A Concept Note on Quality and Sustainable Schools – Learning from Schools

SHIKSHAK PARV, 2021
NEP provisions relating to Curriculum and Pedagogy in Schools: Learning Should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable, and Engaging

Restructuring school curriculum and pedagogy in a new 5+3+3+4 design

NEP Para 4.1: The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education will be reconfigured to make it responsive and relevant to the 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. The curricular and pedagogical framework for school education will therefore be guided by a 5+3+3+4 design, consisting of the Foundational Stage (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8), Preparatory Stage (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11), Middle Stage (Grades 6-8, covering ages 11-14), and Secondary Stage (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18).

NEP Para 4.2: The Foundational Stage will consist of five years of flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning and the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE as mentioned in para 1.2. The Preparatory Stage will comprise three years of education building on the play, discovery, and activity-based pedagogical and curricular style of the Foundational Stage, and will also begin to incorporate some light text books as well as aspects of more formal but interactive classroom learning, in order to lay a solid groundwork across subjects, including reading, writing, speaking, physical education, art, languages, science, and mathematics. The Middle Stage will comprise three years of education, building on the pedagogical and curricular style of the Preparatory Stage, but with the introduction of subject teachers for learning and discussion of the more abstract concepts in each subject that students will be ready for at this stage across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities. Experiential learning within each subject, and explorations of relations among different subjects, will be encouraged and emphasized despite the introduction of more specialized subjects and subject teachers. The Secondary Stage will comprise of four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style of the Middle Stage, but with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility and student choice of subjects. In particular students would continue to have the option of exiting after Grade 10 and re-entering in the next phase to pursue vocational or any other courses available in Grades 11-12, including at a more specialized school, if so desired.

NEP Para 4.3: The above-described stages are purely curricular and pedagogical, designed to optimize learning for students based on the cognitive development of children; they will inform the development of National and State curricula and teaching-learning strategies at each stage, but parallel changes to physical infrastructure will not be required.

NEP provisions relating to Holistic development of learners
**NEP Para 4.4:** The aim of education will not only be cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st-century skills. All aspects of curriculum and pedagogy will be reoriented and revamped to attain these critical goals. Curriculum frameworks and transaction mechanisms will be developed for ensuring that these skills and values are imbibed through engaging processes of teaching and learning. NCERT will identify these required skill sets and include mechanisms for their transaction in the National Curriculum Framework for early childhood and school education.

**NEP provisions relating to reduce curriculum content to enhance essential learning and critical thinking**

**NEP Para 4.5:** Curriculum content will be reduced in each subject to its core essentials, to make space for critical thinking and more holistic, inquiry-based, discovery-based, discussion-based, and analysis-based learning. Teaching and learning will be conducted in a more interactive manner; questions will be encouraged, and classroom sessions will regularly contain more fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory activities for students for deeper and more experiential learning.

**NEP provisions relating to experiential learning**

**NEP Para 4.6:** In all stages, experiential learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, story-telling-based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject, and with explorations of relations among different subjects. To close the gap in achievement of learning outcomes, classroom transactions will shift, towards competency-based learning and education. The assessment tools (including assessment “as”, “of”, and “for” learning) will also be aligned with the learning outcomes, capabilities, and dispositions as specified for each subject of a given class.

**NEP Para 4.7:** Art-integration is a cross-curricular pedagogical approach that utilizes various aspects and forms of art and culture as the basis for learning of concepts across subjects. As a part of the thrust on experiential learning, art-integrated education will be embedded in classroom transactions not only for creating joyful classrooms, but also for imbibing the Indian ethos through integration of Indian art and culture in the teaching and learning process at every level. This art-integrated approach will strengthen the linkages between education and culture.

**NEP Para 4.8:** Sports-integration is another cross-curricular pedagogical approach that utilizes physical activities including indigenous sports, in pedagogical practices to help in developing skills such as collaboration, self-initiative, self-direction, self-discipline, teamwork, responsibility, citizenship, etc. Sports-integrated learning will be undertaken in classroom transactions to help students adopt fitness as a lifelong attitude and to achieve the related life skills along with the levels of fitness as envisaged in the Fit India Movement.

