

A Study of School Teacher's Perspective on National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) released in 2020 has been the topic of much public debate ever since the draft of the same was circulated in the wider public in 2019. Responses to the policy have been mixed with the policy being hailed as a commendable reform on one side and critics questioning the policy for its commitment to universal and equitable education on the other. Much of these deliberations in the public forums, however, have been confined to discussions amongst academicians and scholars. Given that teachers are key stakeholders in the educational reforms, the present study attempted to find out school teachers' understanding of the NEP 2020 policy and their perception and opinion of the same. The research is broadly rooted in critical theory and the methodology is mixed methods research. Data was collected from 151 school teachers through the use of an online questionnaire. The analysis of the data is presented in four broad themes – 'early childhood care and education', 'curriculum and pedagogy', 'assessment', 'governance and systemic issues'. The findings reveal varying degrees of agreement of school teachers on these aspects of the NEP 2020 policy. Triangulation with qualitative data highlights teachers' apprehensions with respect to implementation of the policy. Statistically, no significant differences were found in the opinions of government and private school teachers.

Keywords: National Education Policy 2020; mixed methods research; perception of school teachers

Introduction

National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) was approved by the Union Cabinet on 29 July 2020. The long overdue policy that comes after a gap of three decades (the last national policy being National Policy on Education (NPE 1986), which was subsequently revised in 1992), is meant to address the challenges of the twenty first century. The process for the formulation of the policy had been initiated way back in 2015 and a comprehensive draft was proposed in 2019 on which the Government of India called for nationwide

suggestions and comments. The draft policy generated an overwhelming response from the public. The final policy, which has a few major departures from the draft policy, was approved in July 2020.

The final NEP 2020 policy also generated mixed response from the academia and the public. While on the one hand several institutions plunged into organising webinars and online workshops to unravel the policy for the various stakeholders, academics took to writing in the print and social media besides broadcasting their opinions via videos

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and podcasts. The responses to the policy in this public discourse have been mixed with extreme opinions¹ being expressed in hailing the policy as a commendable effort or critiquing it on various accounts. The policy has been applauded for numerous initiatives prominent of which are: according 'emphasis on early childhood care and education'; 'mother tongue/local language as the medium of instruction'; 'focus on foundational literacy and early numeracy'; 'rearrangement of curricular structure'; 'pedagogical reforms' and for highlighting the 'need for digital education'. However, on the flip side of this commendation is the view of the critics who argue that the layered policy document is contentious. Hence, there has been little agreement on the effectiveness of the proposed reforms in the public discourse. To cite an example, the inclusion of the age group 3-6 years in the ambit of school education has been welcomed as commendable reform especially since the Right to Education Act 2009 does not include children in this age bracket; yet the critics allege that the policy's silence on the extension of the RtE 2009 in this context is ominous (Right to Education Forum, 2020). Critics have also urged that the policy be understood as being situated in the broader socio-political economic context and the commitment of the policy towards universal and equitable access to education be examined through a nuanced analysis of the various proposals made in the policy (Batra, 2020; Govinda, 2020; Jha and Parvati, 2020).

Much of the debates and deliberations made on the NPE 2020 in the public discourse have remained confined to views from academicians, scholars and intellectuals mostly in the field of higher education and teacher education. The absence of schools teachers' voice in this educational discourse is conspicuous. This phenomenon wherein

school teachers are often looked at as 'mere implementers' of policy reforms is not new (Batra, 2005; Kumar, 2005).

Critical theorists (Apple, 1995, 2000; Giroux, 1988, 2001) argue that policy makers have sought and brought changes in the educational discourse in the neo-liberal era that have led to a drastic shift in the work of teachers. This redefining of a teacher's role has been referred to as 'deskilling' by Apple, wherein the teacher's task is reduced to execution of the bureaucratic policies focussing more on administrative affairs rather than on pedagogical concerns that surround teaching. Several Indian scholars (Batra, 2005; Kumar 2005; Sarangapani, 2003) contend that limiting the role of teachers to implementation of the policy reforms planned by higher placed bureaucrats further exacerbates the 'intellectual isolation' of the teachers (Batra, 2005). Though there have been a few empirical researches on understanding the work of teachers in the larger socio-political context, such as that by Majumdar, 2011, not many researchers have focussed exclusively on understanding the perceptions of school teachers on major educational policy frameworks.

