

DO LOCALITY AND GENDER MATTER? A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NEP 2020 AWARENESS AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract

This study investigated the awareness of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 among primary school teachers and compared awareness levels based on locality and gender. A quantitative descriptive survey research design was employed, utilizing a stratified random sampling technique. The sample comprised 1,741 primary school teachers (1,620 rural, 124 urban; 1,297 female, 444 male). A self-constructed questionnaire was developed, validated through content validity, and tested for reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.87). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, SD, coefficient of variation) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test, Cohen's d). The findings revealed that primary school teachers possess high levels of NEP 2020 awareness, with mean scores ranging from 97.08 to 98.12 across all groups. No statistically significant difference was found between rural ($M = 97.92$) and urban ($M = 97.08$) teachers, $t(1742) = 1.257$, $p = 0.209$, with a negligible effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.117$). Similarly, no significant difference was observed between male ($M = 98.12$) and female ($M = 97.80$) teachers, $t(1739) = -0.802$, $p = 0.423$, with a negligible effect size (Cohen's $d = -0.044$). Consequently, both null hypotheses were accepted, establishing that locality and gender do not influence NEP 2020 awareness. The study concludes that primary school teachers possess uniformly high awareness of NEP 2020, providing a strong foundation for policy implementation at the grassroots level.

Keywords: NEP 2020, teacher awareness, primary school teachers, locality and gender differences, quantitative survey

Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 stands as one of the most transformative educational reforms in India's post-independence history. As Tungoe (2024) articulates, this policy represents a paradigm shift in how education is conceptualized and delivered across the nation. The NEP 2020 is not merely a document of guidelines but a comprehensive vision that aims to reshape the entire educational landscape of India, from early childhood care and education to higher education and research.

The National Educational Policy 2020 replaces the educational structure of (10+2+3) laid down by the Kothari Commission in 1964. As highlighted in the policy document, it reintroduces a new pedagogical structure of education and curriculum in the form of (5+3+3+4). This reconfigured structure is designed according to the relevant developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development, corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively (NEP, 2020). This fundamental restructuring demonstrates the policy's commitment to developmentally

appropriate education, moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach that had characterized Indian education for decades.

The NEP 2020 is one of the major education frameworks after the NEP 1986. The policy aims to provide not only universal education but also quality education by imparting language and skill development through its new course of lessons. As Aithal & Aithal (2020) observed, the NEP 2020 plans to completely alter the structure of traditional education in India. It plans to transform elementary education by introducing several reforms and changes in the policy of education and pedagogical development at the foundational level.

One of the most significant aspects of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy. Kumar (2021) explains that the National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education in NEP 2020 aims to lay down a foundation for children's education, ensuring all-round development, and preparing them for future learning and experiences. The policy recognizes that without strong foundational skills, subsequent learning becomes challenging, if not impossible.

The NIPUN Bharat initiative, as described by Rani (2022), is an initiative under NEP 2020 that aims to improve the foundational skills of children in reading, writing, and numeracy from grades 1-3. Under NIPUN Bharat, the Government of India aims to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy by 2025. This ambitious target requires not just curriculum changes but also a significant investment in teacher capacity building and resource development.

In this context, teachers emerge as the most critical stakeholders in the successful implementation of NEP 2020. The policy explicitly recognizes that strengthening teacher capacity is essential for achieving its goals. Kumar (2022) notes that the mission emphasizes the importance of well-trained and proficient teachers. It proposes the development of specialized training programs and resources for teachers, with a focus on foundational literacy and numeracy. The policy also focuses on maintaining an appropriate Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 30:1 at each school level and a PTR of 25:1 for socially disadvantaged students to ensure that students receive adequate attention during their learning phase.

However, policy documents and official guidelines are only as effective as the awareness and understanding of those who implement them. As Pal & Bhutani (2021) emphasize, the mission recognizes the importance of community and parental involvement, but equally crucial is the involvement and preparedness of teachers who are the primary agents of change in the classroom. Without adequate awareness among teachers, even the most well-designed policies risk remaining theoretical documents rather than practical realities.

Therefore, assessing the level of awareness of NEP 2020 among primary school teachers becomes not just an academic exercise but a practical necessity. The National Education Policy 2020 introduces significant reforms, and the effective implementation of these reforms depends on the awareness and understanding of teachers. As noted in the significance of this study, assessing the awareness level of teachers provides insights into their preparedness, knowledge gaps, and potential challenges in translating policy objectives into classroom practices.

