



## Research Article

# Role of National Policies in Shaping Secondary Teacher Education: A Historical Perspective


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Abstract	Manuscript Information
<p>This study explores the historical evolution of national policies shaping secondary teacher education in India, focusing on the impact of key frameworks such as the National Policy on Education (1968), National Policy on Education (1986), and National Education Policy (2020). From the colonial period, when teacher training institutions were first established, to post-independence reforms aimed at professionalizing education, the policies have significantly influenced teacher preparation at the secondary level. The study highlights how successive policies have emphasized improving teacher qualifications, integrating new pedagogical approaches, and promoting continuous professional development. Furthermore, it investigates the role of government interventions in standardizing teacher education across regions and addressing challenges like regional disparities and inconsistent implementation. The research reveals how these policies have collectively contributed to enhancing the quality and uniformity of secondary teacher education in India. By analyzing historical documents and policy reports, this study offers insights into the evolving governmental approach to teacher education and its impact on the professional development of secondary school teachers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>ISSN No:</b> 2583-7397</li> <li>▪ <b>Received:</b> 24-02-2025</li> <li>▪ <b>Accepted:</b> 26-03-2025</li> <li>▪ <b>Published:</b> 18-04-2025</li> <li>▪ <b>IJCRM:</b> 4(2); 2025: 242-247</li> <li>▪ <b>©2025, All Rights Reserved</b></li> <li>▪ <b>Plagiarism Checked:</b> Yes</li> <li>▪ <b>Peer Review Process:</b> Yes</li> </ul>
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**KEYWORDS:** National Policies, Secondary Teacher Education, National Policy on Education, Professional Development, Standardization, Pedagogical Reforms

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The role of national policies in shaping secondary teacher education has been pivotal in the evolution of the educational landscape worldwide. In India, the historical trajectory of teacher education, particularly at the secondary level, reflects the complex interplay between socio-political dynamics and

educational reforms. National policies, through a series of strategic frameworks and interventions, have aimed to address the pressing need for qualified and competent teachers who can effectively manage the challenges of secondary education.

The establishment of structured teacher training systems can be traced back to colonial times when the British government first

emphasized the need for trained teachers to support the expansion of schooling. Post-independence, India adopted several national policies to ensure the professional development of teachers and to align teacher education with the national goals of social equity, economic development, and cultural integration. Notable among these policies are the National Policy on Education (1968) and its subsequent revisions in 1986 and 2020, each reflecting changing educational priorities. These policies have advocated for a comprehensive, flexible, and dynamic approach to teacher education, including reforms in curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment frameworks (Sharma, 2012) <sup>[12]</sup>. This study aims to explore the historical evolution of national policies that have shaped secondary teacher education in India, focusing on how these policies have contributed to the professionalization and improvement of teacher preparation, with particular emphasis on the period from post-independence to the present. The examination of historical documents and policy reports will provide insights into the underlying principles guiding these educational reforms.

### Historical development of teacher education in India

Teacher education in India has a rich and evolving history, shaped by its colonial past and the quest for educational reforms post-independence. In ancient India, the *gurukul* system was the primary mode of education, where students learned under the guidance of a guru in a personalized setting. However, the modern system of teacher education began to take shape during British rule, primarily with the establishment of training institutions for teachers in the 19th century.

The first significant step towards formal teacher education was the establishment of the Calcutta Normal School in 1791, followed by other institutions like Madras Normal School (1856) and Bombay Normal School (1857) (Buch, 1966) <sup>[2]</sup>. These schools were designed to train teachers to deliver British-designed curricula, which were often disconnected from Indian traditions. After independence, India witnessed a shift towards reforming the education system to meet the needs of the newly independent nation. *Kothari Commission* (1964-66) played a pivotal role in shaping teacher education, recommending a more structured and formal approach to teacher training through universities and teacher training colleges. One of its major suggestions was the introduction of a *two-year B.Ed. program* to enhance the quality of teachers. In the 1980s and 1990s, the focus shifted towards in-service training and professional development of teachers. The National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), established in 1993, further standardized and regulated teacher education programs across the country. National Policy on Education 1986 <sup>[9]</sup> and its subsequent revisions in 1992 also highlighted the importance of improving the quality of teacher education through rigorous curricula and continuous professional development. The recent National Education Policy 2020 stresses the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy, as well as the integration of technology into teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2020) <sup>[8]</sup>. It envisions a future where teacher education is more holistic, inclusive, and research-driven.