Research objectives

Acknowledging the dearth of teachers' voices in the educational discourse, this research aimed to explore the notions of teachers pertaining to NEP 2020. The specific objectives of the research were twofold: to assess the understanding of school teachers about the NEP 2020 policy and to find out teachers' perceptions about certain key propositions in the policy pertaining to school education² 'early childhood care and education'; 'curricular and

¹ This research study does not attempt to analyse or examine the National Education Policy 2020 critically, though key features of the policy have been identified and delineated on which the opinion of teachers was sought.

² Even though other aspects, such as language, focus on Indian culture and ethos, provisioning for socio-economically disadvantaged groups; teacher education; philanthropic, private and community participation are considered to be important in terms of the policy recommendations of the same and data has been collected for these. The analysis pertaining to these have not been included in this paper by delimiting the scope of the study.

pedagogical reforms'; 'assessment'; 'school governance and systemic issues'.

Methodology

The research is situated in an interpretive framework as the intention of the researchers was to find out the understanding of the teachers and seek their opinions rather than testing a hypotheses (Flick, 2007). The subjective responses of the respondents are considered to be imperative in the interpretive research framework. The overall design of this study is mixed methods research (MMR) and the methodology and the analysis have been designed according to application of the MMR in an interpretive framework (Hesse-Biber, 2010).

To understand and analyse the school teachers' perception regarding NEP 2020, it was decided to use an online questionnaire as the tool for data collection. The questionnaire was chosen to collect data from a larger pool set and to give anonymity to the respondents so that they could give their candid opinions on the policy without any inhibitions (Lumsden, 2007). The questionnaire was hosted on Google platform and the link for the form was circulated via social media and personal contacts (including school teachers, mentor teachers, headmistress, principal and other administrators). The method of sampling was snowball and data from a total of 151 school teachers across India³ was finally collected. Even though this method of sampling could lead to sampling bias, the above method of data collection was chosen to gain a wider reach in an economical manner.

The online anonymous questionnaire was divided into two distinct sections and hosted in such a manner that the respondents could go to the second section only after filling the responses in the first section. The first section included questions on the demographic profile of the respondents and open-ended questions on NEP 2020. The

³ Since the researchers are based in Delhi, majority of the sample (about 90 per cent) was from Delhi-NCR.

purpose of these open-ended questions was to seek the respondents' understanding and opinions on the policy. The second section of the questionnaire had questions based on the Likert type rating scale. Key thematic categories were identified on the basis of key proposals made in NEP 2020 and respondents' opinion in terms of agreement with those specific educational reforms was sought. The four key themes were, 'early childhood care and education'; 'curricular and pedagogical reforms'; 'assessment'; 'governance and systemic issues'. Specific recommendations from the policy were identified in these four clusters and put forth as statements to the respondents. Pilot testing of the questionnaire was undertaken to avoid any ambiguity in terms of language and for comprehension; subsequent to which minor language changes were made in the questionnaire. The reliability of the tool was statistically calculated. The Cronbach alpha came out to be 0.95 and since it is greater than 0.7, the tool is found to be reliable.

The analysis of the data was undertaken in a mixed methods framework. The data obtained through open-ended descriptive questions was coded using thematic analysis while the data sets from Likert rating scale type questions were subjected to quantitative analysis. Quantitative analysis was carried out by using both descriptive and inferential statistics employing the SPSS software. The process of qualitative analysis of the data was iterative wherein the coding itself was a part of the analysis (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

As the research is conducted almost one year after the NEP 2020 was made public, it is presumed that the teachers had enough time to reflect, discuss and deliberate extensively on various facets of NEP and its implications for school education. Hence, the research is significant in terms of reflecting the opinion of the teachers despite the delimitations of a limited data set of respondents and the methodological limitation of questionnaire as the tool of data collection.

The analysis is presented thematically as per the four aspects of the policy on which teacher's opinion was sought. Each of these themes includes quantitative as well as qualitative data and an attempt is made towards data triangulation. A description of the sample is necessitated before discussing the findings and the inferences.

Sample

The sample for this study comprises 151 school teachers who are currently teaching. The demographic details of the sample are represented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic details of sample (N=151)

Demographic aspects	Sample distribution (N=151)			
	Gender	Male	Female	Others
	22 (14.6%)	129 (85.4%)	Nil	
Age (in years)	20- 30 years	31 – 45 years	Above 46 years	
	40 (26.5%)	62 (41%)	49 (32.5%)	
Type of school	Government	Private	Alternate/Non-gov- ernmental	
	63 (41.8%)	80 (53%)	8 (5.2%)	
Designation	Primary	TGTs	PGTs	Administrators
	85 (56.3%)	25(16.5%)	31(20.5%)	10(6.6%)
Teaching experience	Less than 1 year	1to 5 years	5 to 10 years	Above 10 years
	19 (12.6%)	27 (17.9%)	15 (9.9%)	90(59.6%)
Academic qualifications	Graduation	Post-graduation	Other higher qualifications such as M.Phil., Ph.D.	
	52 (34.5 %)	85 (56.2%)	14 (9.3 %)	

