

# A Study of the Perception of Teachers and Pupil Teachers Towards National Professional Standards for Teachers

Devendra Singh<sup>1</sup>, Rachna<sup>2</sup> and Pavan Kumar<sup>3\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, HNB Garhwal University (A Central University), Srinagar, Uttarakhand, India

<sup>2</sup>Scholar, Department of Education, HNB Garhwal University (A Central University), Srinagar, Uttarakhand, India

<sup>3</sup>Department of Education, Regional Institute of Education, NCERT, Shyamla Hills, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

\*Corresponding author: pavankmredu@gmail.com

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## ABSTRACT

The National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) is an initiative under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, designed to redefine and elevate the teaching profession in India. The present study has been initiated to investigate the perception of teachers and pupil teachers towards National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) in relation to gender and stages of the teaching profession. The representative sample consisted of 100 teachers and 100 pupil teachers of private senior secondary schools and private B.Ed. colleges, respectively, from the Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh state. The perception of teachers and pupil teachers was assessed through a self-developed questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed based on five dimensions related to perception, such as awareness, contextual, procedural, implementation, and possible impact. Statistical techniques, mean, S.D., and t-test have been used to analyze the data. The findings of the study indicate that teachers demonstrated a more favorable perception regarding NPST as compared to pupil teachers. Female participants displayed a more positive perception than their male counterparts, with female pupil teachers showing the most positive perspective among all categories. Male and female teachers expressed similar views regarding NPST; that indicates gender does not shape their views among the teaching community.

**Keywords:** National Professional Standards for Teachers, Perception, Teachers, Pupil Teachers, Gender, Profession

Professional standards for teachers act as a structure. It defines the necessary knowledge, skills, and attributes of teachers that they must carry to ensure quality education. These standards are benchmarks for effective teaching. These standards cover multiple domains of teaching. These are knowledge of the subject, skills for pedagogy, techniques of classroom management, assessment, and ethical conduct. Teachers are better equipped to meet diverse learners' needs by aligning teaching practices with standards. They will be able to foster inclusive learning environments and continuously improve their instructional methods. The professional standards maintain the integrity of the teaching profession and help to achieve better student outcomes. The NEP-2020 has offered suggestions to enhance the work setting, career regulation process,

and professional development map of the teachers. The National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST) also seek to fulfill the objective of NEP 2020 by ensuring that every learner receives a good and equal education. NPST desires that all teachers be enthusiastic, proficient, competent, and prepared to instruct students of every age group. The most talented and the best individuals should be attracted to be teachers (NCTE, 2023). NPST demonstrates a new mentality whereby teachers are perceived as valued change-makers who should be supported on a regular basis, appreciated, and given opportunities

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to learn and develop their careers. The professional standards will be reformulated and updated countrywide in 2030 and announced every ten years after it (NEP, 2020). High-quality teaching is to be maintained by means of professional standards. They assist them in staying updated with new ways. They help in the construction of trust and teaching professional responsibility. The teaching standards explain and prove what the quality of teaching is. They describe effective practice as it should be. These norms could be across a career in terms of teachers. They provide a clear career ladder and structure between the beginning level and the high level. This is a debatable practice of professional standards. Some teachers are thinking of it as an avenue of empowerment, whereas some of them are viewing it as a sort of wall to the profession. In his research, Ramchand (2021) mentioned that globally, accreditation of career growth and development is done using teacher standards. Teachers view them as a useful tool of clarity and progress, and others condemn them as a means of control and regulation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 suggests a set of professional standards for educators. It connects accountability, professional learning, and governance. It has a clear outline on different career levels and vertical professional mobility. NEP (2020) provides the following explanation, stating that these standards are developed in order to present the nature and scope of the task of a teacher. Their primary task is to contour equitable working and service terms. They assist in revamping and modernizing teacher education programs. They make formalization of registration and certification processes easy. They promote life-long learning and control career advancement. The standards also assure consistency in the qualifications of teachers. Their primary responsibility is to offer mechanisms that are used to assess the quality of teaching. Through this process the teacher motivation can be boosted and the professional responsibilities and duties can be explained with ease. Although NEP (2020) states that the focus on specific components can be changed based on the context of their usage, it emphasizes that there must be a consistent framework that would help unite policies in all aspects of the teaching profession. The NPST takes the form of a stage-based organization to support the development of teachers and provides three levels of proficiency—proficient, advanced, and