### Rationale of the study

Teacher education plays a critical role in shaping the educational landscape of any country, particularly at the secondary level, as it directly influences the quality of instruction and student outcomes. In India, secondary education serves as a crucial stage for students, marking the transition from foundational knowledge to specialized learning. The quality of teaching at this stage depends heavily on the preparedness of teachers, which is directly influenced by national policies governing teacher education. A historical analysis of these policies reveals the dynamic interplay between educational reforms and the evolving needs of the society.

Historically, India's teacher education policies have undergone significant transformations to adapt to the changing educational and societal needs. From the early 20th century, when teacher preparation was focused on rudimentary instructional methods, to the post-independence era that sought to modernize education and improve quality, national policies have shaped the structure, content, and delivery of teacher education programs. The enactment of National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968 and its revisions in 1986 and 2020, marked landmark moments in the evolution of teacher training. Each policy aimed at reforming teacher education to align it with contemporary needs, emphasizing quality, inclusivity, and professionalism in teaching.

The 1986 NPE, for instance, emphasized improving teacher qualifications and extending pre-service and in-service training programs to ensure teachers' competency in delivering secondary education. It also advocated for the establishment of institutions dedicated to teacher education at regional and national levels (MHRD, 1986). This focus on expanding and enhancing teacher preparation programs was critical in meeting the demands of an increasingly diverse and complex educational environment. More recently, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has introduced a new paradigm for teacher education, focusing on the holistic development of teachers through multi-disciplinary learning and integration of technology.

A historical perspective on these policies is essential for understanding the challenges and successes in the field of teacher education. By examining the evolution of teacher education policies, this study aims to uncover the shifts in governmental approaches to teacher training, identify key factors influencing policy changes, and assess their impact on secondary teacher education in India. This understanding will help in shaping future policies and improving the effectiveness of teacher education programs in meeting the evolving needs of secondary education.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The evolution of secondary teacher education in India has been significantly influenced by national policies that have aimed to address the changing educational needs and social dynamics of the country. The development of these policies can be traced back to the pre-independence era and has continued through the post-independence period with various landmark reforms. Historically, the earliest significant influence came from *Wood's Despatch* (1854), which laid the foundation for teacher education

by recommending the establishment of training schools for teachers (Sharma, 2013) <sup>[13]</sup>. The recommendations of this policy were implemented to some extent, but it wasn't until Kothari Commission Report (1966) that a more structured approach towards teacher education was introduced. The Kothari Commission emphasized the importance of professional training for teachers, recommending that teacher education become a specialized area with uniform standards across the country (Kothari, 1966) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Post-independence, National Policy on Education (NPE) 1968 further streamlined teacher education by stressing the need for a sound and organized teacher training system. It also advocated for in-service training programs and the recruitment of highly qualified teachers for secondary schools (Govt. of India, 1968). The NPE 1986 continued this trend, with a more focused approach towards improving the quality of education and providing opportunities for professional development for teachers.

National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 placed greater emphasis on teachers as facilitators of learning, urging a shift from traditional pedagogies to more learner-centered approaches. This policy aimed at enhancing the quality of teacher education by aligning it with the demands of the 21st century (NCERT, 2005) <sup>[11]</sup>. National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 further redefined teacher education, introducing innovative reforms such as the integration of multi-disciplinary approaches and the promotion of research-driven practices within the field of teacher training.

Right to Education Act (2009) also played a role in shaping teacher education by focusing on improving the quality and accessibility of education for all children, thereby influencing the policies surrounding teacher recruitment and training (Govt. of India, 2009) <sup>[5]</sup>.

