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NCF 2023: An Effort to Re-strengthen the Contemporary Educational System

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Abstract:

In the present era of substantial changes, education system of the nation is also ready to rejuvenate its existing system. National Education Policy 2020 is a new step moving forward in the reconstruction of the education system and providing new vision to every aspect of the education viz. structure, system and skills at all the levels of education, particularly the reconstruction and revamping of curricular and pedagogical concerns of the school education. As envisioned in NEP 2020, National Curriculum framework 2023 is designed and is ready for implementation with a core objective of bringing positive transformation in the curriculum especially in the pedagogy. Another focus area of the new framework is to provide a platform to the teachers as well as other stakeholders for development of new vision for school education. Moreover, this framework has the capacity to make the education more interesting and interactive as this is based on the research, experiences and accumulated knowledge of the policy planners and teachers across the nation. Whatever, lacunas has been seen the existing education system, this new framework is an effort to re-strengthen the system through its innovative approaches.

Keywords: NCF, features, curricular framework, assessment, approaches

Introduction:

National Education Policy 2020 has focussed on the improvement of the entire education system and has suggested some ways through which the educational outcomes can be improved at all the levels of education. The focus area of school education in NEP 2020 were; restructuring of the school education system through 5+3+3+4 system of education; development of holistic curriculum for ECCE; achievement of universal foundational literacy and numeracy; development of conceptual learning; focus on experiential learning; reduction of the content to make curriculum less burdensome and more practical; flexibility in the selection of the subjects; interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approach. As envisioned in NEP 2020, National Curriculum framework -2023 has

been developed to bring qualitative changes in the school education. The five focussed areas of NCF 2023 are i.e. (a) approach viz. objectives, stages and time allocation of school education, (b) cross cutting themes viz. ancient foundation of school education including values and disposition, ICT, inclusiveness and guidance and counselling at school education, (c) school subjects viz. various basic subjects and interdisciplinary approach, (d) school culture and processes (e) creating a supporting ecosystem. This framework has not only refurbished the whole school education system but also has tried to remove the gaps and lacunas of the previous curriculum framework.

Earlier, NCF 2005 depicted a vision for the desirability of the children and to cater their diverse needs by bringing drastic changes according to the desirability of the young ones. For this, wider scope for handling of the issues related to; learning of the children, the nature of knowledge and the school as an institution as well as ethos and culture of the school, the pedagogical approaches of teachers, learning practices within and outside the school has been provided. NCF 2005 emphasized on propagation of learning without burden. Although the previous document of school curriculum was well drafted and has covered almost all the aspects of school education but when it was analysed on the basis of the implementation it has found that;

- The core aspect of the curriculum i.e. the education free from burden has totally been ignored as the actual class environment is not appropriate according to this very issue of the curriculum. Students are not been provided the environment which is free from force and fear (Sharma & Parihar, 2018).
- Constructivist approach has also been ignored as in real classroom practice not all the students got the opportunity for actual implementation of their knowledge and skills. Moreover, construction of knowledge through the effective pedagogical practice has also been ignored. It has been observed that the project work and assignments which is a part of the school curriculum has become a burden for the parents because in class, the main focus of the teacher is on the completion of the syllabus. This is the main reason, that they are unable to guide and train the students due to their own limitations and job pressures and at the end those projects are merely a burden for the students as well as parents resulting into unfulfillment of the desired learning outcomes.
- Curriculum centred approach has been focussed but multi-grade system has not been given due importance especially at pre- primary education (Khan, 2015).
- Emphasis was given on art and work experience but due to lack of trained teachers it has become just a subject without any effective outcome.
- In case of languages, three language formula and its implementation was not clear, and certain subjects like geography were not given due importance.
- Focus should be given on the teacher autonomy and systemic support structures (Sharma &

Parihar, 2018).

Basic features of NCF 2023 :

After the gap of around seventeen years NCF 2023 has been launched with a new aspiration of upgradation in the quality of school education and to cover all those aspects which are necessary to face the challenges of this fast growing techno savvy globalised century. The basic features of NCF 2023 are:

- NCF 2023 redesigned the structure of school education as, “5+3+3+4 i.e. Foundational Stage (in two parts, 3 years of pre-school + 2 years in primary school in class 1-2; together covering age group 3-8 years), Preparatory Stage (Class 3-5, age group 8-11 years), Middle Stage (class 6-8, covering age group 11-14 years), Secondary Stage (covering class 9-12 in two phases, i.e. 9 and 10 first phase and 11 and 12 in second stage, age group 14-18 years)” (Kabra, 2023).
- Due recognition has been given to all the three languages as envisioned by NEP 2020 (Three language formula i.e. R1, R2 and R3). Basic literacy of R1 i.e. reading and writing up to class 3, while up to class 6 targeting development of language skills of R2 and up to class 9 development of language skills and comprehension of R3. Focus has also been laid on the development of language skills and competencies through different writing and comprehension tasks, development of vocabulary and additional goal has been set up for the perseverance of the literary heritage of India. In class 11 and 12 the students have to study two languages and one of them should be Indian language (Sharma, 2023).
- It has been found that the current pattern of the board examination (both 10 and 12) is questionable on the point of effective assessment of the student's competencies and moreover, has the issues of reliability and validity. NCF 2023 has proposed twice a year board examination and has also linked the examination with the curriculum defined competencies. Specialized assessment for the practical subjects like vocational, arts and physical education and these subjects will have local assessment along with board certification. Focus has been given to the creation of assessment frameworks, blueprints, periodic review tests for quality assurance and proper alignment. On the basis of the semester exams, more flexibility and freedom has been given to the students of class 11 and 12 for the selection of more subjects (Kabra, 2023).
- Eight curriculum areas have been offered and for the completion of class 10, it is necessary for the students to complete two courses from those available 8 curricular areas. The same set of eight curricular areas will be offered to class 11 and 12 students but along with wide range of subjects. Total six examinations have to be cleared by the students to get 12 pass certificate.