expert—that become more complex. These phases cut across all instructional areas, grades, and all subject areas. Specific descriptors of each level explain what teachers at that level are supposed to be able to do and also where they can improve. This model, besides shedding light on the features of exemplary teaching, is also able to provide a clear design. This will be used to identify when teachers have achieved greater standards in matching roles and responsibilities with the competencies portrayed. The study is critical because there are a number of reasons as to why the proposed study is necessary. To begin with, professional standards development and implementation is part of the way to a high-quality education and teacher professionalism. Professional standards can be used as reference points that direct and shape teaching practices, which subsequently boosts teaching results. In accordance with the National Education Policy 2020, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT, 2022) published the guidelines of 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) to teachers, head teachers, and teacher educators. These standards deal with major aspects of teacher training, and they are created to satisfy the demands of the developing requirements of teachers. They suggest having an e-portfolio in order to enable the teachers to evaluate themselves, make targets, and measure the progress. Their Career Management and Progression (CMP) and the National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST) will also be linked to this e-portfolio. Thus, it is important to know how teachers and pupil teachers perceive these standards in order to judge their effectiveness and find the way to improve them. Second, although the importance of professional standards is acknowledged, it is necessary to determine what is the level to which teachers and pupil teachers are aware of and perceive the standards. Their awareness of professional standards and the knowledge of these standards will help to see the present situation and the possible gaps. Since the level of awareness is identified, the study will be able to contribute valuable insights on the professional development needs of teachers and pupil teachers to enable the targeted interventions and support systems. Further, investigating the impression of teachers and pupil teachers is crucial in the interpretation of their attitude and belief in the relevance and applicability of such standards

in their teaching practices. This observation can be used to understand possible barriers or obstacles in the implementation of professional standards and in formulating solutions to them. Moreover, the views of future teachers, as they will be reflected by the pupil teachers, will help them be ready to conform their practices to professional standards when they become teachers. Moreover, the research will determine the factors that impact the implementation and integration of standards of professionalism. The study could give useful recommendations to educational policymakers, institutions, and teacher training programs by investigating these factors, including awareness, contextual, procedural, implementation, and possible impact. These perceptions are important matters of understanding to optimize NPST and allied policies prior to the 2030 review. The knowledge about five factors will be used to make specific interventions at various levels, starting with the early teacher education curriculum to the leadership practices of schools. This study makes an effort to make NPST a vibrant tool of empowerment. one that does not just stipulate expectations but also provides each and every teacher, irrespective of gender and stage of career, to succeed and contribute to the overall objective of quality and fair education. Such recommendations can help in improving the level of awareness, knowledge, and application of the professional standards by teachers and pupil teachers, which results in better education.

### **Objectives**

The main aim of the research is to examine the perception of the National Professional Standards of Teachers by the various stakeholders who are called upon to enforce them to in-service teachers as well as those who are going to join the profession. To do this, the researcher will initially attempt to document the general attitudes of working teachers to each area of the NPST, which standards the working teachers hold in the highest, where they feel comfortable, and where they are challenged. Continuing on this, the data is disaggregated by gender, and the interpretation and prioritization of the standards are considered separately between male and female teachers; this will reveal any gender-related variation in confidence, relevance,

or hindrances in implementation of the standards. Parallel to this, the perspectives of pupil teachers have been examined of those who are still undergoing training, male and female, in a bid to know how these future professionals will interact with the NPST framework and what they expect of it in their future practice. It has also attempted to establish whether their anticipatory perceptions are different from those of the experienced teachers. Through making cross-cohort comparisons between these four groups (male teachers, female teachers, male pupil teachers, and female pupil teachers), the study will strive to create a complex, intersectional view of how the standards of professionalism are met in the teaching community as well as produce the insights that can inform more focused assistance, training, and policy changes.

