

Empowering Educators: A Critical Insight into the National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) under NEP 2020

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Abstract—National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) is a commendable measure initiated by NEP 2020 in supporting and strengthening school teachers in the country. Under the aegis of the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), the mission itself believes that teachers require more than just training but also continued mentorship, fresh ideas, and the comfort of a peer support community. At the core of NMM is mentorship: bringing experienced teachers into schools to support them both professionally and personally. Expert mentors are now working with teachers on areas like early literacy, classroom management, digital tools and inclusive practices through a special digital platform. Still in its infancy, NMM has been gaining interest from thousands of educators and has generated meaningful conversations about best teaching practices and teacher wellness. But it is also confronted with challenges — usage of mentors is low, digital access and digital issues in rural areas and the requirement for local content.

This article examines some of the goals and accomplishments of the mission, as well as its strengths and weaknesses. It showcases how NMM has the potential revolutionize the education system by starting with those who influence it the most—our teachers. With the proper support and ongoing assessment, NMM has the potential to be a powerful agent of change in Indian education.

Index Terms—Mentoring, NEP 2020, professional support, teacher development

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers play an irreplaceable role in shaping not just young minds, but the future of a nation. In a diverse and evolving educational landscape like India's, the expectations placed on teachers are immense—they are not just knowledge providers but mentors, guides, problem-solvers, and lifelong learners. Despite numerous reform initiatives over the years, many

teachers—especially in government and rural schools—have lacked sustained professional support beyond initial training. This gap has often led to professional isolation, stagnation, and a disconnect from evolving best practices in pedagogy.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 brings fresh momentum to the cause of teacher empowerment by recognizing that meaningful, continuous support must go hand in hand with capacity building. One of the most promising proposals under this vision is the National Mission for Mentoring (NMM)—a structured, nation-wide initiative led by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). As outlined in the *Bluebook on Mentoring*, the NMM is envisioned as a dynamic framework where experienced educators, domain experts, and thought leaders come together to mentor teachers through peer-based, contextual, and inclusive support systems.

This mission isn't merely about training; it's about building a culture of mentorship, where teachers are encouraged to learn from one another, reflect on their practice, and grow in a safe, collaborative environment. It acknowledges that professional development must be ongoing, decentralized, and personalized to meet the diverse needs of educators across India. The digital integration and equity-oriented design of the mission ensure that even those in remote areas are not left behind.

II. NEED FOR A NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING (NMM)

In today's unprecedented demands and challenges, teachers require new solutions. The community of educators in education in itself is rich with experts, who have the knowledge and skills to contribute towards problem-solving and capacity building of

peers. Systems that are able to adapt to the continuously changing environment, can provide their citizens with the right mix of skills to enable them to lead fulfilling personal and professional lives. This leads to inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Therefore, a mentoring system provides a solution to address the existing gaps in a more decentralised manner. These are the gaps in accessing expertise, continuous professional development, connecting with peers from similar contexts and the absence of a platform to leverage cross-learning. Mentoring offers individuals the opportunity to engage in learning with an experienced professional. The different ways of engaging in Mentor-Mentee interactions can enable skill and capacity building for teachers. This provides opportunities to network with experts, engage in forums to exchange learnings and best practices and disseminate findings across various domains such as school leadership and management, curriculum, pedagogy, educational policies and assessments etc. The hierarchical, unidirectional, top-down flow of information and learning, often designed as training events, have been prevalent woes in the current education system. Mentoring has an opportunity to soften the boundaries of hierarchies and bring a fundamental paradigm shift. It will make learning more peer and community-led. It will also make learning more personalised and continuous. Mentoring gives rise to a collaborative agency for stakeholders where the community fosters the spirit of learning, reflection and sharing towards capacity building.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING (NMM)

1. To give teachers regular, structured guidance
Many teachers, especially in rural and government schools, do not get enough ongoing support after their basic training. The NMM aims to change this by giving every teacher a mentor— an experienced educator who can guide them regularly through planned sessions. A new teacher in a village school may struggle with handling a large class. Through NMM, she gets connected to a senior mentor who gives her tips on classroom management, student engagement, and lesson planning every month. This ongoing help improves her confidence and teaching quality.

