

# **National Education Policy, 2020**

## **Effective Governance and Standard Settings in School Education**

### **Background Paper**

**For**

**Teacher's Fest**



**National Council of Educational Research & Training, Delhi**

# Effective Governance and Standard Settings in School Education

The nation is committed to bring all children to school and ensure that they are learning. Since independence, there has been a huge expansion in schooling facilities in the country due to various programmes of the government, such as District Primary Education Programme, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan*, *Samagra Shiksha* and others. The enactment of *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009* guaranteeing the right to education of children in the age group of six to fourteen years, provides a legal mandate for sustaining these efforts. As a result, almost near universal enrolment of children at the primary stage has been achieved. Significant efforts have also been made towards improving equity and quality aspects in the schooling.

While access is no longer a problem, bringing out improvement in the quality of teaching-learning still poses a challenge. There are various dimensions of quality including quality of physical space in the school, available teaching and learning materials, classroom processes including assessment procedures, academic support to teachers, involvement of community in the functioning of the school, etc. It also calls for beginning of a participative process of school development involving the community.

Any attempt to enhance the quality of teaching-learning process is hampered by the size of the schools, number of students studying in these schools and the absence of a mechanism to set standards in different types of schools. According to U-DISE 2016-17 data, nearly 28% of India's public primary schools and 14.8% of India's upper primary schools have less than 30 students. The average number of students per grade in the elementary schooling system (primary and upper primary, i.e. Grades 1-8) is about 14, with a notable proportion even below 6; during the year 2016-17, there were 119,303 single-teacher schools, the majority of them (94,028) being primary schools serving Grades 1-5. The data further shows that, there were around 9,00,316 teacher vacancies at Elementary levels.

Schools are of different types: Government, Private aided, and Private unaided schools. The number and variety of private schools has increased considerably. Private schools vary considerably in terms of physical space, quality of teaching-learning, fees charged, participation of community in the management of private schools, and so on. Despite these variations the number of private schools is increasing rapidly, and enrollment of students in government schools is decreasing over the years. Thus, there is an urgent need to bring change in this situation. Keeping these aspects in view, the *National Education Policy (NEP) 2020* suggested for bringing out effective governance through establishment of school complexes and standard setting.

## **Effective Governance through Establishment of School Complex**

According to NEP 2020, providing equal opportunities to all children quality education will be possible only if we could find a viable and feasible mechanism to overcome the challenges that happens due to the expansion of schools. The major challenge such as the small size of schools makes it economically suboptimal and operationally complex, to allocate and deploy all the resources necessary to run a good school, single teacher teaching multiple classes at the same time (multi-grade teaching), and single teacher teaching all subjects are very pertinent and is likely to affect the quality of education. The NEP 2020 also raises concerns such as absence of teachers for special areas such as arts, crafts, music, and physical education and non availability of physical resources such as experimental kits, laboratory equipment, library books etc in many of these schools. As far as providing equal opportunity to all children is concerned, the small schools present a systemic challenge for governance and management. The geographical dispersion, challenging access conditions and the very large numbers of schools, make it difficult for any effort to reach all schools equally.

Another serious concern is related with teacher and his/her professional development. Teachers function effectively and optimally in teams and through collaborative discussions and deliberations. The absence of this team work results in the performance of the teacher. The NEP 2020 is concerned about addressing these issues systematically and effectively as a matter of effective governance of the schools. NEP 2020 recommends establishment of School Complex, the recommendation made by the Education Commission (1964–66), which was left unimplemented so far. A school complex will consist of one secondary school together with all other schools offering lower grades in its neighbourhood including Anganwadis, in a radius of five to ten kilometers. The aim of the school complex/cluster will be greater resource efficiency and more effective functioning, coordination, leadership, governance, and management of schools in the cluster.

## **Standard Settings in Schools**

The present structure of governance of the school education system in which all three main functions, the provision of public education, regulation of all educational institutions, and making policy are all handled by the Department of School Education or its arms (e.g. DSE and its officials such as the DEO, BEO), and it leads to deep concentration of power and conflicts of interest. It also leads to ineffective management of the school system, since the efforts towards education provision is often diluted by the focus on the other roles, particularly regulation that the DSE must perform.