**NEP provisions relating to empower students through flexibility in course choices**

**NEP Para 4.9:** Students will be given increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study, particularly in secondary school - including subjects in physical education, the arts and crafts, and vocational skills – so that they can design their own paths of study and life plans. Holistic development and a wide choice of subjects and courses year to year will be the new distinguishing feature of secondary school education.
There will be no hard separation among ‘curricular’, ‘extracurricular’, or ‘co-curricular’, among ‘arts’, ‘humanities’, and ‘sciences’, or between ‘vocational’or ‘academic’ streams.

**NEP Para 4.10:** Each of the four stages of school education, in accordance with what may be possible in different regions, may consider moving towards a semester or any other system that allows the inclusion of shorter modules, or courses that are taught on alternate days, in order to allow an exposure to wide range of subjects, including across the arts, sciences, humanities, languages, sports, and vocational subjects and enable greater flexibility.

**NEP provisions relating to Multilingualism and the power of language**

**NEP Para 4.11:** Young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue. Home language is usually the same language as the mother tongue or that which is spoken by local communities. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible. This will be followed by both public and private schools. High-quality textbooks, including in science, will be made available in home languages/mother tongue.

**NEP Para 4.12:** As research clearly shows that children pick up languages extremely quickly between the ages of 2 and 8 and that multilingualism has great cognitive benefits to young students, children will be exposed to different languages early on (but with a particular emphasis on the mother tongue), starting from the Foundational Stage onwards. All languages will be taught in an enjoyable and interactive style, with plenty of interactive conversation, and with early reading and subsequently writing in the mother tongue in the early years, and with skills developed for reading and writing in other languages in Grade 3 and beyond.

**NEP Para 4.13:** The three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions, and the Union, and the need to promote multilingualism as well as promote national unity. However, there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any State. The three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.

**NEP Para 4.14:** All efforts will be made in preparing high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching-learning materials for science and mathematics, so that students are enabled to think and speak about the two subjects both in their home language/mother tongue and in English.

**NEP Para 4.15:** India’s languages are among the richest, most scientific, most beautiful, and most expressive in the world, with a huge body of ancient as well as modern literature (both prose and poetry), film, and music written in these languages that help form India’s national identity and wealth. For purposes of cultural enrichment as well as national integration, all young Indians should be aware of the rich and vast array of languages of their country, and the treasures that they and their literatures contain.

**NEP Para 4.16:** Every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative. In this
project/activity, students will learn about the remarkable unity of most of the major Indian languages, starting with their common phonetic and scientifically-arranged alphabets and scripts, their common grammatical structures, their origins and sources of vocabularies from Sanskrit and other classical languages, as well as their rich inter-influences and differences.

**NEP Para 4.17:** The importance, relevance, and beauty of the classical languages and literature of India also cannot be overlooked. Sanskrit, while also an important modern language mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, possesses a classical literature that is greater in volume than that of Latin and Greek put together, containing vast treasuries of mathematics, philosophy, grammar, music, politics, medicine, architecture, metallurgy, drama, poetry, storytelling, and more (known as ‘Sanskrit Knowledge Systems’), written by people of various religions as well as non-religious people, and by people from all walks of life and a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds over thousands of years. Sanskrit will thus be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an important, enriching option for students, including as an option in the three-language formula.

**NEP Para 4.18:** India also has an extremely rich literature in other classical languages, including classical Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia. In addition to these classical languages Pali, Persian, and Prakrit; and their works of literature too must be preserved for their richness and for the pleasure and enrichment of posterity. In addition to Sanskrit, other classical languages and literatures of India, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools as options for students, possibly as online modules, through experiential and innovative approaches, to ensure that these languages and literature stay alive and vibrant.

**NEP Para 4.19:** For the enrichment of the children, and for the preservation of these rich languages and their artistic treasures, all students in all schools, public or private, will have the option of learning at least two years of a classical language of India and its associated literature, through experiential and innovative approaches, including the integration of technology, in Grades 6-12, with the option to continue from the middle stage through the secondary stage and beyond.

**NEP Para 4.20:** In addition to high quality offerings in Indian languages and English, foreign languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, will also be offered at the secondary level, for students to learn about the cultures of the world and to enrich their global knowledge and mobility according to their own interests and aspirations.

**NEP Para 4.21:** The teaching of all languages will be enhanced through innovative and experiential methods, including through gamification and apps, by weaving in the cultural aspects of the languages - such as films, theatre, storytelling, poetry, and music - and by drawing connections with various relevant subjects and with real-life experiences.

