



Research Article

**Investigating the Role of Teachers in Supporting Students Through Transitions
Brought by the National Education Policy 2020**

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ABSTRACT

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) introduces major structural and pedagogical reforms within India's school and higher-education systems—such as the 5+3+3+4 school structure, foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) mission, multidisciplinary and flexible curricula, assessment reform, teacher professional development and digital integration. This paper examines the critical role of teachers in helping students navigate the transitions engendered by these reforms. Specifically, it explores how teachers' roles are changing, what support they require to effectively guide students through change (curriculum, assessment, pedagogy, technology), and what constraints hamper that role. Drawing on literature on teacher professional development and transformation under NEP 2020, the paper offers a framework of teacher responsibilities and enablers/barriers in the context of student transition, and provides recommendations to strengthen teacher support systems. The analysis finds that while NEP 2020 rightly places teachers at the centre of change, success will depend on robust in-service training, domain-specific mentoring, time and resource allocation, as well as systemic support for teacher well-being and adaptive capacity.

Keywords: NEP 2020, sustainability education, global citizenship, holistic development

Introduction

Education reforms invariably place demands on both students and teachers. The 2020 policy framework of NEP 2020 marks one of India's most sweeping reforms: from restructuring schooling into the 5+3+3+4 pattern, emphasising early childhood care and education (ECCE) and foundational skills, to introducing flexible, multidisciplinary curricula, competency-based assessments, and digital/ blended learning possibilities. These shifts create significant transitions for students: transitioning from rote to active learning pedagogy, from rigid curricula to flexible pathways, from summative exams to continuous assessment, and from classroom-only to blended/digital modes. In these transitions, the teacher becomes a key mediator: helping students navigate new expectations, new modes of learning, new assessment styles, and new digital tools.

Thus this paper investigates the multifaceted role of teachers in supporting students through the transitions triggered by NEP 2020, by exploring (a) how the teacher's role is evolving, (b) what specific support tasks teachers must perform to assist students in transition, (c) what enablers and barriers affect their ability to do so, and (d) recommendations to strengthen teacher capacity and systems. The significance lies in recognising that reforms cannot materialize purely via policy documents — the success depends on teacher agency, readiness and the support ecosystem surrounding teachers.

The existing literature highlights that teacher transformation is central to implementing NEP 2020. For example, Lalzawmliana et al. (2023) identify challenges and opportunities for teacher professional development under NEP 2020: inadequate funding, limited resources, stakeholder support lack,

and resistance to change are notable. Another study by Pitla Raju & Veeraiah (2025) explores continuous professional development, digital platforms and mentorship under NEP 2020, noting that structural limitations (regional inequalities, resource disparities) hamper realization of the policy's teacher-development goals. Additionally, a review article "Transformation in the Teachers' Role According to NEP 2020" (2024) outlines how teachers must shift roles: from content-transmitters to facilitators, mentors and curriculum-designers, with demands on technology, student engagement, multidisciplinary and lifelong learning.

These analyses underscore that as students face new transitions (curriculum changes, assessment changes, pedagogical changes, blended/digital learning), teachers must adapt accordingly—not only to deliver content but to scaffold student transitions. However, there is less empirical work explicitly mapping

the teacher's "student-transition support" role in the NEP context (e.g., helping students adapt to new learning pathways, managing anxiety of change, bridging digital divides, guiding flexible subject choices). This gap motivates this investigation.

Methodology

This paper uses a **qualitative-analytical** methodology drawing on secondary literature and policy documents to conceptualize the teacher's role in student transitions under NEP 2020. Key sources include peer-reviewed articles on teacher professional development and NEP 2020, policy documents of NEP, and reports on teacher readiness and digital integration. The paper synthesizes thematic elements from the literature to develop a framework of teacher responsibilities and identifies enablers and barriers. While no primary empirical data were collected, the synthesis is useful for guiding future empirical research and policy design.

The focus is on K–12 schooling transitions (including foundational stage, preparatory stage) although aspects of higher education teacher roles are also referenced insofar as they reflect the shifting landscape. The transitions considered include: pedagogical (rote→inquiry/competency), curricular (rigid→flexible/multidisciplinary), assessment (summative→continuous/competency based), digital/blended (traditional classroom→hybrid), and structural (10+2→5+3+3+4). The teacher's support for students in navigating each transition is delineated.

Analysis: Role of Teachers in Supporting Student Transitions

- **Facilitator of Pedagogical Transition** Under NEP 2020, the emphasis shifts from rote memorisation to inquiry-based, experiential, discussion-based, learner-centred pedagogy. Teachers play the role of

facilitator: scaffolding students to adopt active learning habits, guiding inquiry, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. For example, the transformation review article notes that teachers should promote self-directed learning and shift from “sage on the stage” to “guide by the side”. Teachers support students in globally unfamiliar modes: group work, project work, interdisciplinary tasks, reflection and metacognition.