The current regulatory mechanism has failed in ensuring the symmetry when it comes to the accreditation of public and private Schools. This also has created commercialisation of education and economic exploitation of parents by many for-profit private schools. The public education system being the foundation of a vibrant democratic society, and the way it is run must be transformed and invigorated in order to achieve the highest levels of educational outcomes for the nation. This requires a standardised system of regulation and accreditation of various schools using same criterion and standards. The NPE 2020 visualises an effective quality self-regulation

or accreditation system for all stages of education including pre-school education - private, public, and philanthropic - to ensure compliance with essential quality standards. To ensure that all schools follow certain minimal professional and quality standards, States/UTs will set up an independent, State-wide, body called the State School Standards Authority (SSSA).

The NEP 2020 recommends that apart from standard criterion for accreditation, to ensure academic quality, a separate School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework have to be developed by SCERTs, being the academic authority at state level. All the schools including private schools will be assessed and accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, emphasizing online and offline public disclosure and transparency. Educational outcomes and the transparent disclosure of all financial, academic, and operational matters will be given due importance and will be incorporated suitably in the assessment of schools. By ensuring a uniform process of accreditation and quality framework for both Public and Private schools, the aim of improving the public education system could be ensured.

The NEP 2020 also recommends for a periodic health check up of the overall system by conducting sample-based National Achievement Survey. States may also conduct State Achievement Surveys. It also suggests developing an effective mechanism to ensure the safety and rights of children.

### **Implementation Plan**

States/UTs have to take initiatives in grouping schools into **school complexes** by considering the population distribution, road connectivity, and other local considerations. The grouping must ensure convenience of access for students and families, administrative ease for the State government, and a support system for teachers and principals.

States/UTs through DSE have to create School Complex Management Committees (SCMC) at all such School Complexes for more robust and improved governance, monitoring, oversight, innovations, and initiatives by local stakeholders. Building such larger communities of schools, school leaders, teachers, students, supporting staff, parents, and local citizens would energize and empower the schooling system, and in a resource-efficient manner.

States/UTs can take initiatives in developing an action plan for organising orientation to SCMCs and SMCs in preparing Development Plans at School Complex and School levels respectively with the help of BRCs, DIETs, CTEs, IASEs etc..

States/UTs/CBSE needs to take initiative in starting twinning/pairing of one public school with one private school. A guideline can be developed by States/UTs/CBSE to implement it in a systematic way. Each paired schools may meet/interact with each other, learn from each other, and also share resources, if possible. Best practices of private schools will be documented, shared, and institutionalized in public schools, and vice versa, where possible.

States/UTs have to establish “Bal Bhavans” where children of all ages can visit once a week (e.g., on weekends) or more often, as a special daytime boarding school, to partake in art-related, career-related, and play-related activities. Such Bal Bhavans may be incorporated as a part of school complexes/clusters if possible.

States/UTs government needs to create three structures at State school education system with independent responsibilities within that system.

The Department of School Education, which is the apex state-level body in school education, will be responsible for overall monitoring and policymaking for continual improvement of the public education system

The educational operations and service provision for the public schooling system of the whole State will be handled by the Directorate of School Education

An independent body called the State School Standards Authority (SSSA) to ensure that all schools follow certain minimal professional and quality standards

SCERT will be the state body responsible for academic matters, including academic standards and curricula in the State. The SCERT will develop a School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF) through wide consultations with all stakeholders.

States/UTs have to develop an action plan to revive CRCs, BRCs, and DIETs which must change the capacity and work culture of these institutions in 3 years, developing them into vibrant institutions of excellence

States/UTs need to create a framework through SCERTs for public disclosure information such as the numbers of classrooms, students, and teachers, subjects taught, any fees, and overall student outcomes on standardized evaluations such as the NAS and SAS on the school website and on the SSSA website - for both public and private schools

CBSE in consultation with the MHRD shall prepare a framework for schools controlled/managed/aided by the Central government, the.

MHRD will establish the National Assessment Centre, PARAKH with the support of NCERT. This body will carry out the periodic ‘health check-up’ of the overall system of education, a sample-based National Achievement Survey (NAS) of student learning levels.