Voices from the Field: Implementing New Education Policy in Classrooms and Challenges with Practice-Based Teacher Education Programs in India

Harita Raval

Stockholm University, Sweden

This presentation explores challenges in implementing India's 2020 New Education Policy (NEP), focusing on the readiness of two teacher educators and their adaptation to its transformative goals. The study uses clinical interviews and Fairclough's discourse analysis to gain insights into the impact of NEP on practice-based teacher education, highlighting educators' struggles in aligning methodologies that NEP 2020 mandates. The perspectives of these two teacher educators reveal uncertainties, insufficiencies, and chaos, emphasizing the practical gaps between policy expectations and implementation. The presentation serves as a reflection on the challenges faced in Indian teacher education, underscoring the need for collective efforts to bridge gaps between international benchmarks and contextual dynamics.

With the advent of the New Education Policy 2020 (MHRD, 2020), India seeks to meet global standards in the field of education. Transformation of classrooms and integration of practice-based teacher education programs are at the core of its vision. While these changes may be promising regarding their potential impact on society, they also pose challenges in implementation in the diverse context of India (Batra, 2023). As the NEP policy is being implemented, it presents numerous challenges for teacher educators who are not adequately prepared (Batra, 2023). This presentation aims to investigate how teacher educators are navigating the system with the agency they have. This examination is based on clinical interviews, and the research question: What insights do the interviews with teacher educators reveal concerning India's NEP implementation and challenges in practice-based teacher education?

Discourse analysis provides a tool for critiquing the ideology that manifests at the border of policy and society. Discourse about any policy is defined by a set of characterizing frameworks created by the authority. Also, these discourses establish the socio-political context (Oudatzis & Tzikas, 2022). (Fairclough, 1992) critical discourse analysis framework offers a nuanced view of power structures, ideologies, and social meanings embedded in educational policies and practices.

The interviewees confirm how the implementation of the NEP 2020 poses many challenges. The included teacher educators; from suburban areas of Maharashtra, are faced with aligning their teaching methodologies and content with the new policy's objectives, all while grappling with its complexities and demands. A concerted effort is required to bridge the gap between policy expectations and implementation. During an interview one of the teacher educators mentioned:

TEd1: Now, with the NEP coming into play, it is saying that teachers should be delivering curriculum in bilingual or multilingual teaching. (Pause) It's a big thing, how and what we don't know.

In this quote, TEd1 acknowledge the sense of not knowing enough about what comes with multilingual teaching in the diverse language context of India. Hence, the policy discourse is more than a mere representation of what has been already in practice; it constructs new relations between teacher educators and students.

TEd2: Since 2014 the practice-based teacher education programme has been implemented and we are still struggling with the practical issues of how to deliver the course that we have planned due to delays in the admission process for almost 4-6 months. What has been expected from us… It is a chaos. (Pause) Eventually, we have to finish, and till they find a way we can try our best for the PSTs.

In the second quote, TEd2 comments on the relationship between TEds and the practical, and political, context of delays, resulting in a sense of chaos. Hence, uncertainty and a sense of insufficiency are found in both interviews. This sense relates both to the demands of TEds itself, but also to insufficient preparation and administrative obstacles. Based on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, this brief communication is a testimony of how teacher education in India stands at a juncture, as it grapples with numerous obstacles, including curriculum design, practicals and the readiness of teacher educators. For the conference, the analysis of TEds together with an analysis of interviews will be presented, to highlight the tension between international benchmarks for education, while being responsive to the cultural, social, and economic dynamics of the society they serve.

## References

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