The role of national policies in shaping secondary teacher education has evolved significantly over time, with each policy building upon the previous one. The policies have progressively focused on improving the quality of teachers, the standardization of teacher training, and the incorporation of innovative educational practices to meet the needs of an ever-changing educational landscape.

### Research questions of the study

The research questions for this study are as follows -

- How have the national policies on education in India evolved over time to influence the development and structure of secondary teacher education?
- What are the key provisions in National Policy on Education (1968), National Policy on Education (1986) <sup>[9]</sup>, and National Education Policy (2020) that have directly impacted secondary teacher education in India?
- To what extent have national policies addressed the professional development and training needs of secondary school teachers throughout India's post-independence educational history?
- What role has government intervention, through national education policies, played in standardizing teacher

education programs across different states and regions in India?

These questions aim to explore the historical evolution, key policies, and their effects on secondary teacher education in India.

### 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Based on the research questions outlined above, the following objectives have been established for the study -

- To analyze the historical evolution of national education policies in India and their influence on the development and structural changes in secondary teacher education.
- To identify and evaluate the key provisions in the National Policy on Education (1968), National Policy on Education (1986) <sup>[9]</sup>, and National Education Policy (2020) that have specifically impacted secondary teacher education.
- To assess the impact of national policies on the professional development and capacity-building programs for secondary school teachers in India.
- To investigate the role of national education policies in promoting uniformity and standardization of secondary teacher education across different regions and states in India.

These objectives guide the study's focus on the historical perspective of national policies and their impact on secondary teacher education.

### 4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study has adopted a qualitative research methodology, utilizing document analysis and historical research approaches. The primary focus would be on analyzing key national policies, reports, and educational frameworks to understand their impact on the evolution of secondary teacher education in India. The collected documents was analyzed using thematic analysis, focusing on identifying recurring themes, provisions, and strategies in the policies that shaped secondary teacher education. A historical comparison was drawn to assess how policies have evolved and their influence on teacher education over time. The study primarily focused on national policies and their direct implications for secondary teacher education, with limited scope on regional or state-specific policies. The study may also be limited by the availability of archival data and historical documents. This methodology has provided a comprehensive historical perspective on the role of national policies in shaping secondary teacher education in India.

### 5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Objective 1: To analyze the historical evolution of national education policies in India and their influence on the development and structural changes in secondary teacher education**

The evolution of national policies on education in India has played a crucial role in shaping the development and structure of secondary teacher education. Over time, these policies have progressively emphasized quality, equity, and inclusivity in the

educational system, influencing the training and professional development of teachers.

The foundation of teacher education in India was laid during British rule with the establishment of normal schools in the 19th century. These schools primarily focused on training teachers for elementary education. The structure of teacher education was rudimentary and based on Western ideals, with limited emphasis on pedagogical methods suited to Indian contexts.

After independence, India's education policies began to focus on the development of a unified and equitable education system. Kothari Commission (1964-66) played a pivotal role by recommending the establishment of teacher education programs at the secondary level. It emphasized the need for a professional approach to teaching, including a structured curriculum and the need for comprehensive teacher training. The Commission advocated for a two-year B.Ed. program and suggested strengthening teacher education institutions to improve educational quality. The National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1986 (revised in 1992) was a turning point, marking a shift toward quality and inclusive education. The policy recognized the importance of professional development for teachers and proposed significant reforms in secondary teacher education. It recommended the establishment of more teacher training colleges and emphasized continuous professional development through workshops and in-service training. It also recognized the need for more comprehensive teacher education programs, including pedagogical methods and subject-specific expertise.