**NEP Para 4.22:** Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country, and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment. Local sign languages will be respected and taught as well, where possible and relevant.

**NEP provisions relating to Curricular Integration of Essential Subjects, Skills, and Capacities**

**NEP Para 4.23:** While students must have a large amount of flexibility in choosing their individual curricula, certain subjects, skills, and capacities should be learned by all students to become good,
successful, innovative, adaptable, and productive human beings in today's rapidly changing world. In addition to proficiency in languages, these skills include: scientific temper and evidence-based thinking; creativity and innovativeness; sense of aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; health and nutrition; physical education, fitness, wellness, and sports; collaboration and teamwork; problem solving and logical reasoning; vocational exposure and skills; digital literacy, coding, and computational thinking; ethical and moral reasoning; knowledge and practice of human and Constitutional values; gender sensitivity.

**NEP Para 4.24:** Concerted curricular and pedagogical initiatives, including the introduction of contemporary subjects such as Artificial Intelligence, Design Thinking, Holistic Health, Organic Living, Environmental Education, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), etc. at relevant stages will be undertaken to develop these various important skills in students at all levels.

**NEP Para 4.25:** It is recognized that mathematics and mathematical thinking will be very important for India's future and India's leadership role in the numerous upcoming fields and professions that will involve artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data science, etc. Thus, mathematics and computational thinking will be given increased emphasis throughout the school years, starting with the foundational stage, through a variety of innovative methods, including the regular use of puzzles and games that make mathematical thinking more enjoyable and engaging. Activities involving coding will be introduced in Middle Stage.

**NEP Para 4.26:** Every student will take a fun course, during Grades 6-8, that gives a survey and hands-on experience of a sampling of important vocational crafts, such as carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making, etc., as decided by States and local communities and as mapped by local skilling needs. A practice-based curriculum for Grades 6-8 will be appropriately designed by NCERT while framing the NCFSE 2020-21. All students will participate in a 10-day bagless period sometime during Grades 6-8 where they intern with local vocational experts such as carpenters, gardeners, potters, artists, etc. Similar internship opportunities to learn vocational subjects may be made available to students throughout Grades 6-12, including holiday periods. Vocational courses through online mode will also be made available.

**NEP Para 4.27:** "Knowledge of India" will include knowledge from ancient India and its contributions to modern India and its successes and challenges, and a clear sense of India's future aspirations with regard to education, health, environment, etc. These elements will be incorporated in an accurate and scientific manner throughout the school curriculum wherever relevant; in particular, Indian Knowledge Systems, including tribal knowledge and indigenous and traditional ways of learning, will be covered and included in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, yoga, architecture, medicine, agriculture, engineering, linguistics, literature, sports, games, as well as in governance, polity, conservation. Specific courses in tribal ethno-medicinal practices, forest management, traditional (organic) crop cultivation, natural farming, etc. will also be made available. An engaging course on Indian Knowledge Systems will also be available to students in secondary school as an elective.

**NEP Para 4.28:** Students will be taught at a young age the importance of "doing what's right", and will be given a logical framework for making ethical decisions. In later years, this would then be expanded along themes of cheating, violence, plagiarism, littering, tolerance, equality, empathy, etc., with a view to enabling children to embrace moral/ethical values in conducting one's life, formulate a
position/argument about an ethical issue from multiple perspectives, and use ethical practices in all work. Excerpts from the Indian Constitution will also be considered essential reading for all students. Basic training in health, including preventive health, mental health, good nutrition, personal and public hygiene, disaster response and first-aid will also be included in the curriculum, as well as scientific explanations of the detrimental and damaging effects of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

**NEP Para 4.29:** All curriculum and pedagogy, from the foundational stage onwards, will be redesigned to be strongly rooted in the Indian and local context and ethos in terms of culture, traditions, heritage, customs, language, philosophy, geography, ancient and contemporary knowledge, societal and scientific needs, indigenous and traditional ways of learning etc. – in order to ensure that education is maximally relatable, relevant, interesting, and effective for our students.

**NEP provisions relating to National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE)**

**NEP Para 4.30:** The formulation of a new and comprehensive National Curricular Framework for School Education, NCFSE2020-21, will be undertaken by the NCERT -based on the principles of this National Education Policy 2020, frontline curriculum needs, and after discussions with all stakeholders including State Governments, Ministries, relevant Departments of the Central Government, and other expert bodies, and will be made available in all regional languages. The NCFSE document shall henceforth be revisited and updated once every 5-10 years, taking into account frontline curriculum.