Specific tasks include: designing classroom activities that encourage exploration; helping students develop metacognitive skills (how to learn rather than what to learn); diagnosing students' foundational gaps and providing differentiated support; creating safe classroom environments where students transition from

passive receivers to active learners.

Teachers thereby help students make the pedagogical transition—often stressful, especially in early grades—and reduce resistance or confusion by explicit orientation, scaffolding, feedback and continuous formative assessment.

- **Guide of Curricular and Pathway Transitions**

NEP 2020 introduces flexible curricular pathways: students may choose subjects across disciplinary boundaries, take vocational modules, have multiple entry/exit in higher education, and engage in experiential learning. Teachers assume the **guide/advisor** role: helping students understand new choices, advising on subject combinations, aligning learning to competencies and

interests, bridging between old and new systems.

For school level, teachers help students (and parents) understand the move to 5+3+3+4 structure (foundation, preparatory, middle, secondary) and how this may affect progression. They support transitions between stages—for example, students moving from foundational to preparatory stage require more conceptual learning; teachers help ensure readiness. This guidance role is critical when students face new curricula or assessment paradigms.

- **Assessment and Feedback Navigator**

A central reform in NEP 2020 is assessment reform: emphasis on continuous and comprehensive evaluation, formative assessment, reduced burden of board exams, and aptitude/competency-based

assessments. Teachers act as **navigators** through this transition for students: they explain to students how assessment is changing, prepare them for new formats (projects, portfolios, tasks, self/peer assessment), provide timely feedback aligned to competency progression, and help students develop self-assessment and reflective learning skills.

Teachers must also diagnose student learning trajectories and provide remediation/discussion to ensure students cope with the shift from one-time high stakes to ongoing assessment. The review of professional development strategies emphasises teacher readiness for blended assessments and digital assessment tools. **Digital/Blended Learning Facilitator** NEP emphasises the use of technology, digital

learning platforms, virtual labs, online resources and blended/hybrid learning. Teachers become **facilitators and mediators** of digital learning transitions: preparing students for using digital tools, guiding them through hybrid modes, ensuring equitable access, helping students navigate asynchronous/synchronous environments, and managing the digital divide.

For students unfamiliar with blended formats or lacking resources, teachers' role is vital for scaffolding: teaching digital literacy, monitoring engagement in online tasks, ensuring accessibility (offline substitutes if needed), integrating technology meaningfully (not just as substitution). The study on teacher readiness and digital integration under NEP indicates the importance of such capacity.

- **Mentor for Socio-Emotional and Equity Transitions** Transitions inevitably involve change-related stress: different learning formats, peer grouping, teacher roles, curricular demands, technology dependence. Teachers assume the role of **mentor and coach** to support students through socio-emotional transitions: helping them adjust to new pedagogy, relieve anxiety about changing assessment formats, guide peer collaboration, manage self-regulation, and maintain motivation. For disadvantaged students (rural, socio-economically weak), teachers work to ensure equity: monitoring participation, bridging foundational deficits, providing additional scaffolding, and motivating students to adapt to new expectations.

The literature underscores that capacity building needs to include pedagogies that account for student diversity and transitions.

- **Curriculum Designer and Continuous Practitioner** NEP 2020 envisages teachers as more autonomous and professionally engaged: from

merely delivering textbook content to designing flexible curricula, selecting pedagogy and assessments, collaborating in peer communities, engaging in professional learning, and adapting to changing contexts. The “curriculum designer scientist” role emphasised in the transformation review article highlights this. In transitions, this means that teachers continually adapt their practice to support students: adjusting pace, differentiating tasks, integrating interdisciplinary modules, reflecting on outcomes, and revising their strategies.

Enablers and Barriers in Teacher Support Role

Enablers:

- Robust in-service professional development (continuous, technology-enabled, peer mentoring) enabling teachers to cope with new roles.
- Institutional structures supporting teacher autonomy, collaboration, innovation (teacher learning communities).
- Adequate resources: digital infrastructure, learning materials aligned to new

pedagogy/assessment, time for teacher planning and reflection.

- Leadership support: school leadership recognising teacher role, providing scaffolding and capacity building.
- Focus on equity: targeting additional support to disadvantaged schools/students so teacher can allocate time/resources for transitions.

Barriers:

- Variation in readiness across states, schools and teachers: rural/underserved schools often lack infrastructure and resource support to implement NEP transitions.
- Heavy workload and time constraints: transitioning pedagogy, curriculum redesign, digital adaptation require time—often not built into teacher schedules.
- Resistance to change: some teachers may be accustomed to traditional rote methods and high-stakes exam culture; shifting mindset is challenging.
- Digital divide and connectivity/infrastructure gaps hamper blended learning support.