The District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) were established to improve the quality of teacher education. The focus was on addressing regional disparities in educational access and ensuring that teachers in rural and remote areas received quality training. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005 further emphasized the need for teacher autonomy, reflective teaching practices, and learner-centered approaches. National Policy on Education (NPE) 2020 aims to revamp the entire educational framework, with a clear focus on enhancing teacher quality. It advocates for a four-year integrated teacher education program (ITEP) for secondary teachers, blending academic knowledge with pedagogical training. The policy also emphasizes the need for teachers to engage in continuous professional development and research, aligning them with global standards and ensuring they can cater to the diverse needs of students. National policies on education in India have evolved from a colonial-era focus on basic training to a comprehensive, holistic approach to secondary teacher education. These policies have significantly shaped the development of teacher education programs, ensuring that teachers are well-equipped to address the challenges of modern classrooms.

**Objective 2: To identify and evaluate the key provisions in the National Policy on Education (1968), National Policy on Education (1986), and National Education Policy (2020) that have specifically impacted secondary teacher education**

The National Policy on Education (NPE) documents of 1968, 1986, and 2020 have played a crucial role in shaping secondary

teacher education in India. Each policy brought reforms aimed at improving the quality of teacher training, addressing professional development, and adapting to the evolving educational needs of the nation.

- **National Policy on Education (1968):** NPE 1968 emphasized the importance of teacher education for improving the quality of education at all levels. Specifically for secondary education, it recommended strengthening teacher preparation programs through better training institutions. The policy advocated for the establishment of more teacher education colleges and the development of a national curriculum for teacher training. The provision for in-service training and the periodic updating of teachers' skills became a significant step toward ensuring teachers' professional growth (Government of India, 1968). Additionally, it highlighted the need for a professional approach to teaching, aiming to equip teachers with both content knowledge and pedagogical skills necessary for secondary education.
- **National Policy on Education (1986) <sup>[9]</sup>:** NPE 1986 marked a significant shift towards modernizing and improving teacher education across the country. It emphasized the professionalization of teaching and aimed to enhance the status of teachers through better training programs. Key provisions included the expansion of in-service training programs, a focus on improving the qualifications of teachers, and the establishment of District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) to improve teacher preparation at the grassroots level. The policy also recommended curriculum reforms, including the integration of a more learner-centered and activity-based approach to teaching, which directly influenced secondary teacher education by encouraging the development of skills in critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving.
- **National Education Policy (2020):** NEP 2020 introduced transformative changes in teacher education, focusing on enhancing the holistic development of teachers. One of its key provisions was the introduction of a four-year integrated Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program to replace the previous two-year B.Ed. This new approach emphasized interdisciplinary learning, experiential learning, and digital literacy, aligning teacher education with contemporary global educational trends (Ministry of Education, 2020) <sup>[8]</sup>. Furthermore, the NEP 2020 stressed continuous professional development (CPD) through regular training, workshops, and mentoring, recognizing the importance of keeping teachers updated with modern pedagogical practices and technological advancements. The policy also highlighted the need for teachers to acquire 21st-century skills, including digital competency and critical thinking, to meet the challenges of modern secondary education.

These policies have progressively enhanced the quality of secondary teacher education in India by focusing on teacher qualifications, curriculum reforms, and continuous professional



development, while addressing the evolving needs of the educational landscape.

**Objective 3: To assess the impact of national policies on the professional development and capacity-building programs for secondary school teachers in India**

National policies in India have played a crucial role in shaping the professional development and training of secondary school teachers, evolving over time to address the needs of a dynamic education system. Since independence, the government has recognized the importance of a well-trained teaching workforce in improving educational outcomes, and various policies have been introduced to address these needs.

In the early post-independence period, India's education policies were primarily focused on expanding access to education and rebuilding the education infrastructure. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1968 emphasized the importance of teacher training, particularly through the establishment of training institutions like the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs). However, teacher training programs were largely limited to pre-service education, with little focus on continuous professional development (Govinda, 2002) [3].