**NEP provisions relating to National Textbooks with Local Content and Flavour**

**NEP Para 4.31:** The reduction in content and increased flexibility of school curriculum - and the renewed emphasis on constructive rather than rote learning - must be accompanied by parallel changes in school textbooks. All textbooks shall aim to contain the essential core material (together with discussion, analysis, examples, and applications) deemed important on a national level, but at the same time contain any desired nuances and supplementary material as per local contexts and needs.

**NEP Para 4.32:** The aim will be to provide such quality textbooks at the lowest possible cost -namely, at the cost of production/printing - in order to mitigate the burden of textbook prices on the students and on the educational system. This may be accomplished by using high-quality textbook materials developed by NCERT in conjunction with the SCERTs; additional textbook materials could be funded by public-philanthropic partnerships and crowd sourcing that incentivize experts to write such high-quality textbooks at cost price. States will prepare their own curricula (which may be based on the NCFSE prepared by NCERT to the extent possible) and prepare textbooks (which may be based on the NCERT textbook materials to the extent possible), incorporating State flavour and material as needed.

**NEP Para 4.33:** Concerted efforts, through suitable changes in curriculum and pedagogy, will be made by NCERT, SCERTs, schools, and educators to significantly reduce the weight of school bags and textbooks.

**NEP provisions relating to Transforming Assessment for Student Development**
NEP Para 4.34: The aim of assessment in the culture of our schooling system will shift from one that is summative and primarily tests rote memorization skills to one that is more regular and formative, is more competency-based, promotes learning and development for our students, and tests higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking, and conceptual clarity. The primary purpose of assessment will indeed be for learning; it will help the teacher and student, and the entire schooling system, continuously revise teaching-learning processes to optimize learning and development for all students. This will be the underlying principle for assessment at all levels of education.

NEP Para 4.35: The progress card of all students for school-based assessment, which is communicated by schools to parents, will be completely redesigned by States/UTs under guidance from the proposed National Assessment Centre, NCERT, and SCERTs. The progress card will be a holistic, 360-degree, multidimensional report that reflects in great detail the progress as well as the uniqueness of each learner in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. It will include self-assessment and peer assessment, and progress of the child in project-based and inquiry-based learning, quizzes, role plays, group work, portfolios, etc., along with teacher assessment. The holistic progress card will form an important link between home and school and will be accompanied by parent-teacher meetings in order to actively involve parents in their children’s holistic education and development.

NEP Para 4.36: The current nature of secondary school exams, including Board exams and entrance exams - and the resulting coaching culture of today - are doing much harm, especially at the secondary school level, replacing valuable time for true learning with excessive exam coaching and preparation. These exams also force students to learn a very narrow band of material in a single stream, rather than allowing the flexibility and choice that will be so important in the education system of the future.

NEP Para 4.37: While the Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, board exams will also be made ‘easier’, in the sense that they will test primarily core capacities/competencies rather than months of coaching and memorization; any student who has been going to and making a basic effort in a school class will be able to pass and do well in the corresponding subject Board Exam without much additional effort. To further eliminate the ‘high stakes’ aspect of Board Exams, all students will be allowed to take Board Exams on up to two occasions during any given school year, one main examination and one for improvement, if desired.

NEP Para 4.38: In addition to introducing greater flexibility, student choice, and best-of-two attempts, assessments that primarily test core capacities must be the immediate key reforms to all Board exams. Boards may over time also develop further viable models of Board Exams that reduce pressure and the coaching culture.

NEP Para 4.39: With regard to all of the above, guidelines will be prepared by NCERT, in consultation with major stakeholders, such as SCERTs, Boards of Assessment (BoAs), the proposed new National Assessment Centre etc., and teachers prepared, for a transformation in the assessment system by the 2022-23 academic session, to align with the NCFSE 2020-21.

NEP Para 4.40: To track progress throughout the school years, and not just at the end of Grades 10 and 12 - for the benefit of students, parents, teachers, principals, and the entire schooling system in planning improvements to schools and teaching-learning processes - all students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority. These examinations would test
achievement of basic learning outcomes, through assessment of core concepts and knowledge from the national and local curricula, along with relevant higher-order skills and application of knowledge in real-life situations, rather than rote memorization.

