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NEP 2020 comes short on providing an enabling milieu for teachers

Good salaries, regular increments, rigorous entrance exams, professionally valued degrees for teachers, autonomy in curriculum development and student assessment are part of the reform process.

Written by [Disha Nawani](#) |

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The National Education Policy 2020 reiterates the importance of teachers and aspires for outstanding students to choose the teaching profession.

School teachers, particularly in India, are caught in a strangely paradoxical situation — they are revered and ridiculed at the same time. The framing of teachers and perceptions around their work is rooted in mistrust. Hence, the rhetoric to closely supervise, monitor and hold them accountable has now become the norm rather than an exception.

The National Education Policy 2020 reiterates the importance of teachers and aspires for outstanding students (mentioned at least nine times in this section, without explaining what it really means) to choose the teaching profession. Several measures are suggested for the same including scholarships, housing, ensuring “decent and pleasant” conditions in school and providing opportunities for their continuous professional development (CPD). The measures are not being carried out.

However, there are three key assumptions in this

One, outstanding candidates, if attracted to the teaching profession will enhance the quality of education. While one agrees with this assumption, one is not convinced with the measures suggested in the NEP to attract “outstanding” talent. They indicate minimal conditions for teachers to work and can hardly be seen as making any value addition to their professional lives. In fact, security of tenure and salary

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youngsters be interested in making this career choice? Linked to this is the off-repeated idea of “passion” amongst tea **Sign in** ; if passion alone will see teachers through and improve the quality of education.

Two, a comprehensive system of teacher assessment will lead to greater efficiency and accountability on the part of teachers. There is value in developing a system of assessment which will be used to reward some teachers and motivate others but would it be fair to assess (based on peer reviews, attendance, commitment, hours of service to CPD and other forms of service to the school and community) all teachers by the same yardstick when they are working in starkly varying conditions? None of the parameters listed take cognisance of the backgrounds of children they teach. For example, students of teachers equipped with social and cultural capital will do well even with minimal inputs from the teachers, and vice versa. Moreover, to entirely discredit the experience gained by teachers which comes with years of service may not be appropriate.

Three, good teacher education programmes would prepare good teachers. One can hardly contest this assumption, but the question is whether that alone will ensure effective teaching and meaningful learning in the classroom. For example, an outstanding teacher could crumble under pressure if her class has a huge number of students. Similarly, a teacher trained in a rigorous programme may also excessively depend on one textbook, if the externally designed student-assessment system is tightly tied to that book.

In the current context, there is increasing talk of
with externally tested learning outcomes of students among them (that’s where government school teachers excessive monitoring through use of CCTV cameras

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breathing, meditation to calm their mind, and equating an enabling environment with personal attributes such as passion and motivation. In an environment, where cameras unabashedly chase them, records/documentation take precedence over teaching and the educational discourse is replete with voices which support the



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Despite variations in social contexts, if one were to understand how Finland, the world's finest education system, transitioned from mediocre academic scores to outstanding results, one will find teachers at the centre of reforms. Good salaries, regular increments, rigorous entrance exams, professionally valued degrees for teachers, autonomy in curriculum development and student assessment are part of this reform process. However, the one remarkable feature which stands out is the implicit belief that teaching, caring and educating children is a highly demanding job and cannot be measured by quantitative measures alone. Therefore, even if students do badly, unwavering trust in teachers ensures that they are never in the radar of suspicion.

Implementing these ideas in our context may require a 360-degree change in mindsets, may confront several obstacles and take time, but that's exactly what our education system requires. A turnaround of our attitude and policies towards teachers.

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This article first appeared in the print edition on 'New Policy, Old Mindset' The writer is professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

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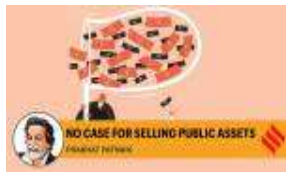
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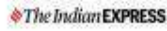
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