### **Methodology**

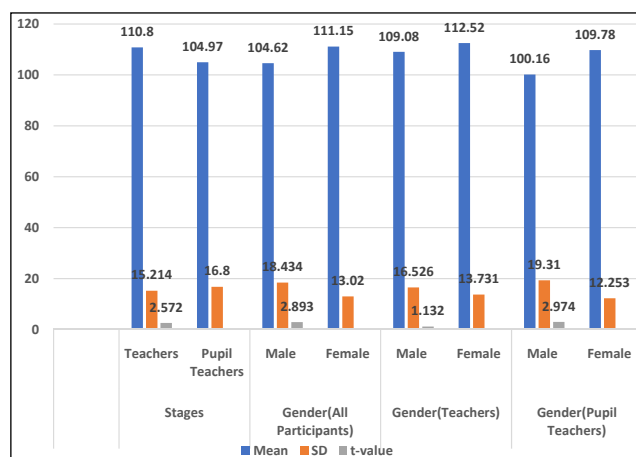
In the present study, the descriptive survey method has been used to compare the perception of teachers and pupil teachers. All the private B.Ed. colleges and private senior secondary schools in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh state are the population of the present study. In the present study, the sample was selected by the simple random sampling method. The total sample of the research consisted of 200 respondents (100 teachers and 100 pupil teachers). The researcher, under the guidance of experts from the Department of Education, Birla Campus, HNBSU, Srinagar, constructed the questionnaire tool. The tool has been constructed on the basis of five dimensions, which are awareness, contextual, procedural, implementation, and possible impact. The first dimension comprises four items related to awareness, the second dimension contains three items of contextual attributes, the third dimension of procedural attributes consists of two items, the fourth dimension about implementation has ten items, and the last dimension of possible impact includes eleven items. The face and content validity were considered while preparing the tool, and it has 30 final statements to analyze the perception. The whole procedure of tool construction has been done under the supervision of experts. Mean and standard deviation were used as descriptive statistics. A t-test was applied to investigate the significance of differences.

## Findings

The hypotheses of the study were tested with the assistance of the following table 1.

**Table 1:** Perception of Teachers and Pupil Teachers towards NPST

Basis		Mean	SD	t-value
Stages	Teachers	110.8	15.214	2.572
	Pupil Teachers	104.97	16.8	
Gender (All Participants)	Male	104.62	18.434	2.893
	Female	111.15	13.02	
Gender (Teachers)	Male	109.08	16.526	1.132
	Female	112.52	13.731	
Gender (Pupil Teachers)	Male	100.16	19.31	2.974
	Female	109.78	12.253	



**Fig. 1:** Graphical representation of the perception of teachers and pupil teachers towards NPST

The findings of the study reveal significant differences in the perception of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) across different groups. The perception of the teachers ( $M = 110.8$ ) was more favorable than that of the pupil teachers ( $M = 104.97$ ), which could be attributed to having a larger experience with the educational reforms and standard acceptance. The analysis of the gender difference between all participants showed that female participants ( $M = 111.15$ ), as compared to male participants ( $M = 104.62$ ), had a much more positive perception, and this indicates that female participants were more aware of the objectives of NPST or they were more in consonance with the objectives. No significant difference was also found in male ( $M = 109.08$ ) and female ( $M = 112.52$ ) teachers, which might be explained by their

equal experience and maturity. However, there was a considerable gender difference between the pupil teachers, as females ( $M = 109.78$ ) demonstrated a more positive perception compared to males ( $M = 100.16$ ). This may be a sign that female pupil teachers are better informed or open to the professional standards, which leads to the necessity of making male trainees more aware and active.

## DISCUSSION

The current research examined the attitude of teachers and pupil teachers towards the National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST) and how these views vary depending on the stage of teacher (teachers and pupil teachers) and gender (male and female) aspects. The results have significant implications for the understanding of professional standards by both teaching and non-teaching professionals.

### Overall Perception of Teachers and Pupil Teachers

The findings suggest that the teachers as well as the pupil teachers have an overall positive attitude towards the NPST. The average of the teachers (110.8) is marginally more than that of the pupil teachers (104.97), which implies that the in-service teachers might be a bit more oriented with the standards or recorded a higher and better orientation. This can be explained by the fact that they have an actual classroom experience that can enable them to better understand the relevance and applicability of the professional standards in actual teaching situations. Pupil teachers, however, even though they still portrayed positive perceptions, might have a lighter perception of the standards being more theoretical or prospective. The fact that their mean score is relatively lower might be an indication of their limited exposure to actual classroom issues, which usually inform a better comprehension of professional expectations.