**NEP Para 4.41:** It is proposed to set up a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), as a standard-setting body under MHRD that fulfills the basic objectives of setting norms, standards, and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards of India, guiding the State Achievement Survey (SAS) and undertaking the National Achievement Survey (NAS), monitoring achievement of learning outcomes in the country, and encouraging and helping school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century in consonance with the stated objectives of this Policy.

**NEP Para 4.42:** The principles for university entrance exams will be similar. The National Testing Agency (NTA) will work to offer a high-quality common aptitude test, as well as specialized common subject exams in the sciences, humanities, languages, arts, and vocational subjects, at least twice every year. These exams shall test conceptual understanding and the ability to apply knowledge and shall aim to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams. Students will be able to choose the subjects for taking the test, and each university will be able to see each student’s individual subject portfolio and admit students into their programmes based on individual interests and talents.

**NEP provisions relating to Support for Gifted Students/Students with Special Talents**

**NEP Para 4.43:** There are innate talents in every student, which must be discovered, nurtured, fostered, and developed. These talents may express themselves in the form of varying interests, dispositions, and capacities. Those students that show particularly strong interests and capacities in a given realm must be encouraged to pursue that realm beyond the general school curriculum. Teacher education will include methods for the recognition and fostering of such student talents and interests. The NCERT and NCTE will develop guidelines for the education of gifted children. B.Ed. programmes may also allow a specialization in the education of gifted children.

**NEP Para 4.44:** Teachers will aim to encourage students with singular interests and/or talents in the classroom by giving them supplementary enrichment material and guidance and encouragement. Topic-centered and Project-based Clubs and Circles will be encouraged and supported at the levels of schools, school complexes, districts, and beyond. Along these lines, high-quality national residential summer programmes for secondary school students in various subjects will also be encouraged, with a rigorous merit-based but equitable admission process to attract the very best students and teachers from across the country including from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

**NEP Para 4.45:** Olympiads and competitions in various subjects will be conducted across the country, with clear coordination and progression from school to local to state to national levels, to ensure that all students may participate at all levels for which they qualify. Efforts will be made to make these available in rural areas and in regional languages to ensure widespread participation. Public and private universities, including premier institutions like the IITs and NITs, would be encouraged to use merit-based results from National, and International Olympiads, and results from other relevant national programmes, as part of the criteria for admissions into their undergraduate programmes.
NEP Para 4.46: Once internet-connected smartphones or tablets are available in all homes and/or schools, online apps with quizzes, competitions, assessments, enrichment materials, and online communities for shared interests will be developed. Schools will develop smart classrooms, in a phased manner, focusing digital pedagogy and thereby enriching the teaching-learning process with online resources and collaborations.

NEP provisions relating to Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

NEP Para 5.15: Teachers will be given continuous opportunities for self-improvement and to learn the latest innovations and advances in their professions. These will be offered in multiple modes, including in the form of local, regional, state, national, and international workshops as well as online teacher development modules. Platforms (especially online platforms) will be developed so that teachers may share ideas and best practices. Each teacher will be expected to participate in at least 50 hours of CPD opportunities every year for their own professional development, driven by their own interests. CPD opportunities will, in particular, systematically cover the latest pedagogies regarding foundational literacy and numeracy, formative and adaptive assessment of learning outcomes, competency-based learning, and related pedagogies, such as experiential learning, arts-integrated, sports-integrated, and storytelling-based approaches, etc.

NEP Para 5.16: School Principals and school complex leaders will also be expected to participate in 50 hours or more of CPD modules per year, covering leadership and management, as well as content and pedagogy with a focus on preparing and implementing pedagogical plans based on competency-based education.

NEP provisions relating to Career Management and Progression (CMP)

NEP Para 5.17: Teachers doing outstanding work must be recognized and promoted, and given salary raises, to incentivize all teachers to do their best work. Therefore, a robust merit-based structure of tenure, promotion, and salary structure will be developed, with multiple levels within each teacher stage, that incentivizes and recognizes outstanding teachers. A system of multiple parameters for proper assessment of performance will be developed for the same by State/UT Governments that is based on peer reviews, attendance, commitment, hours of CPD, and other forms of service to the school and the community or based on NPST given in Para 5.20.

NEP Para 5.18: Further, it will be ensured that career growth (in terms of tenure, promotions, salary increases, etc.) is available to teachers within a single school stage (i.e., Foundational, Preparatory, Middle, or Secondary), and that there is no career progression-related incentive to move from being teachers in early stages to later stages or vice versa (though such career moves across stages will be allowed, provided the teacher has the desire and qualifications for such a move).