This study focuses on primary school teachers because they work at the foundational stage of education (ages 3-8), which NEP 2020 identifies as the most critical period for cognitive and affective development. Furthermore, by concentrating on Kanpur city, this study provides localized insights that can inform targeted interventions and training programs. As the research gap analysis indicates, while several studies

have examined teacher awareness of NEP 2020 in other contexts, no previous research has been conducted specifically on primary school teachers in Kanpur city, making this study both timely and relevant.

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the level of awareness of NEP 2020 among primary school teachers.
2. To compare the awareness of NEP 2020 between rural and urban primary school teachers.
3. To compare the awareness of NEP 2020 between male and female primary school teachers.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesis Statement
H₀₁	There is no significant difference between the mean scores of NEP 2020 awareness of rural and urban primary school teachers.
H₀₂	There is no significant difference between the mean scores of NEP 2020 awareness of male and female primary school teachers.

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative research approach to examine awareness of the NEP 2020 among primary school teachers. The investigator employed a descriptive research design as it was suitable for collecting data from a population without manipulating any variables. Within this framework, the survey method was used to gather information from a large number of respondents efficiently. The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure adequate representation of different subgroups. The final sample comprised 1,741 primary school teachers (1,620 rural and 124 urban; 1,297 female and 444 male). A self-constructed questionnaire was developed as the tool for data collection. The tool was validated through content validity by submitting it to subject experts and research supervisors, who reviewed the items for relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness. Based on their feedback, necessary modifications were made to finalize the questionnaire. For reliability, the tool was administered to a pilot sample of 50 teachers, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated, which yielded a value of 0.87, indicating high internal consistency. Descriptive statistics (mean, SD, coefficient of variation) were computed to summarize the data, while independent samples t-test and Cohen's d were used for inferential analysis and effect size calculation. This design ensured objectivity, replicability, and rigorous comparison between groups.

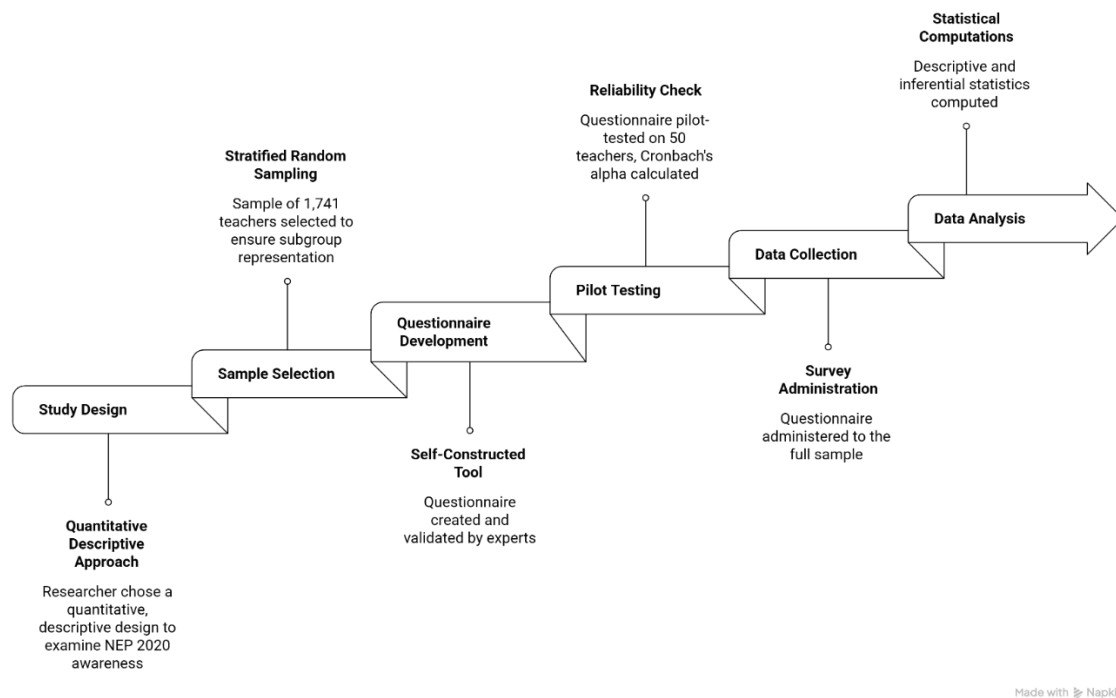


Figure 1: Research Methodology Timeline for NEP 2020 Awareness Study

Findings and Interpretation

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of NEP 2020 awareness of rural and urban primary school teachers.