2. To create a strong network of expert mentors
NMM wants to bring together a group of skilled and experienced educators—like retired principals, award-winning teachers, and subject experts—who are willing to share their knowledge with others. These mentors will guide teachers in different areas like pedagogy, digital tools, and student well-being.

A science teacher wants to learn new ways to explain experiments using simple home materials. He connects with a subject expert mentor through the NMM portal, who shares videos, low- cost ideas, and gives feedback after observing a class.

3. To help teachers grow in knowledge, emotion, and ethics

Good teaching is not just about knowing the subject. A teacher also needs emotional intelligence (to handle students kindly) and strong ethics (to stay honest and fair). NMM supports teachers to develop in **all these** areas. A mentor helps a teacher learn how to support children with learning difficulties without making them feel left out. The mentor also discusses professional values like fairness, punctuality, and respect for students.

4. To build learning communities among teachers

NMM encourages teachers to not work alone, but learn together. Teachers can form groups— online or offline—where they discuss challenges, share ideas, and reflect on their work. This makes professional development more friendly, meaningful, and regular. Every second Saturday, teachers from five nearby schools meet online to talk about how to make lessons more fun. They share stories of what worked and what didn't, and the mentor gives suggestions.

5. To reduce the gap between urban and rural schools

Teachers in remote areas often don't have access to good training or expert guidance. NMM uses digital platforms, mobile apps, Braille and audio resources, and local language materials to ensure that every teacher—whether in a village or a city—gets equal support. A tribal school teacher gets access to training videos in her local language through the NMM portal. She also receives a printed version of the NMM Bluebook and attends audio mentoring sessions on her phone.

IV. STAGES OF MISSION EXECUTION:

The National Mission for Mentoring is like a well-planned journey. It brings together Mentors, Mentees (teachers), and Administrators to work toward one goal: helping teachers grow professionally. The mission will be achieved through **five key stages**:

1. Preparation Stage What happens?

- Schools and education departments will assess what kind of help teachers need.
- They will also check what resources (like expert teachers, digital tools) are already available.
- Planning for how mentoring will be done starts here.

Example:

A district education officer finds that many teachers in their area need help with using digital tools. This need is noted, and suitable mentors are identified.

2. Capacity Building Stage

- Mentors are trained in **how to mentor** others.
- They learn how to guide, communicate, give feedback, and support mentees.

Example:

60 experienced teachers from across India are selected. They attend workshops where they learn how to support others using online tools and emotional support techniques.

3. Familiarity Stage

- Mentors now practice mentoring in real or demo sessions.

- Feedback is collected from mentees.
- Methods are improved based on this feedback.

Example: A mentor practices online mentoring with a group of 5 teachers. After the session, the teachers say they want more examples and shorter videos. So, the mentor adjusts the next session.

4. Strengthening Stage

- Real mentoring begins across schools and districts.
- Mentors and mentees meet regularly (online or in-person).
- The process is tracked to measure if it's helping teachers.

Example:

A mentor regularly meets with 10 teachers every two weeks. Their sessions are about classroom management. After 3 months, the teachers report better student engagement in their classes.