As is evident from the above table (Table 1) a majority of the respondent teachers were female. Most of the teachers were above 31 years of age and can be called 'seasoned teachers' since 70 per cent of them had a teaching experience of five years and above. Most of the teachers were employed as primary teachers though there is a significant number of PGTs and TGTs as well. The professional qualification mentioned by 60 per cent teachers was B.Ed., about 21 per cent specified B.El.Ed., 6 per cent chose D.El.Ed./D.Ed., and the remaining, chose 'any other qualification'.

A fair representation of teachers in government schools (42%) and those teaching at private schools (53%) is included in the sample. Since the number of teachers

teaching in an alternate school or a school run by a non-governmental organisation, this set has not been included while making statistical comparisons between teachers as per the school they are teaching in.

The data set had only a small percentage of males (15%), therefore, the data has not been analysed from the perspective of gender differences. Deeming the school in which the teachers were teaching, government and private to be an important factor in a teacher's perception of the NEP 2020 policy, statistical comparison of the responses on this parameter was undertaken. To find out differences in the responses of the teachers as per the years of teaching experience and academic qualifications, qualitative analysis of the responses was undertaken.

Results and discussion

Before delving into the analysis on specific themes on which the opinion of teachers was sought, it is pertinent to discuss the primary sources from where the teachers got their understanding about the policy. On a multiple choice question that provisioned for the teachers to 'check' multiple options, almost half of the teachers 'checked' workshops and training sessions on NEP as the main source for information. This was closely followed by reading of the original policy (43%), newspapers (42%) and TV and social media (43%). A significant number of teachers (40%) also mentioned discussions with other teachers and stakeholders while some (31%) stated circulars from the administration as the source. It is interesting to note that while 43 per cent teachers mentioned original policy document as the source of information, only 23 per cent teachers have read the original document completely while 62 per cent reported having read the document partially.

In an open-ended question seeking the opinion of school teachers on the NEP 2020, majority (70%) were appreciative of the policy and used phrases such as 'good', 'need of the hour', 'great proposal', 'revolutionary', 'milestone'. A few teachers elucidated their responses: "NEP 2020 seeks to align itself with the Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education for all in the next 20 years"; "NEP is a progressive policy given the need of the neo-liberal world. The foundations of the policy can be traced back to the NCF 2005 document"; "The policy is comprehensive, holistic, far-sighted and will certainly play a great role in the nation's future growth".

This affirmative response of the teachers to NEP 2020 was evident when asked to mention 'positive and negative aspects of the policy' since quite a few teachers did not specify any 'negative aspects'. A few teachers acknowledged that they needed to 'read more to comment on the negative aspects of the policy'. Moreover, some

teachers stated their apprehensions about the policy in terms of the challenges of implementation particularly mentioning funding, infrastructural requirements and recruitment of teachers. When specifically asked about the challenges of implementation of the policy the responses of the teachers included funding; resources such as infrastructure (especially laboratories and digital equipment; inequitable distribution of resources); pedagogical concerns (huge student-teacher ratio; migration of children; shift to inter-disciplinary studies; mother tongue as the medium of instruction); teachers ('most teachers have a mind-set that is fixed rather than a growth mind-set'; training of teachers specially to be able to implement modern skills and technology; proficiency of teachers in mother tongue of the children); and lack of a clear-cut road map.

The next sub-sections discuss the findings of the teachers' responses on the specific chosen features of the policy, such as 'early childhood care and education'; 'curriculum and pedagogy'; 'assessment'; 'school governance and systemic issues'.

Early childhood care and education

NEP 2020 makes a compelling argument for early childhood care and education (ECCE) and advocates that children in the age group of 0-6 years be covered in this ambit. While proposing delivery mechanisms for the same the document emphasises on the need for 'play-based, activity-based and inquiry-based pedagogical approaches'. This focus of the policy on ECCE has been widely publicised especially in the wake of the Right to Education Act 2009 having excluded this crucial age group and denied a vulnerable category of children their fundamental right to education.