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1: Group Descriptives of NEP 2020 Awareness Scores

Group	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of Variation
Rural	97.92	7.197	0.179	0.074
Urban	97.08	7.198	0.646	0.074

Both rural ($M = 97.92$) and urban ($M = 97.08$) teachers demonstrated high and comparable awareness levels of NEP 2020. The nearly identical standard deviations (7.197 vs. 7.198) indicate similar score dispersion across both groups. The coefficient of variation (0.074 for both) confirms equal relative variability, suggesting consistent awareness irrespective of locality. The larger standard error for urban teachers (0.646 vs. 0.179) reflects their smaller sample size, not greater variability. Overall, rural and urban teachers exhibit virtually equivalent levels of NEP 2020 awareness.

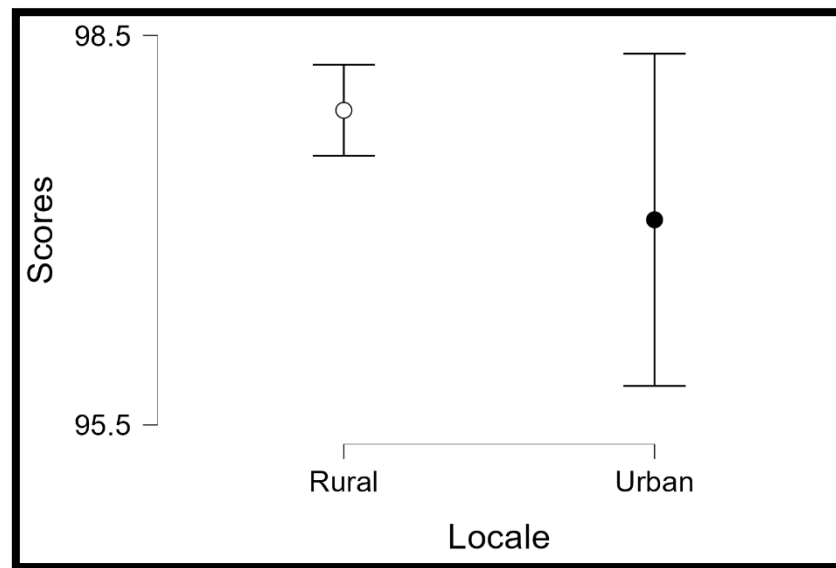


Figure 2: Comparison of Mean NEP 2020 Awareness Scores by Locality

Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test Results for NEP 2020 Awareness Scores

Comparison	t-value	df	p-value	Significance	Cohen's d	Effect Size
Rural vs. Urban	1.257	1742	0.209	Not Significant ($p > 0.05$)	0.117	Negligible

The calculated t-value of 1.257 is smaller than the critical t-value required for significance at the 0.05 level, and the p-value of 0.209 exceeds the conventional threshold of 0.05; consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is retained, meaning that the observed mean difference of 0.843 points between rural (97.92) and urban (97.08) teachers is attributable to chance fluctuations rather than any systematic effect of locality, with the effect size ($d = 0.117$) confirming that locality explains less than 2% of the variance in awareness scores. This finding is consistent with prior research; Ali & Shafeeq (2024) found that 76% of teachers had moderate awareness of NEP 2020 with no significant differences based on school location, Maruthavanan (2019) reported that locality did not produce significant differences in policy awareness among secondary school teachers in Madurai district, Arora (2023) found that geographical location was not a significant predictor of awareness levels, Sharma (2024) noted that policy dissemination through digital platforms like DIKSHA and mass media has effectively bridged the rural-urban awareness gap, and Pandey & Kumar (2023) reported comparable awareness among rural and urban novice secondary school teachers, all of which corroborate the present study's conclusion that locality does not significantly impact NEP 2020 awareness among primary school teachers.