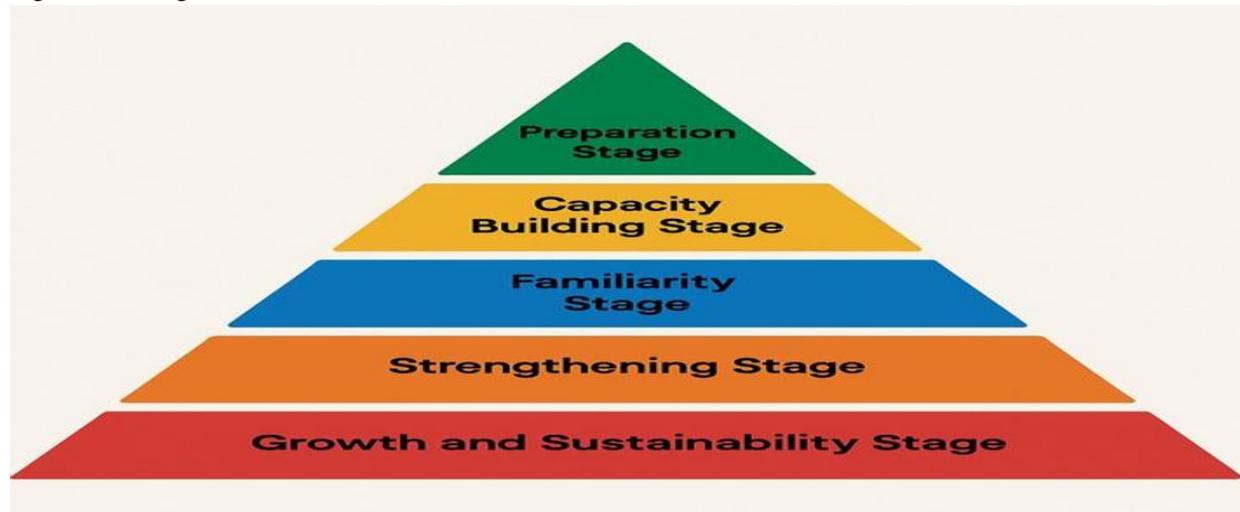
5. Growth and Sustainability Stage

- The mentoring system now becomes part of the school system.
- More teachers and mentors join in.
- Motivation is kept high by giving certificates, recognition, or incentives.

Example:

A teacher receives a certificate and is recognized as an "Active Mentee" in a school event. This encourages others to join and take mentoring seriously.

Figure no 1: stages of mission execution



V. KEY FEATURES OF THE NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING (NMM)

1. Structured Mentor-Mentee Model

- Teachers (mentees) receive regular guidance from expert mentors.
- The relationship is continuous, supportive, and goal-oriented.

Example: A mentor helps a teacher plan lessons, manage classrooms, and reflect on their teaching practices over time.

2. National Pool of Expert Mentors

- Selected mentors include highly experienced educators, some of whom are Padma awardees.
- Expertise covers areas like pedagogy, emotional well-being, digital education, and inclusive learning.

Example: A mentor skilled in inclusive education helps teachers address the needs of children with learning disabilities.

3. Digital Platform for Mentoring

- A dedicated NMM web portal (by NCTE) facilitates online interaction.
- Both real-time (live) and self-paced (asynchronous) sessions are supported.

Example: A teacher logs into the portal after school hours to attend a session on using digital tools in teaching.

4. Diverse Mentoring Domains

The NMM provides mentoring support across 17 important domains that reflect the varied needs of teachers. These areas aim to improve both teaching and student learning outcomes:

1. Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN)
2. Multilingual Education
3. Classroom Management
4. Inclusive Education
5. Digital and Technology-enabled Teaching
6. 21st-century Skills
7. Leadership and School Transformation
8. Holistic Progress Cards
9. Art-Integrated, Sports-Integrated & Vocational Education
10. Mental Health and Well-being
11. Gender Sensitization

12. Assessment Reforms

13. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

14. Teaching in Local Language/Mother Tongue

15. Experiential and Play-Based Learning

16. Curriculum and Pedagogical Reforms

17. Reflective Teaching Practices

Example: A teacher interested in improving student engagement in early grades can choose mentoring support in “Play-Based Learning” or “Foundational Literacy & Numeracy.”

5. Accessibility and Inclusion

- Resources like the NMM Bluebook are available in Braille and audiobook formats.
- Local languages are used to reach teachers in remote areas.

Example: A visually impaired teacher accesses the Bluebook using an audio file and participates in the program.

6. Pilot Phase and Gradual Expansion

- Started in July 2022 in 30 schools (KVs, JNVs, CBSE schools).
- Early feedback from these pilots informs national rollout.

7. Feedback and Monitoring System

- Mentoring sessions are monitored for quality.
- Continuous feedback from teachers is used to improve the process.

