

F. No. 1-15/2010 EE 4
Government of India
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Department of School Education and Literacy

Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi, 31st January, 2012

Subject: Advisory on implementation of the provisions of section 29 of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 – reg.

1. Section 29(1) of the RTE Act provides that the curriculum and evaluation procedure for elementary education shall be laid down by an academic authority specified by the appropriate Government. Section 29(2) lays down the factors which need to be taken into consideration by the academic authority notified by the States for preparing the curriculum and evaluation procedure, namely:

- (a) Conformity with Constitutional values;
- (b) All round development of the child;
- (c) Building up the child's knowledge, potentiality and talent;
- (d) Development of physical and mental abilities to the fullest extent;
- (e) Learning through activities, discovery and exploration in a child friendly and child-centred manner;
- (f) The child's mother tongue serving 'as far as practicable' as the medium of instruction;
- (g) Making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child to express views freely and
- (h) Comprehensive and continuous evaluation of the child's understanding and knowledge and the ability to apply it.

2. The Central Government has also notified the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) as the academic authority for preparing the framework of national curriculum under section 7(6) of the RTE Act. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 prepared by NCERT has been accepted as the curriculum framework till further directions in the matter. Therefore, in implementing the provisions of section 29, the academic authority notified by the appropriate Governments shall ensure adherence to child centred principles of NCF 2005.

3. The following guidelines are issued for the academic authority to implement the provisions of section 29.

(a) Formulate age-appropriate curricula and syllabi in keeping with NCF-2005: The curriculum and syllabus document should be an explicit document indicating the goals and aims of education. This should address questions, such as, what is worth teaching, how much should be taught in a particular class, and in what sequence, with what methods and materials, the linkages across different aspects of knowledge, how teachers should be prepared and children's learning assessed, and how schools should be monitored.

There is a tendency to burden the curricula and syllabi with concepts which are not age appropriate. This often happens on account of a top-down approach to curriculum and syllabus formulation. Curricula and syllabi should be prepared from class I upwards, based on what is age-appropriate for children, rather than by first fixing the curricula/syllabi for higher classes and working downwards. Educational research regarding the inter-relationship about age and concept needs to be kept in mind while formulating the curriculum.

(b) Maintain subject balance: While developing the curriculum and syllabus it will be important to rationalise the number of subjects and textbooks at the primary and upper primary levels such that there is no additional curriculum load on children. States that follow the seven - rather than the eight-year elementary education cycle, tend to introduce subjects of history, geography, science and social studies in Class V instead of Class VI. This adds to the curricular load on children. In transiting to an eight-year elementary education cycle these states should initiate a review of the subjects and textbooks currently taught in class V and VIII, and rationalise them according to the respective needs of the primary and upper primary stages.

There is also need to integrate and align various learning materials like textbooks, workbooks, worksheets, supplementary materials etc. in order to reduce unnecessary burden on the teacher and child, bring in cohesiveness and reduce overlaps.

(c) Initiate Textbook Contents Reform: The academic authority notified by the appropriate Government under section 29(1) for developing curriculum and evaluation procedure is also responsible for textbook development. Textbooks must reflect the principles of child centred pedagogy as enunciated in: (i) section 29(2) (e) *learning through activities, discovery and exploration in a child friendly and child centred manner*, and (ii) section 29(2) (g) *making the child free of fear, trauma and anxiety and helping the child to express views freely*. Textbooks developers should design books such that they provide interactive opportunities for group activities with continuous self and peer assessment. The textbooks should keep the principle of equity and inclusion at the forefront,

proactively break extant stereotypes to reflect sensitivity to gender and caste, peace, health and the needs of differently-abled children.

(d) Textbook language: Extensive research points to the fact that in a multilingual country like India, the child's 'home' language is often different from the 'standard' language in textbooks. This imposes enormous learning burden on the child, and is perhaps one of the chief reasons of low achievement in school subjects. The difference between the 'home' language and 'textbook' language not only affects the language learning in school, but also subjects like Mathematics, Environment Studies, etc. because these subjects also need a language for transaction. This is why the RTE Act stipulates that the mother tongue should be used as far as practicable. Thus, efforts to incorporate well known methods of bridging between the child's 'home' language with the 'standard' classroom language need to be given utmost attention.

(e) Undertake Textbook Production Reform: Textbook production, encompassing the layout and design, text and cover, paper size and specifications, ink, printing and binding, etc., have significant implications for quality. There should be adequate focus on good quality printing and visual design of books alongside improvement in content.

SSA provides support for textbooks to all children in government, local body and government aided schools, including Madrasas desirous of introducing the State curriculum. SSA provides support within an upper ceiling of Rs 150 per child at the primary stage, and Rs 250 per child at the upper primary stage.

States that have been providing textbooks to children under State sector schemes and budgets since 2007-08 will continue to fund textbooks being provided from the State Plans. Wherever States have undertaken curricular reform in consonance with NCF-2005 and have taken steps to improve the development, production and printing quality of textbooks, support under SSA will be available as 'top up' grants for children supported under the State sector schemes and budgets within the prescribed per child ceilings, subject however to evidence of such contents and production reform

(f) Ensure continuous and comprehensive assessment for Learning: There have been some misgivings on the provision of 'no detention', which is wrongly interpreted to mean that children will not be assessed, but will be automatically promoted to the next class. RTE provides for Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE). CCE implies continuous assessment, rather than no assessment. This means that assessment should be treated as an integral part of teaching and learning, as exemplified by the Activity Based Learning (ABL) methodology practiced in schools in Tamil Nadu, and piloted in several States, including Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, etc. Central to ABL is the "learning ladder" with a series of activity cards. Assessment is built into the "learning ladder" in the form of activity cards. When a child finishes with a set of activity cards, including the assessment cards, she completes a 'milestone' on the ladder, and can move to the next level. Every milestone involves completing several activities including

games, rhymes, drawings and songs. There are no exams, but a student can move to the next level only after attaining proficiency in the previous one. Thus assessment is inbuilt into the teaching learning process, and is recorded for each child at his/her own pace of learning, on an assessment chart.

Apart from the ABL methodology, there are other CCE techniques which provide for an appropriate assessment profile for each child, including five tools, namely (a) Engagement pattern of the child, (b) Observations in general, (c) Observation in classroom during group-work and individual activity (d) Understanding child's written work on work assigned by the teacher, and (e) an Anecdotal record. If CCE is implemented in this manner ***from the child's perspective***, it will bring out the best in every child, rather than pressurizing the child to compete and out-perform in every aspect of learning, and show what progress the child has made with respect to her own performance over time.

This advisory issues with the approval of the competent authority and should be brought to the knowledge of all concerned.

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