- Development of values, skills, capacities and potentialities has been focussed in NCF as envisioned in the latest education policy and for this emphasis has been given on experiential learning rather than the rote memorization and content accumulation.
- For the teaching of social sciences at middle level (class 6 to 8) a new integrated and thematic approach has been proposed. All the disciplines under the social sciences area like history, geography, political science, civics and economics will be integrated along with associated subjects such as psychology, philosophy, anthropology, and sociology. Curriculum has been further diversified on the basis of coverage of areas so that students are able to learn about wider content. The percentage that has been given is as twenty percent has been given to content of local area, thirty percent to content related to regional level, thirty percent to content of national level and twenty percent to content of global level. It has been further recommended that class 9 onwards, social science will be taught as separate discipline including history, geography, political science, and economics. In class 9 and 10 more focus is given on the broader vision of the curriculum and curriculum is more comprehensive, correlated and integrated for all the subjects like science, social science, and humanities. For teaching of mathematics innovative and interactive methodology has been focussed so that students can shed away the mathematics fear. This subject will be interconnected with other subjects and more topics like India's history in mathematics and science will be the part of curriculum.
- To provide the opportunities to the students regarding the development of skills required for a particular vocation, Vocational Education is introduced in the curriculum. At primary stage work skills and competencies will be developed through play method and activity based learning while at middle stage students will be given exposure to wide range of work specifically in those which they want to adopt at secondary stage. Proper design and layout for vocational education and its effective implementation is prepared for effective outcomes in near future.
- Interdisciplinary approach will be used in all the subjects and at each stage effort will be made to help the students to observe and understand their immediate social and natural environment by engaging them in specific curricular and co-curricular activities.
- As far as the role of teacher is concerned, NCF 2023 is designed with the teacher as the primary focus, acknowledging their pivotal role in putting into practice pre-determined goals in education. Moreover it has also been suggested to have capacity building and orientation programmes for not only teachers but also for all the stakeholders. Teacher autonomy and accountability is focussed. Teacher must have autonomy in the effective planning of the lesson and selection of the methodology to cater the diverse needs of the students.
- Another issue that has been addressed in the NCF 2023 is the involvement of the parents and

community in the education of the students through frequent parents teacher meetings and associations. Moreover, parents should be oriented regarding the working of the school and methodology being adopted in the school.

- Efforts have been made to ensure the proper and effective learning environment to the students like fulfilment of required infrastructure facilities like labs, classrooms, playgrounds, eco-friendly environment etc.
- NCF 2023 is goal-oriented and to maintain the learning standards goals has been set for all the stages covering wider aspects. So, the goals have been determined for each chapter in NCF keeping in view the particular and general needs of the students, society, nation and globe as a whole. Goals are more relatable, understandable and useable for all the stakeholders of school education.
- NCF 2023 is aspirational and have deep roots in the ancient Indian culture and ethos. Moreover, it focussed on the creation of a supportive ecosystem for putting into practice the drafted provisions related to every aspect covered in it i.e. curricular areas, infrastructure, student, teachers etc.
- It focuses on the student centred approach for tall round development of the personality of the children and to prepare them for a bright future. Goals have been set keeping in view their survival beyond the schools. It also caters to the diverse needs of the pupil through inclusive practices and has defined the role of teacher, student, parents and community in effective implementation of these practices.
- NCF 2023 scrubbed about the development of modes of inquiry from play way and activity to specialised methodology for the development of content and skills for different subjects and area of study. A wide variety of methods has suggested to be used by the teacher in the classroom for the attainment of pre-determined goals and objectives.

These distinguished features of well drafted NCF 2023 will resultant into effective changes in the school education. All the suggestion and recommendation given in the form of objectives, methodology, role of teachers and students undoubtedly will strengthen the contemporary education system and will groom the personality of the school students through the intellectual nourishment suggested in this unique draft of school education. Moreover, this curriculum framework has covered a wide variety of aspects of school education and has addressed all those issues which were untouched in the previous curriculum frameworks.

Conclusion:

The NCF 2023 laid down the directions and guidelines in the form of principles, objectives, design, structure and elements for the progression of curriculum, teaching learning process and techniques of assessment. It aims to bring about a holistic transformation in the existing structure and

system of the school education. Efforts have been made to maintain harmony between curricular aims, goals, competencies and learning outcomes. NCF adopts an effective and unique style of presentation that has improved its readability, understandability and utility. It is based on constructivist approach and has promoted the experiential learning which has also been envisioned in NEP-2020. Hence, this curriculum framework will bring drastic and effective changes in the system of school education and students will be able to face the challenges of this fast growing century in effective ways.

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