, technology, pedagogy and local context.

3. Leverage Digital Platforms and Blended Delivery

- Platforms like DIKSHA should be expanded, made more interactive, available in regional languages, offline accessible where connectivity is weak.
- Blended CPD (online + in-school peer interaction + classroom-based implementation) is effective.
- Teachers should be equipped with digital literacy and given access/devices to participate meaningfully.

4. Embed CPD in School Schedules and Provide Time & Incentives

- Schools should institutionalise CPD time (for example, weekly or monthly professional learning communities, peer review groups) so CPD is not an “add-on” but part of regular work.
- Incentives such as certification, recognition, linkage with career progression, salary increments or awards can increase motivation for participation. NEP 2020’s CMP (Career Management & Progression) framework should be leveraged.
- Monitoring systems should track CPD hours, completion, teacher feedback and impact.

5. Promote a Culture of Continuous Learning and Peer Collaboration

- Encourage teacher-led communities of practice, mentoring by experienced peers, reflection journals and action research in schools.
- Principals and school leaders must model CPD participation and create a collegial environment where teachers share best practice and innovations.
- Networking across schools, regional clusters, international exchanges can create professional growth ecosystems.
- **Focus on Leadership and Capacity Building of School Heads**
- Under NEP 2020, school heads and complex leaders need 50+ hours CPD annually too (para 5.16). Leadership modules must cover pedagogy, instructional leadership, change management, school culture, teacher mentoring and data-driven practices.
- School leaders should facilitate CPD in their schools: identifying needs, organising sessions, supporting peer learning, monitoring outcomes.

6. Ensure Equity & Accessibility

- Special attention should be paid to ensuring CPD access for teachers in rural, remote, tribal areas including multilingual modules, offline/low-bandwidth options and mobile-friendly resources.
- CPD must encompass inclusive education, special needs pedagogy, multilingual/ mother-tongue instruction, gender-sensitivity, socio-emotional learning so that teachers are prepared for all learners.

7. Research, Evaluation & Feedback Mechanisms

- Establish mechanisms to evaluate CPD programmes: What percentage of teachers complete 50 hours? What changes occur in classroom practice? Do student outcomes improve?
- Use feedback loops to improve CPD offerings based on teacher experience, classroom observations and student performance data.
- Generate and disseminate case studies of effective CPD implementation under NEP 2020 for peer learning across states/districts.

8. Sustainable Funding and Institutionalisation

- CPD must not depend solely on one-time grants. States/UTs, schools and institutions should budget for CPD, build it into teacher development plans, and partner with teacher education institutions (TEIs), SCERTs, DIETs, NGOs for sustained support.
- Institutional linkages between schools and teacher education/research institutions should enable CPD to draw on the latest research and practice.

9. Recognition of Teacher Agency

- CPD should respect teacher choice and professional interests: allow teachers to select CPD modules aligned with their context, subject, stage and career goals. This increases ownership, relevance and motivation.
- Schools should recognise and reward teacher-led innovation, sharing of best practices, mentoring of peers – aligning with NEP 2020's vision of teacher as lifelong learner, collaborator and innovator.

Conclusion: Continuous Professional Development for school teachers is not optional rather it is vital if the ambitious vision of NEP 2020 is to be realised. The CPD helps the teachers to remain current, competent, confident and connected. The policy's stipulation of spending at least 50 hours per year for CPD signals its seriousness, but, the number of hours alone does not guarantee impact, rather, how CPD is designed, delivered, embedded and sustained will determine whether reforms translate into improved teaching and learning.

The continuous professional development have multifaceted exposure as for the teachers, CPD means growth, renewal, professional agency and improved practice whereas for the schools, it means enhanced culture, innovation, better outcomes. Further for the system, it implies scalable, equitable reform aligned to 21st century needs. The benefits are many folded, but so too are the challenges ahead. Timely and appropriate attention to infrastructural requirement alongside motivation, relevance, leadership, organizational culture and evaluation is essential for effective professional development.

If the institutions and schools allocate the time, resources and trust as per the need, and if teachers themselves engage actively in true spirit, CPD can only then become a powerful driver for transformation of school education under NEP 2020. The journey ahead requires sustained commitment, collaboration and reflection-and then only, the destination promises a more effective, engaged and future-ready teaching force and schooling system.

References

- Chaturvedi, A. "The Professional Development of Teachers: Challenges and Opportunities for Educational Transformation in the Context of NEP 2020." *International Journal for Research Publication & Seminar* (2022). (jrpsjournal.in)
- Walia, P. & Walia, P. "Continuous Professional Development: A Policy Analysis in Indian Perspective." *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, Vol 6, No 7 (2022). (Positive Psychology Journal)
- "National Education Policy 2020." Government of India, Ministry of Education. (Department of School Education)
- "Governance and Capacity Building of Teachers for Quality Education." Government of India – Thematic Session (2022). (Education Ministry of India)
- "Continuous Professional Development (CPD): School Education, Pre-primary to Senior Secondary including the development of attitude, skill and knowledge." *IER-NCERT* (2023). (ejournals.ncert.gov.in)
- https://in.pearson.com/our-story/blog/2021/09/nep-2020--challenges-and-opportunities-for-teachers.html?utm_source
- https://shikshan.org/nep-2020/teachers/?utm_source
- https://www.globalscienceresearchjournals.org/articles/continuous-professional-development-and-teacher-education-post-implementation-of-national-education-policy-2020-102409.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com

Cite this Article:

Mumtaz Jaki , Raheem Abdul, **Continuous Professional Development of School Teachers under NEP2020: From Policy to Practice** .Adhigamy International Journal of Modern Research Perspectives,ISSN:3139-7522(Online),Volume01,Issue03,Pp.43-52,Sept.-2026.Journal, URL:<https://adhigamy.com/>,

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.67985/aijmrp.v1i3.05>

This is an Open Access Journal / article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License CC BY-NC-ND 3.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited. All rights reserved.



Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The views, findings, and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the author(s). The publisher and editorial team are not responsible for any errors, claims, or consequences arising from the use of the published content