VI. KEY STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED IN NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING (NMM)

1. Mentors

These are experienced and skilled educators who guide and support other teachers. They may include:

- Retired principals or senior teachers
- Subject experts (in pedagogy, mental health, digital learning, etc.)
- Award-winning teachers or professionals with a strong background in education

Role of Mentors:

- Help teachers grow professionally
- Share knowledge, tools, and best practices
- Provide emotional and professional support

Example: A mentor guides a new teacher on how to handle multi-grade classrooms in a rural school.

2. Mentees

These are the teachers who receive guidance and support from mentors. They can be:

- New teachers
- In-service teachers from PM SHRI schools, government, and aided schools
- Teachers seeking help in specific areas like classroom management or digital learning

Role of Mentees:

- Take part in mentoring sessions
- Ask questions, reflect, and improve their teaching
- Apply what they learn in their classrooms

Example: A teacher struggling with online teaching gets help from a mentor to use digital tools effectively.

3. Administrators These are individuals or institutions that manage and support the mentoring process. They include:

- NCTE and NCERT
- District-level officers, SCERT, DIETs
- Technology partners or platform managers

Role of the Administrators:

- Plan and oversee the program
- Select and train mentors
- Monitor progress and ensure quality mentoring
- Collect feedback and refine the system

Example: A DIET official organizes monthly review meetings to track how mentoring is helping teachers in the district

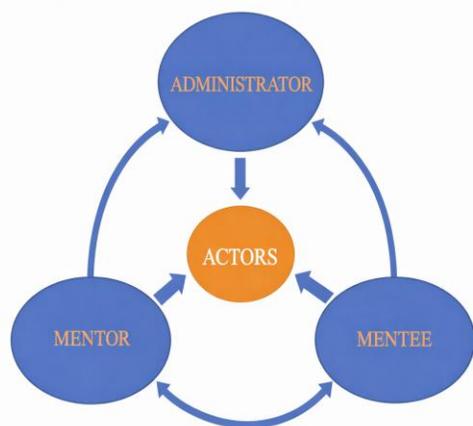


Figure 2. Adapted from *National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) Bluebook* (p. 14), by National Council for Teacher Education, 2022, NCTE. Copyright 2022 by NCTE.

VII. STRENGTHS OF THE NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING (NMM)

The NMM brings several advantages to India's teacher education ecosystem:

- **Mentorship Culture:** Builds a lasting system of support and professional bonding.
- **Policy Alignment:** Directly fulfills NEP 2020's vision for empowered, reflective teachers.
- **Technology Enabled:** Uses digital platforms to overcome geographic barriers.
- **Inclusivity:** Prioritizes accessibility with resources in Braille and audio formats.
- **Professional Growth:** Helps teachers identify gaps, self-reflect, and improve practice.

VIII. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING (NMM)

Despite its promise, NMM faces several challenges that need urgent attention:

- **Limited Mentor Base:** 60 mentors for a nation with millions of teachers is insufficient.
- **Digital Divide:** Many rural and tribal schools still lack access to digital infrastructure.
- **Scalability:** Difficulties in replicating quality mentoring models at scale.
- **Sustainability:** Maintaining continuous engagement from mentors and mentees over time.

Local Context Gaps: One-size-fits-all mentoring may not suit diverse linguistic and cultural needs.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS TO MAKE NATIONAL MISSION FOR MENTORING (NMM) MORE IMPACTFUL AND SUSTAINABLE

To make NMM more impactful and sustainable, the following steps are suggested:

- **Expand Mentor Pool:** Include retired teachers, SCERT faculty, and district resource persons.
- **Localization of Content:** Develop regional language modules with cultural sensitivity.
- **Strengthen Institutions:** Use DIETs and BRCs as mentoring hubs at the grassroots level.
- **Incentivize Mentors:** Offer recognition, certification, or financial incentives to mentors.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Institutionalize regular assessments and impact reviews.

X.CONCLUSION:

The National Mission for Mentoring is a landmark initiative to elevate the quality of education by focusing on what matters most — teachers. As India works towards the goals of NEP 2020 and Viksit Bharat @2047, empowering educators through mentoring is not just desirable but essential.

For NMM to reach its full potential, it must be institutionalized, expanded, and continuously evaluated. A well-supported teacher is the foundation of an empowered learner, and NMM holds the key to this transformation.

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