NPE of 1986 marked a shift toward improving the quality of education, recognizing that the effectiveness of teachers is central to quality outcomes. This policy advocated for regular in-service training and the professional development of teachers, suggesting a more holistic approach (Jha, 2006) [6]. The Program of Action (POA) 1992, following the NPE of 1986, outlined the need for innovative teacher training methods and periodic assessment of teacher competencies to ensure high teaching standards.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Right to Education Act (RTE) 2009 further reinforced the need for qualified teachers and specified the requirement for regular professional development. This was in line with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, which emphasized that teacher training should be responsive to the needs of students and contemporary pedagogical trends (NCERT, 2005) [11]. The National Mission for Teachers and Teaching (NMTT), launched in 2011, set the foundation for professional development through continuous training, especially with the advent of digital tools and teaching methodologies.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 takes a more comprehensive approach, recognizing the significance of continuous professional development for teachers. It advocates for the creation of a National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) and the establishment of a National Research Foundation for Teacher Development (MHRD, 2020). These initiatives aim to support teachers' growth through competency-based assessments, research, and digital training tools, making professional development an integral part of teachers' careers. Despite these advancements, challenges remain in terms of equitable access to quality training programs, especially in rural and underserved regions (Banerjee, 2018) [1]. Therefore, while national policies have progressively emphasized the importance

of teacher professional development, their implementation and impact are still evolving.

**Objective 4: To investigate the role of national education policies in promoting uniformity and standardization of secondary teacher education across different regions and states in India**

Government intervention in teacher education in India has played a significant role in standardizing teacher education programs across different states and regions, primarily through national education policies. These policies have sought to address various disparities in education quality, ensuring a more uniform approach to teacher preparation throughout the country. The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968 was one of the earliest attempts by the Indian government to streamline teacher education. The policy emphasized the need for rigorous teacher training and established guidelines for the quality of teacher education programs. This was further reinforced in the NPE of 1986, which aimed to improve the overall standard of education and included provisions for the professional development of teachers. The 1986 NPE recommended the establishment of institutions for teacher training at various levels to ensure that teachers across the country were adequately trained.

The introduction of National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in 1995 marked a crucial turning point in the standardization process. The NCTE was tasked with overseeing and regulating teacher education across the country, ensuring that programs met specific academic and professional standards. It developed detailed guidelines for the structure and content of teacher education programs, thereby promoting uniformity in the quality of training offered to prospective teachers.

National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009, developed by the NCTE, further contributed to the standardization by providing a comprehensive framework for teacher education. This document focused on the importance of developing a teacher's pedagogical skills, knowledge of subject matter, and ability to adapt to diverse classroom settings (NCTE, 2009) [10]. It aimed to align teacher education programs with the broader educational goals of the country, including promoting inclusive education, critical thinking, and technology integration. Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009, also influenced teacher education in India by mandating certain minimum qualifications for teachers. This legislation emphasized the need for professionally trained teachers in schools, further promoting the uniformity of teacher education standards across states.

Government intervention, particularly through national education policies, has been crucial in standardizing teacher education in India. By setting clear guidelines, establishing regulatory bodies like the NCTE, and enacting laws such as the RTE, the government has made substantial progress in ensuring that teacher education programs across different regions of the country maintain a certain level of quality and consistency.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The study underscores the critical influence of national policies on the evolution and development of secondary teacher

education in India. By tracing the historical trajectory of various educational reforms and policies, the study highlights how government initiatives and frameworks have consistently shaped the quality, accessibility, and relevance of teacher education. From the early days of post-independence education policy to more contemporary frameworks like the National Policy on Education (1968), National Policy on Education (1986)<sup>[9]</sup>, and the National Education Policy (2020), it is evident that these policies have worked to streamline teacher training, professional development, and curriculum design. National policies have aimed to address systemic issues in teacher quality, including the enhancement of pedagogical skills, the incorporation of inclusive education, and the fostering of a more holistic approach to teaching. The study concludes that while significant strides have been made in the formulation and implementation of these policies, challenges remain in terms of policy consistency, resource allocation, and effective monitoring. To strengthen secondary teacher education, it is essential for future policies to focus on enhancing institutional capacities, continuous professional development, and a strong alignment with emerging global trends in education.

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