The analysis of the teacher's responses revealed that 92 per cent teachers agreed (with more than 50 per cent expressing a strong agreement and others agreeing somewhat) with the focus of the NEP 2020 on ECCE (Figure 1). Apart from the specific

responses of the teachers on their agreement/disagreement (on a 5-point Likert Scale) with this feature of the policy, several teachers mentioned ECCE as a revolutionary feature of the policy in the open-ended questions and greatly welcomed it. However, a majority of teachers agreed with the focus on ECCE, but in comparison the number of teachers who were in agreement with the beginning of school at age three was considerably less (64%). This is an interesting finding since it means that even though most teachers are in favour of ECCE yet they do not endorse the beginning of the school at age three (26% teachers expressing their disagreement).

Curriculum and pedagogy

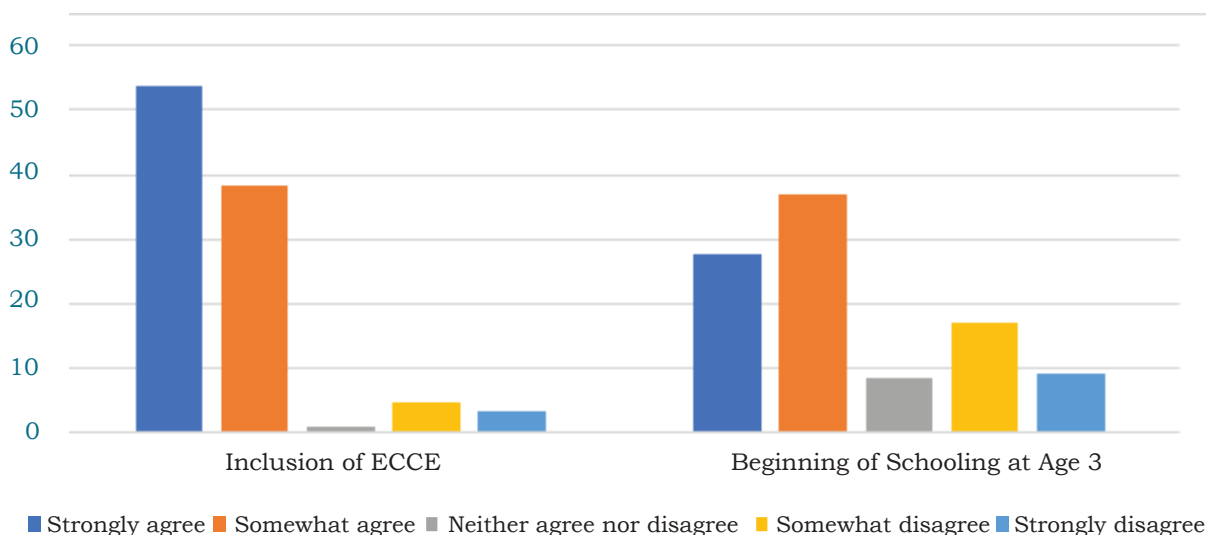
Modification of the school structure from 10+2 to a new pedagogical and curricular restructure of 5+3+3+4' is considered a major delineating feature of the NEP 2020 policy. Another significant curricular and pedagogical proposition is 'attainment of foundational literacy and numeracy by making it an urgent national mission'. This aspect has also garnered a lot of public attention especially since the media has been harping on India's poor performance in the various international and national tests to measure learning outcomes. The policy also makes a strong advocacy for

'multi-disciplinarity' and suggests 'breaking down of hierarchies' by calling out for 'no hard separation between arts and sciences'; 'curricular and extra-curricular activities'; 'vocational and academic streams'. Apart from the above features, a few others were identified as important for seeking the specific opinion of the teachers on the same 'integration of vocational education'; 'introduction of activities pertaining to technology such as coding at Middle Stage'; 'move to semester system'; and 'flexibility in subject choices at secondary level'.

The responses of the teachers on these various recommendations have been presented as percentages in Figure 2. As is evident from the figure, there seems to be an overwhelming agreement with certain key aspects of the policy. The percentages of disagreement (strong and somewhat combined), is not beyond 10 per cent for any parameter. The agreement of the teachers for almost all aspects is corroborated by calculation of mean and standard deviation of the responses of the teachers (Table 2).

