

EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS INTO MARIYANG PRIMARY AND UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS' CAPACITY BUILDING UNDER NEP 2020

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Abstract: The National Educational Policy (NEP) 2020 foregrounds teacher capacity building as a central mechanism for improving educational quality and learner outcomes. In geographically remote and educationally diverse regions such as Mariyang, Arunachal Pradesh, the success of NEP reforms depends largely on teachers' professional preparedness and contextual adaptability. The present study adopts a descriptive survey design to generate empirical insights into the capacity-building experiences of primary and upper primary school teachers' in Mariyang under NEP 2020. Using a descriptive survey approach, data were collected from teachers' regarding their participation in professional development programmes, digital readiness, and perception of NEP reforms. Data collected from teachers reveal moderate to high awareness of NEP provisions, increased participation in professional development programmes, and gradual shift towards learner-centred pedagogical practices. However, infrastructural limitations, digital constraints, and the absence of sustained mentoring mechanism continue to impede effective implementation. The study underscores the need for localized, continuous, and practice-oriented professional development models to realize NEP 2020 objectives in rural and hilly regions.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Teacher Capacity Building; Primary and Upper Primary Teachers; Professional Development; Rural Education

1. Introduction

Teachers are widely acknowledged as the most critical factor influencing the quality of school education. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 relates this position by placing teacher empowerment and continuous professional development at the centre of systemic reform. The policy envisages a paradigm shift from rote-based instruction to competency-based, experiential, and holistic education, particularly at the foundational and preparatory stages.

In remote regions such as Mariyang educational block, teachers operate within complex socio-cultural, linguistic, and infrastructural contexts. Primary and Upper Primary teachers are required to align their classroom practices with NEP mandates related to foundational literacy and numeracy, formative assessment, digital integration, and inclusive pedagogy. Understanding how teachers perceive and experience capacity-building initiatives under NEP 2020 is therefore essential for evaluating policy effectiveness at the grassroots level.

Despite increasing scholarly attention to NEP 2020, empirical studies focussing on localized contexts remain limited. This study seeks to address this gap by examining teacher capacity building in primary and upper primary schools of Mariyang educational block, Upper Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh.

2. Review of Literature

Existing literature indicates that sustained professional development positively influences teachers' pedagogical competence, self-efficacy, and instructional innovation (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Chaturvedi, A. 2025 highlights that teachers' professional development is central to the successful implementation of NEP 2020 policy. The study finds that NEP 2020 emphasizes continuous professional learning reflective teaching practices, and the integration of technology in classroom instruction. However, significant challenges persist, including inadequate infrastructure, limited digital readiness among teachers, resistance to pedagogical change, and insufficient institutional support for sustained capacity building.

Empirical research in India school contexts reveals that while teachers generally exhibit positive attitudes towards policy reforms, the effectiveness of training programmes depends on contextual relevance, duration, and follow-up support (Sharma, 2022). Rural and tribal regions face additional challenges related to infrastructure, teacher shortages, and access to digital resources (NIEPA, 2021).

However, micro-level empirical studies examining teachers' lived experiences under NEP 2020, particularly at primary and upper primary levels remain scarce. The present study contributes to this emerging body of research.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the nature of capacity-building programmes attended by primary and upper primary teachers' in Mariyang Educational Block under NEP 2020.
2. To assess teachers' perceptions of their professional preparedness after NEP-aligned training.
3. To analyze changes in pedagogical practices after participation in capacity-building initiatives.
4. To identify challenges faced by teachers in implementing NEP reforms at the school level.

4. Methodology

4.1 Research Design

A descriptive survey method was adopted to obtain empirical insights into primary and upper primary school teachers' capacity-building experiences of Mariyang Educational Block.

4.2 Sample

The sample comprised of 90 primary and upper primary teachers from government schools in Mariyang educational block. Purposive sampling technique was used to ensure representation across school levels.

4.3 Tool for data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of four sections: a) demographic information, b) participation in capacity-building programmes, c) pedagogical and digital preparedness, and d) perceived challenges. Responses were recorded using a Likert-type scale and open ended questions.

4.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using percentage analysis and descriptive statistics, supported by qualitative interpretation of teachers' responses on structured questionnaire.

5. Results and Findings

5.1 Participation in Capacity-Building Programmes

The majority of teachers reported participation in NEP-oriented training programs conducted by SCERT, DIET, DDSE and online platforms. Primary teachers showed slightly higher participation in subject-specific and digital pedagogy workshops/training compared to upper primary teachers. However, many a time implementation in the classroom teaching is hindered due to lack of technicality and infrastructural availability.

5.2 Awareness and Understanding of NEP 2020

Most teachers demonstrated moderate to high awareness of NEP objectives, particularly related to:

- Foundational literacy and numeracy
- Competency-based learning
- Continuous and formative assessment

However, some teachers expressed the need for career operational guidelines.

5.3 Pedagogical Changes

Teachers reported gradual shifts towards:

- Activity-based and experiential learning
- Use of real-life examples and local context
- Reduced emphasis on rote memorization

Primary teachers emphasized play-based and joyful learning, while upper teachers focussed more on conceptual clarity and critical thinking.

5.4 Digital Readiness

Although teachers acknowledged the importance and significance of digital tools, limited internet connectivity, lack of devices, and inadequate hands-on training to teachers restricted effective ICT integration, especially in remote schools.

5.5 Challenges Identified

Key challenges included:

- Short duration and theoretical orientation of training programmes
- Limited follow-up and mentoring support
- Infrastructure and connectivity constraints
- Heavy workload alongside training requirements

6. Discussion

The findings indicate that NEP 2020 has positively influenced teachers' professional outlook and pedagogical awareness in Mariyang educational block of East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh. Capacity-building initiatives have enhanced primary and upper primary teachers' confidence and openness to innovative practices. However, the impact remains uneven due to contextual constraints typical of rural and hilly regions.

The study aligns with broader empirical literature suggesting that one-time workshops/training programmes is not sufficient for deep pedagogical transformation. Sustained professional learning communities, school-

based mentoring, and contextualized training models are essential for meaningful capacity building of teachers.

7. Implications for Policy and Practice

- Capacity-building programs should be localized to reflect regional realities and classroom contexts.
- Greater emphasis is needed on hands-on training, mentoring, and peer learning.
- Infrastructural and digital support must be strengthened to realize NEP's vision of technology-enabled education.
- Mentoring and feedback mechanism should be integrated into teacher professional development programs.

8. Conclusion

Teacher capacity building under NEP 2020 is a transformative initiative with significant potential to enhance educational quality. The empirical insights from Mariyang primary and upper primary school teachers reveal encouraging progression alongside persistent challenges. Strengthening the quality, continuity, and contextual relevance of capacity-building initiatives will be crucial for translating NEP's vision into classroom practice, particularly in geographically remote regions.

Future research may adopt longitudinal and mixed-method approaches to examine the long-term impact of NEP-aligned capacity building on teaching practices and student better learning outcomes.

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