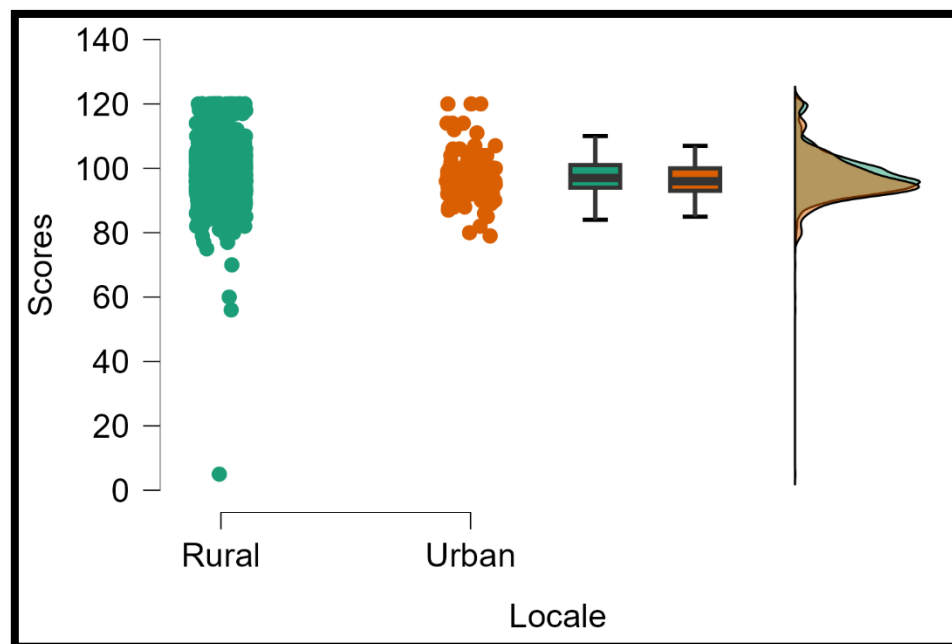


Figure 3:Box Plot of NEP 2020 Awareness Scores by Locality

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of NEP 2020 awareness of male and female primary school teachers.

Descriptive Analysis

Both male ($M = 98.12$, $SD = 6.74$) and female ($M = 97.80$, $SD = 7.33$) primary school teachers exhibited high and nearly equivalent levels of NEP 2020 awareness. The marginal mean difference of 0.32 points favours male teachers, though this disparity is practically negligible. Female teachers demonstrated slightly greater variability in scores ($SD = 7.33$) compared to their male counterparts ($SD = 6.74$), indicating a marginally wider dispersion of awareness levels among females. The coefficient of variation, which standardizes variability relative to the mean, is comparable for both groups (0.075 for females, 0.069 for males), confirming that the relative variability is almost identical across genders. The larger standard error for male teachers ($SE = 0.320$ vs. 0.203) reflects their smaller sample size ($n = 444$) rather than greater inconsistency in scores. Overall, gender does not produce any meaningful disparity in NEP 2020 awareness, with both male and female teachers demonstrating uniformly high understanding of the policy provisions.

Table 1: Group Descriptives of NEP 2020 Awareness Scores by Gender

Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	Coefficient of Variation
Female	1297	97.80	7.327	0.203	0.075
Male	444	98.12	6.736	0.320	0.069