In continuation with the discussion on ECCE and schooling at the age of three, it is notable that compared to the other parameters the responses of the teachers to the modified structure of 5+3+3+4 are not overwhelmingly in agreement. Similarly,

Figure 1: Teachers' Perspective on NEP: Early Childhood Care and Education`



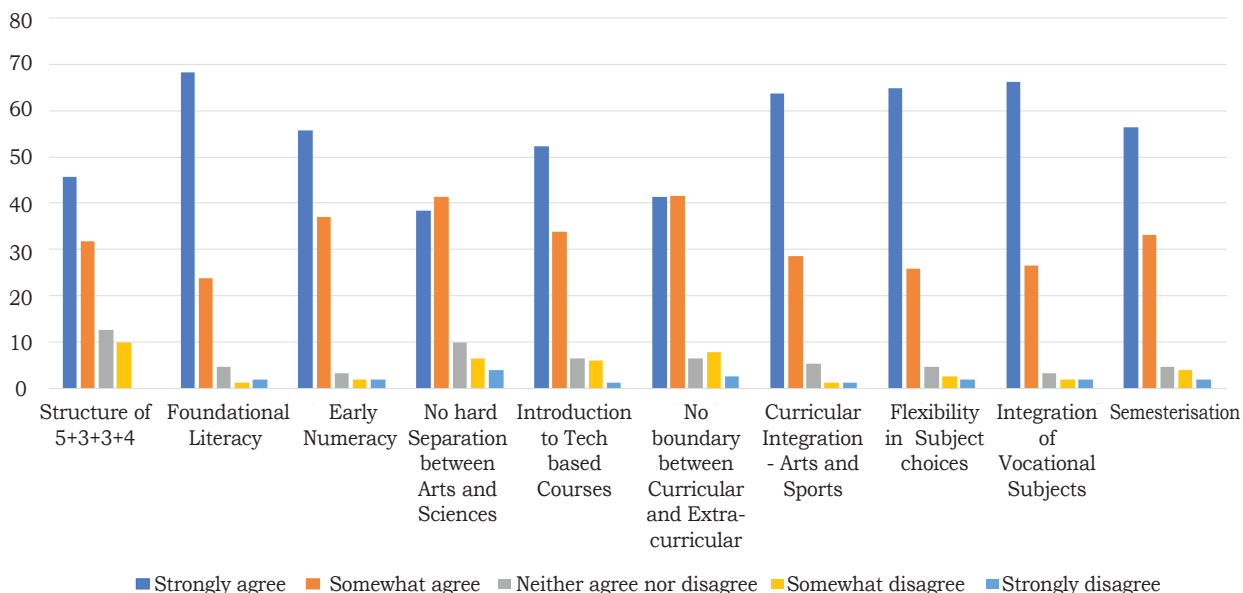
while 68 per cent teachers strongly agree with the focus on foundational literacy, 56 per cent expressed their strong agreement with emphasis on early numeracy (Figure 2). It needs to be noted here that a few teachers (about 10%) also mentioned foundational literacy as one of the ‘positive aspects’ of the policy in the open-ended question about the same.

The percentage of teachers strongly advocating for no hard separation between arts and sciences is 38 per cent, which is the lowest ‘strong agreement’ amongst all the other aspects. However, it is interesting to note that 65 per cent teachers expressed strong agreement with offering flexibility to the students in their choice of subjects. Integration of vocational subjects was seen as an apt recommendation (66% strong agreement), which was also expressed by a few teachers in open-ended questions. Arguments posed for vocationalisation were that it would help students to choose their direction of life early on, and hence, they would be able to realise their potential; it would help students to get better opportunities for employment and help in curbing unemployment; would change the outlook of the people wherein education

will no longer be considered as a burden. A few teachers, however, were concerned that the emphasis on vocational education and provisioning for the same would “shift the focus to building of skill-set only” thereby putting “learning in the backseat”.

Curricular integration of arts and sports was strongly agreed with by 63 per cent teachers while dissolution of boundaries between curricular and extra-curricular activities was strongly agreed with by 41 per cent teachers (Figure 2). It is imperative here to discuss the perspective of teachers regarding the ‘focus on skills and practical knowledge’ since this generated mixed response. Some teachers conveyed that this is a much-needed reform as evident from the following response: “The present education system is in shambles. The output is generations of students who can be best termed as paper tigers without relevant skills. Hence, NEP 2020 is a step to eradicate the problem of getting degrees without skills.” A few other teachers were apprehensive as they believed that this could lead to dilution of focus on learning. A very interesting response in this context is: “...the manner in which ‘coding’ is presented as a mandatory and necessary intervention might find deeper roots and

Figure 2: Teachers’ Perspective on NEP: Curriculum and Pedagogy



undermine the entire effort of building the area of mathematisation”.

To find out differences in the opinion of teachers teaching in government schools and those in private schools, the data was subjected to statistical analysis and on the basis of results based on two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level 0.05, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the responses of government school teachers and private school teachers (Table 2).