### Gender-Based Perceptions among All Participants

When referring to gender among all participants, the results indicate that the female participants (mean = 111.15) indicated a little higher level of perceptions of NPST as compared to the male participants (mean = 104.62). The t-value, however,

shows that this difference is not significant. This implies that gender, on the whole, is not a decisive factor in the formation of attitudes to professional standards. The slightly higher mean among females may be interpreted in light of previous educational research, which often reports higher levels of commitment, reflective practice, and professional orientation among female teachers. Nevertheless, since the difference is not significant, it can be inferred that NPST is perceived similarly by both genders at a general level.

### **Gender-Based Perceptions among Teachers**

The female teachers (mean = 112.52) had a higher score on perception when compared to the male teachers (mean = 109.08). Nevertheless, the t-value once again shows that this difference is not significant. This result means that the attitudes of male and female educators are more or less similar to the professional standards. The slightly increased scores of the female teachers might be the result of the better fit with the professional expectations, which is perhaps because more focus was given to planning, classroom management, and student-centered practices. But, as the difference is not statistically significant, the NPST framework does seem equally acceptable and applicable to both male and female teachers.

### **Gender-Based Perceptions among Pupil Teachers**

The same pattern is followed among the pupil teachers. The score of female pupil teachers was more than that of male pupil teachers (mean = 109.78 and mean = 100.16, respectively). Although it shows a difference in mean scores, the t-value shows that the difference between the two groups is not significant. This indicates that female pupil teachers might have a bit more favourable perceptions; however, gender does not have a significant effect on how the pupil teachers perceive the NPST. The relatively smaller average mark of male pupil teachers can mean a variation in professional orientation or in connection to pedagogical systems in training. Nonetheless, it could be merely the effect of natural variation because the difference is statistically insignificant, and there could be no trend of gender-based difference.

### **Comparison across the Four Cohorts**

In comparing the four groups of male teachers, female teachers, male pupil teachers, and female pupil teachers, an obvious trend falls into place wherein in-service teachers receive a higher perception score than pupil teachers, and female participants in both stages score slightly higher than male participants. Nonetheless, the gender-based differences were not found to be statistically significant in any case. This means that the perceptions about NPST are relatively homogeneous between gender groups and the norms are widely prevalent between teachers and pupil teachers. A difference towards higher scores in in-service teachers implies that experience in teaching can bring appreciation of professional standards. This observation confirms that professional competencies are understood more when one is exposed to real classroom scenarios.

### **CONCLUSION**

The analysis shows that there are critical differences in the perception of NPST, which should be underlined with future-oriented approaches to teacher education. Since teacher perceptions were more favorable than those of the pupil teachers, there is a need to incorporate NPST awareness and training in the initial stages of teacher preparation. The fact that the female participants share a more positive perception also implies the potential of more effectively engaging male pupil teachers via inclusive and reflective learning conditions. In the future, this means that all the subsequent teachers, irrespective of gender or experience, should be aware of and appreciative of professional standards in order to create a sound, progressive, and responsible teaching force that is in line with the objectives of the National Education Policy.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The research results indicate that teachers and pupil teachers have fairly positive opinions about the National Professional Standards of Teachers (NPST). Nonetheless, certain areas of ignorance, readiness, and assurance were also noted (in particular, pupil teachers and teachers in rural private schools). In the light of these results, the following recommendations are proposed that are practical and specific to the context. Educational institutions should keep

abreast of the recent education reforms and policy changes. Trainings: Teacher educators and trainees should be oriented in regular seminars, workshops, and so on to familiarize themselves with the NPST framework. The standards should not be viewed as another policy document in the institution, but an institution should incorporate them into its daily academic discourses, teaching practice, and assessment. The implementation of the National Professional Standards for Teachers has prompted the teachers in the rural setting of the private schools to demur that they may have difficulties in securing good jobs. To get rid of this misconception, a special campaign must be initiated in the remote schools of the private sector. The pre-service teacher training courses should include the addition of National Professional Standards for Teachers documents to the curriculum.

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