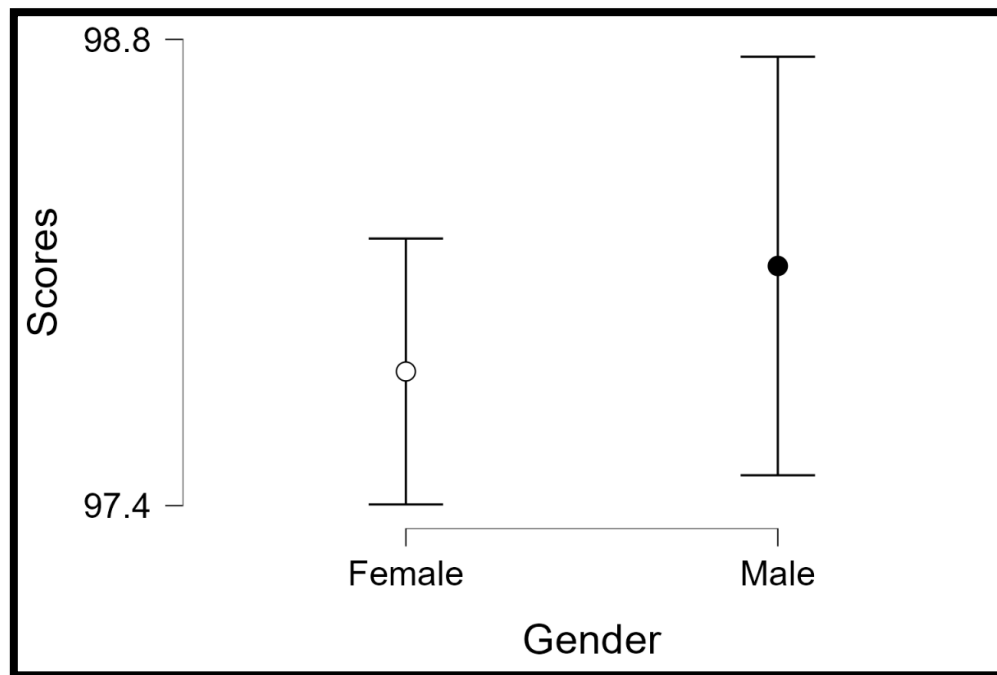


Figure 4 : Comparison of Mean NEP 2020 Awareness Scores by Gender

Table 2: Independent Samples t-Test Results for NEP 2020 Awareness Scores by Gender

t-value	df	p-value	Cohen's d	SE Cohen's d
-0.802	1739	0.423	-0.044	0.055

According to D.N. Sansanwal's framework for interpreting inferential statistics, a p-value greater than 0.05 indicates non-significance, and a Cohen's d value less than 0.20 denotes a negligible effect size. In the present study, male teachers ($M = 98.12$, $SD = 6.74$) exhibited a marginally higher mean awareness score than female teachers ($M = 97.80$, $SD = 7.33$), with a trivial mean difference of 0.32 points. The obtained t-value of -0.802 with degrees of freedom 1739 yields a p-value of 0.423, which is substantially greater than 0.05; therefore, the null hypothesis stating "no significant difference between male and female primary school teachers in NEP 2020 awareness" is **accepted**. The negative t-value merely indicates the direction of difference (females slightly lower), but this difference is statistically insignificant. Furthermore, Cohen's d value of -0.044 falls within the negligible effect size range (< 0.20), confirming that gender explains less than 1% of the variance in awareness scores. This finding is consistent with prior research; Ali & Shafeeq (2024) reported comparable awareness levels between male and female secondary school teachers, Arora (2023) found that gender was not a significant predictor of NEP 2020 awareness, Pandey & Kumar (2023) observed no gender-based differences among novice secondary school teachers, Shobha (2022) concluded that male and female teachers demonstrated equal understanding of NEP 2020 provisions, and Tungoe (2024) noted that policy dissemination through digital platforms like DIKSHA has ensured equal access to information regardless of gender. Although Alam (2021) reported that male high school teachers in Darbhanga district had higher awareness than females, this contradiction may be attributed to differences in geographical context, level of teaching (high school vs. primary school), and time of data collection. Thus, the preponderance of evidence supports the conclusion that gender does not

significantly influence NEP 2020 awareness among primary school teachers, and any observed mean difference is attributable to chance fluctuations rather than any systematic effect of gender.