Assessment

The policy seeks to ‘transform assessment for student development’ through various measures, such as ‘shifting to more competency-based modes’; ‘testing for achievement of basic learning outcomes at the end

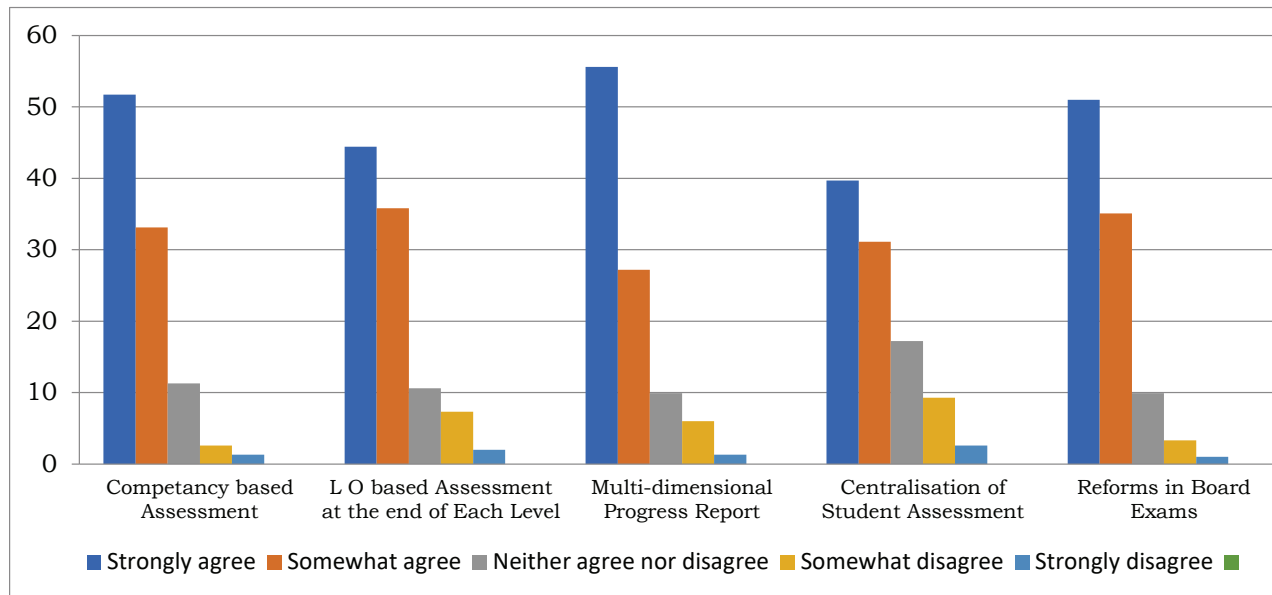
of Classes 3, 5 and 8’; ‘360-degree multidimensional progress card for each student’; ‘reformation in Board exams by offering semester/modular systems’ and ‘redesigning the test in two parts – objective type and descriptive type’; ‘centralisation of student assessment and evaluation through setting up of a standard body – Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development’ (PARAKH).

About half of the teachers are in strong agreement with the various aspects of assessment (Figure 3). It is interesting to note that quite a few teachers have been non-committal in their response in this area especially when compared to the responses of teachers on other aspects such as curriculum and pedagogy. Assessment, thus, can be highlighted as a contentious issue especially since the teachers mentioned

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Teachers’ Perspective : Curriculum and Pedagogy

Aspect	School teachers	Mean	SD	t	Level of significance at 0.05
Proposed structure of 5+3+3+4	Government	4.30	0.91	1.617	Not significant
	Private	4.00	1.02		
Focus on foundational literacy	Government	4.60	0.9	0.669	Not significant
	Private	4.50	0.71		
Focus on foundational numeracy	Government	4.48	0.97	0.927	Not significant
	Private	4.35	0.69		
No hard separation between arts and sciences	Government	3.98	1.11	0.288	Not significant
	Private	4.11	0.94		
Introduction of technology-based courses such as coding	Government	4.35	0.99	0.907	Not significant
	Private	4.21	0.90		
No boundaries between curricular and extra-curricular activities	Government	4.12	1.01	0.334	Not significant
	Private	4.07	1.00		
Curricular integration of arts and sports	Government	4.53	0.89	-0.048	Not significant
	Private	4.50	0.69		
Flexibility in subject choices at secondary level	Government	4.43	1.02	-0.728	Not significant
	Private	4.54	0.73		
Integration of vocational subjects	Government	4.56	0.96	1.265	Not significant
	Private	4.49	0.78		
Semesterisation	Government	4.48	0.83	0.749	Not significant
	Private	4.29	0.96		