- Lack of socio-emotional/mentoring training: while teachers are expected to act as mentors, many may not have training in student counselling or transition-management.
- Inconsistent monitoring, unclear role-definitions, and absence of ongoing support (mentoring/coaching) for teachers.

Discussion

The role of teachers in supporting student transitions in NEP 2020 is multifaceted and pivotal. As students move through new structures, curricula, pedagogies, assessments and technologies, teachers anchor the change process. Without teachers' effective mediation, the reforms risk remaining theoretical rather than experiential for learners.

However, the literature suggests that while NEP's design acknowledges the teacher's central role, the real test lies in operationalising that role across diverse educational contexts. For example, in schools that can deploy professional development and digital tools effectively, teachers can guide transitions proactively; whereas in under-resourced locales, the burden on teachers magnifies and the student transition may falter.

Also salient is that teacher support for transitions is not only academic/pedagogical but holistic: bridging digital literacy for students, mentoring adjustment to new pathways/choices, diagnosing foundational gaps, differentiating instruction, and supporting socio-emotional well-being. This requires not only teacher skill but also school culture, time allocation, and systemic support.

Teacher professional development is thus a linchpin: training must go beyond content delivery to include new roles (mentor, designer, digital facilitator), pedagogical shifts (differentiation, formative feedback), technology integration, and student transition scaffolding. The gap in availability of sustained PD and mentoring is a barrier.

Further, the equity dimension is critical. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may struggle more with transitions (e.g., unfamiliarity with digital modes, less support at home, weaker foundational skills). Teachers in such contexts need greater resources and support to fulfil their transition-support role effectively; policies must allocate targeted support therein.

In effect, to realise the vision of NEP 2020, the teacher is both agent of reform and buffer for student transitions. Ensuring that

teachers are empowered, supported, and adequately resourced is vital for students to benefit from reform—especially during transition phases which can be disruptive.

Recommendations

Based on the above analysis, the following recommendations aim to strengthen the teacher's role in supporting students' transitions under NEP 2020:

- **Comprehensive Professional Development Programmes**
Develop continuous in-service training modules focused on new teacher roles (mentor, digital-facilitator, curriculum designer), pedagogy for transition management, differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and blended learning. Such PD should include peer-mentoring, communities of practice, and ongoing coaching rather than one-time workshops.
- **Dedicated Time and Planning Support for Teachers**
Allocate school-time for teacher collaboration, lesson-planning, reflection and redesign, so teachers can scaffold transitions (e.g., planning how to move students from one stage to next, adapting assessment formats, digital task

design). Ensure workload accounts for additional tasks involved.

- **Resource Provision and Infrastructure Support** Ensure schools—especially those in rural/underserved contexts—have required digital infrastructure, learning materials aligned with the new pedagogy, access to digital platforms (e.g., DIKSHA) and offline alternatives. Provide differentiated resource packs to support teachers in bridging foundational gaps and guiding transition.
- **Mentorship and Socio-emotional Support Structures** Equip teachers with mentoring skills and establish school-based systems for student transition support (e.g., peer mentoring, teacher counsellors, transition-orientation sessions for students). Teachers should be trained to assist students in socio-emotional adjustment to new pedagogies and pathways.
- **Equity-Focused Teacher Support** Deploy targeted support for teachers in under-resourced schools: extra training, reduced student-teacher ratio, additional teaching assistants, scaffolded curriculum modules. Teachers

working in these schools must be supported to manage higher transition burden.

- **Feedback Loops and Teacher Engagement in Implementation** Encourage teacher involvement in curriculum redesign, assessment format design, digital task development, enabling them to shape the transition for students. Provide ways for teacher feedback to reach policy/administration levels, so student-transition issues faced in classrooms inform further adaptation of NEP implementation.

Conclusion

The National Education Policy 2020 envisions a transformative educational ecosystem in India—one that shifts learning to a competency-based, inclusive, flexible, multidisciplinary paradigm. Such sweeping reform necessarily involves substantial transitions for students: in pedagogy, curriculum, assessments, technology and pathways. In this complex process, the teacher plays a central supportive role: mentor, facilitator, designer, navigator and mediator of change.

This paper has mapped how teachers support students through these transitions: by facilitating pedagogical change, guiding new curricular/pathway options, navigating

assessment shifts, enabling digital and blended learning, providing socio-emotional support, and engaging in continuous practice design. It has also identified crucial enablers (professional development, resources, institutional support) and barriers (infrastructure gaps, time constraints, resistance to change, inequity). For the reforms of NEP 2020 to translate into improved student outcomes, teacher capacity and support are imperative.

Future research should empirically examine how teachers in different contexts (urban/rural, well-resourced/under-resourced) perform the transition-support role, how students perceive teacher support during transitions, and which teacher practices most strongly correlate with successful student adjustment and learning under the new policy. From a policy perspective, investments in teacher readiness and support will likely yield high returns—not only in teacher efficacy but in enabling students to thrive through a period of major systemic change.

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