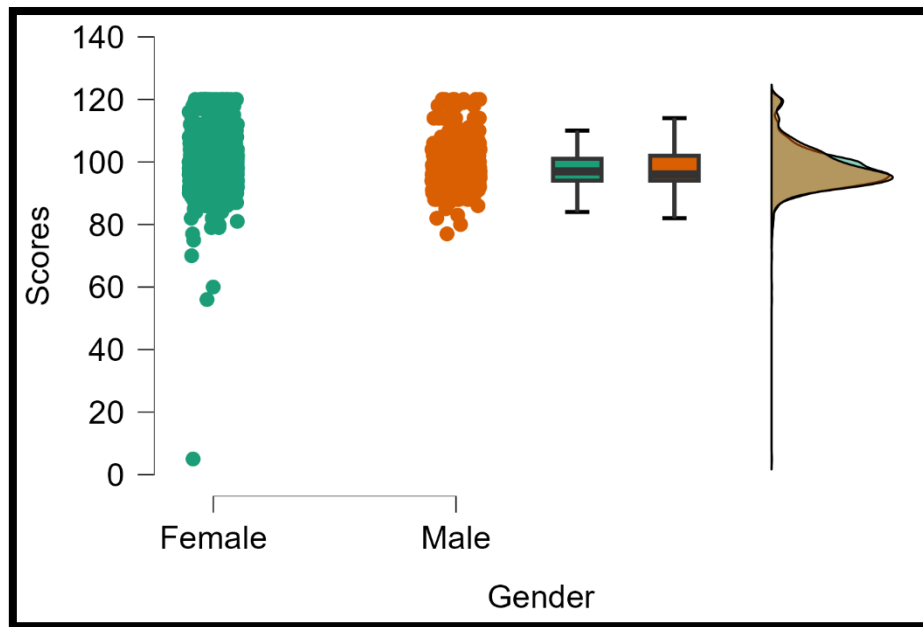


Figure 5: Box Plot of NEP 2020 Awareness Scores by Gender

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that primary school teachers, regardless of their locality (rural or urban) or gender (male or female), demonstrate comparable levels of awareness about NEP 2020. The mean awareness scores for all groups were consistently high (ranging from 97.08 to 98.12 out of a possible maximum score), suggesting that teachers have a good understanding of the policy.

These findings are partially consistent with previous research. While Ali & Shafeeq (2024) found moderate awareness levels among secondary school teachers, the present study found higher awareness levels among primary school teachers. This difference could be attributed to focused training programs for primary teachers or increased policy dissemination efforts in recent years.

Regarding gender differences, the present study found no significant difference between male and female teachers, contradicting Alam (2021), who reported that male teachers had higher awareness than female teachers. This discrepancy may be due to differences in sample characteristics, geographical context, or time of data collection.

The lack of a significant difference between rural and urban teachers is an encouraging finding. It suggests that policy dissemination efforts have reached both rural and urban areas effectively, reducing the traditional urban-rural gap in educational awareness.

Conclusion



Based on the analysis of data collected from 1,741 primary school teachers and the review of existing literature on AI chatbots in education, the following conclusions are drawn.

First, primary school teachers in the study area possess high levels of NEP 2020 awareness, with mean scores ranging from 97.08 to 98.12 across all groups. This indicates that policy dissemination mechanisms—including DIKSHA, NIPUN Bharat, and teacher training programs—have been largely effective in reaching teachers across different demographics.

Second, there exists no statistically significant difference in NEP 2020 awareness between rural ($M = 97.92$) and urban ($M = 97.08$) teachers, as evidenced by $t(1742) = 1.257$, $p = 0.209$, with a negligible effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.117$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is accepted, establishing that locality does not influence NEP 2020 awareness among primary school teachers.

Third, there exists no statistically significant difference in NEP 2020 awareness between male ($M = 98.12$) and female ($M = 97.80$) teachers, as evidenced by $t(1739) = -0.802$, $p = 0.423$, with a negligible effect size (Cohen's $d = -0.044$). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is accepted, establishing that gender does not influence NEP 2020 awareness among primary school teachers.

Finally, it is concluded that primary school teachers, irrespective of their locality or gender, possess uniformly high awareness of NEP 2020. This uniform awareness provides a strong foundation for successful policy implementation at the grassroots level. However, high awareness does not automatically translate into effective classroom practice. Therefore, future efforts should focus on bridging the gap between policy awareness and pedagogical implementation, while leveraging AI-powered tools to support sustained teacher professional development.

Educational Implications

Based on the findings, the following implications are suggested:

1. **Teacher Training Programs:** Although awareness levels are high, continuous professional development programs should be organized to deepen teachers' understanding of NEP 2020 implementation strategies.
2. **Uniform Policy Dissemination:** The finding that rural and urban teachers have similar awareness levels indicates effective policy dissemination, which should be maintained and strengthened.
3. **Gender-Inclusive Approach:** Training programs should continue to be equally accessible to both male and female teachers.
4. **Focus on Implementation:** Since awareness is high, future efforts should focus on translating this awareness into classroom practice and pedagogical change.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to primary school teachers only; secondary and higher secondary teachers were not included.
2. The study used only a quantitative approach; qualitative insights were not captured.
3. The study did not examine other demographic variables such as teaching experience, educational qualification, or type of school (government vs. private).

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