Figure 3: Teachers' Perspective on NEP: Assessment



challenges pertaining to decontextualisation of assessment (and thereby learning) by virtue of centralisation. Less than 40 per cent of the teachers have expressed strong agreement with centralisation of student assessment. A few teachers expressed their apprehension about this aspect in response to the open-ended questions as highlighted in this response: "Assessment would get highly centralised and could be insensitive to learners' real context. For example, if the question asks for an essay on 'rains a boon' it would alienate the learner who faces floods in their region and the marking of this essay would be done by a centralised body who may or may not consider the learner's answer due to the centralised body's own limitation to their context as the question itself is not sensitive to diversity of opinion based on experiences." The recommendation of learning outcome-based assessment at the end of each level (Classes 3, 5, 8) was also critiqued by a few teachers especially

in the first two levels stating that it seems dichotomous to teach these children in play-way method and then subsequently expect them to 'undergo the pressure of board exams' and that this change could lead to an epistemic shift from 'learning to scoring'.

By and large then, agreement to reforms, pertaining to assessment, has the agreement of fewer teachers when compared to the other aspects. These findings are corroborated through data triangulation since only six teachers out of the total 151 rated 'assessment mechanisms' as the most important aspect of the policy when asked to rank certain key aspects of the policy in terms of their importance.

In the aspect of reforms pertaining to assessment, no significant difference (calculated via two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level 0.05) was found between the responses of teachers in government and private schools as evident from Table 3.

Table 3: Comparative Analysis of Teachers' Perspective: Assessment

Aspect	School	Mean	SD	t	Level of significance at 0.05
Competency-based assessment	Government	4.32	0.94	-0.338	Not significant
	Private	4.27	0.83		
Learning outcomes-based exams at the end of Classes 3, 5, 8	Government	4.09	1.19	0.358	Not significant
	Private	4.15	0.86		
Multi-dimensional progress report of students	Government	4.31	1.06	1.102	Not significant
	Private	4.60	0.51		
Centralisation of student assessment	Government	4.06	1.06	0.654	Not significant
	Private	3.80	1.09		
Reforms in board exams	Government	4.35	0.91	1.806	Not significant
	Private	4.26	0.79		

School governance and systemic issues

The policy recommends a 'tight but light' regulatory framework for school governance and monitoring. Referring to the various challenges arising due to 'small schools', NEP 2020 recommends 'establishment of a group structure called 'school complex' consisting of one secondary school together with all the other schools offering lower grades in its neighbourhood'. These complexes are envisaged to play a 'pivotal role in efficient resourcing and effective governance'.

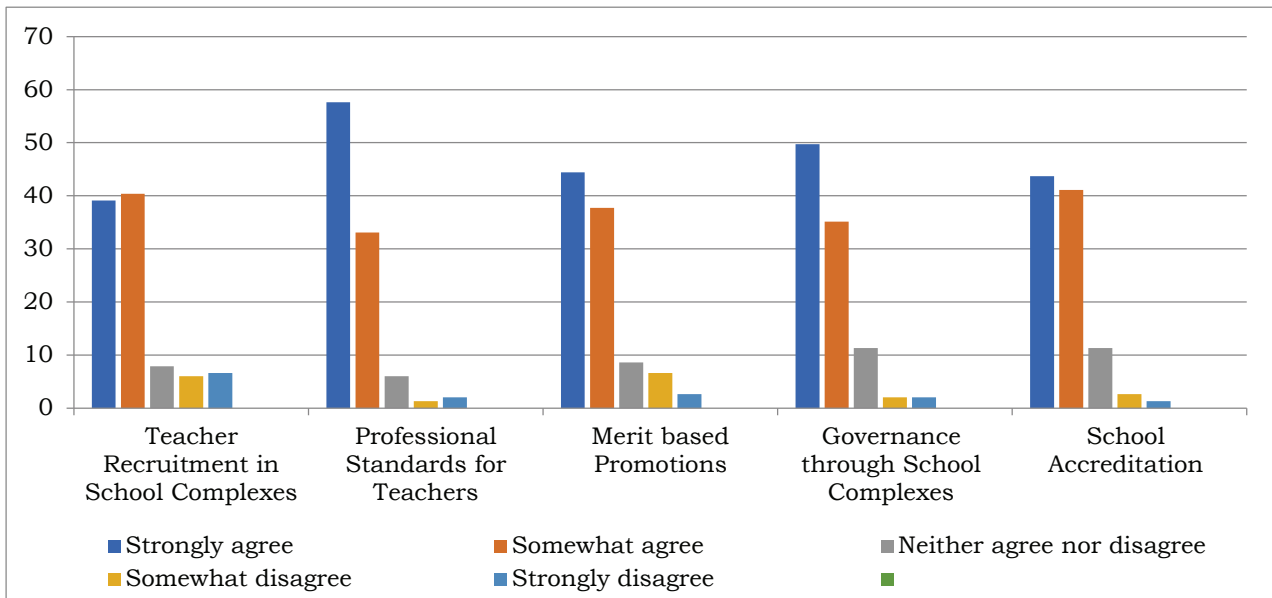
While lamenting on the present quality of teacher education, recruitment, deployment, and service conditions, the policy recommends several measures, such as 'development of robust merit-based structure of tenure'; 'promotion and salary structure'; 'provisioning of vertical mobility for teachers'; 'development of a common guiding set of national professional standard for teachers'.

The overall responses of teachers to these various aspects of school governance indicate some agreement with these proposed reforms (Figure 4). A noteworthy observation is relatively high percentage of agreement with setting up of professional

standards for teachers (combined strong and somewhat agree being 91% and a high mean value). Again this response is triangulated with teachers' qualitative responses since several teachers expressed their reservations about the preparation of teachers for the implementation of NEP 2020 and advocated for measures to undertake the same. Digital measures to facilitate teacher education at the pre-service and in-service level were also critically mentioned by the teachers.

The construct of 'school complex' is central to school governance in NEP 2020 and interestingly apart from one teacher it has not been mentioned anywhere in the open-ended responses of the teachers. A look at Figure 4 reveals that there is somewhat agreement with aspects pertaining to governance through school complexes. By and large, the teachers in their qualitative responses showed reservations about 'centralisation', arguing that instead of "handing over certain responsibilities to the central bodies, they (the policy makers) should move to the states and districts to cater to the diverse needs of diverse learners coming from various backgrounds; giving the opportunity to the teachers to be a part of curriculum designing and development, textbooks, and assessment strategies."

Figure 4: Teachers’ Perspective on NEP: School Governance and Systemic Issues



On the basis of results based on two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level 0.05, it is found that there is no significant difference between the

responses of government school teachers and private school teachers on the various aspects related to school governance and systemic issues (Table 4).

Table 4: Comparative Analysis of Teachers’ Perspective: School Governance and Systemic Issues

Aspect	School	Mean	SD	t	Level of significance at 0.05
Teacher recruitment and resource sharing in school complexes	Government	4.14	1.08	1.211	Not significant
	Private	3.87	1.18		
Setting professional standards for teachers	Government	4.56	0.92	1.397	Not significant
	Private	4.27	0.74		
Merit-based promotions and tenure track	Government	4.17	1.04	1.010	Significant
	Private	4.06	1.00		
Governance through school complexes/ clusters	Government	4.40	1.09	0.631	Not significant
	Private	4.15	0.78		
School accreditation	Government	4.32	0.92	1.390	Not significant
	Private	4.12	0.80		

Conclusion

The study found that a significant number of teachers expressed varying degrees of agreement with the chosen aspects of the NEP 2020 policy presented to them. The aspects of the policy on which there

was a strong agreement of the teachers (above 70%) include, ‘inclusion of ECCE’; ‘focus on foundational literacy’; ‘curricular integration of arts and sports’; ‘flexibility in subject choice’; ‘integration of vocational subjects’. Almost half the teachers, who responded, strongly agreed to the various

aspects pertaining to school governance and systemic issues. Various aspects pertaining to assessment reforms were also agreed upon by the teachers (50% or less than that) though not as strongly as the above aspects. Triangulation of data revealed that some teachers were apprehensive about the proposed reforms in NEP 2020 as they felt that this could lead to dilution of learning and also raised concerns about their ground-level implementation.

Though the analysis of quantitative data informs us of the strong agreement of teachers with chosen aspects of the policy, there were a few voices of dissent on the policy. These few teachers presented powerful arguments rooted in the socio-political understanding of education. Two major thematic areas

that were highlighted in the context of the implications of the policy to perpetuate status quo were digital education and focus on mother tongue/local language as the medium of instruction. Teachers reasoned that digitalisation would lead to 'furthering of the existent social and economic inequalities' and 'depriving government school children of the opportunity of English language would make them lag behind their private school counterparts' in a societal structure deeply seeped in the hegemony of language. Majority of the teachers talked about the challenges in implementing the policy at the ground level. The teachers, however, suggested that with a clear-cut road map, the vision of the policy can be transformed into reality.

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