NEP Para 5.19: Vertical mobility of teachers based on merit will also be paramount; outstanding teachers with demonstrated leadership and management skills would be trained over time to take on academic leadership positions in schools, school complexes, BRCs, CRCs, BITEs, DIETs as well as relevant government departments.

NEP provisions relating to Professional Standards for Teachers
NEP Para 5.20: A common guiding set of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by 2022, by the National Council for Teacher Education in its restructured new form as a Professional Standard Setting Body (PSSB) under the General Education Council (GEC), in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers from across levels and regions, expert organizations in teacher preparation and development, expert bodies in vocational education, and higher education institutions. The standards would cover expectations of the role of the teacher at different levels of expertise/stage, and the competencies required for that stage.

**NEP provisions relating to Efficient Resourcing and Effective Governance through School Complexes/Clusters**

NEP Para 7.1: While the establishment of primary schools in every habitation across the country-driven by the SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA), now subsumed under the SamagraShiksha Scheme and other important efforts across the States - has helped to ensure near-universal access to primary schools, it has also led to the development of numerous very small 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 having below 6; during the year 2016–17, there were 1,08,017 single-teacher schools, the majority of them (85743) being primary schools serving Grades 1–5.

NEP Para 7.2: These small school sizes have rendered it economically suboptimal and operationally complex to run good schools, in terms of deployment of teachers as well as the provision of critical physical resources.

NEP Para 7.3: The isolation of small schools also has a negative effect on education and the teaching-learning process. Teachers function best in communities and teams, and so do students. Small schools also present a systemic challenge for governance and management.

NEP Para 7.4: Although consolidation of schools is an option that is often discussed, it must be carried out very judiciously, and only when it is ensured that there is no impact on access.

NEP Para 7.5: These challenges will, by 2025, be addressed by State/UT governments by adopting innovative mechanisms to group or rationalize schools. The objective behind this intervention would be to ensure that every school has: (a) adequate number of counsellors/trained social workers and teachers (shared or otherwise) for teaching all subjects; (b) adequate resources (shared or otherwise); (c) a sense of community is built to overcome the isolation of teachers, students, and schools, through joint professional development programmes, sharing of teaching-learning content, joint content development, holding joint activities; (d) cooperation and support across schools for the education of children with disabilities; and (e) improved governance of the schooling system by devolving all finer decisions, to Principals, teachers, and other stakeholders within each group of schools and treating such a group of schools, which range from the foundational stage through the secondary stage, as an integrated semi-autonomous unit.

NEP Para 7.6: One possible mechanism for accomplishing the above would be the establishment of a grouping structure called the school complex, consisting 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. This suggestion was first made by the Education Commission (1964–66) but was left unimplemented. This Policy strongly endorses the idea of the school complex/cluster, wherever possible.

**NEP Para 7.7:** The establishment of school complexes/clusters and the sharing of resources across complexes will have a number of other benefits as a consequence, such as improved support for children with disabilities, more topic-centred clubs and academic/sports/arts/crafts events across school complexes, better incorporation of art, music, language, vocational subjects, and other subjects in the classroom through the sharing of teachers in these subjects including use of ICT tools to conduct virtual classes, better student support, enrolment, attendance, and performance through the sharing of social workers and counsellors, and School Complex Management Committees (rather than simply School Management Committees) for more robust and improved governance, monitoring, oversight, innovations, and initiatives by local stakeholders.

**NEP Para 7.8:** The governance of schools will also improve and become far more efficient with school complexes/clusters. First, the DSE will devolve authority to the school complex/cluster, which will act as a semi-autonomous unit. The District Education Officer (DEO) and the Block Education Officers (BEO) will interact primarily with each school complex/cluster as a single unit and facilitate its work. The complex itself will perform certain tasks delegated by the DSE and will deal with the individual schools within it.

**NEP Para 7.9:** The culture of working to a plan, both short-term and long-term ones, will be developed through such complexes/clusters. Schools will develop their plans (SDPs) with the involvement of their SMCs. These plans will then become the basis for the creation of School Complex/Cluster Development Plans (SCDPs). The SCDP will also involve the plans of all other institutions associated with the school complex, such as vocational education institutions, and will be created by the principals and teachers of the school complex with the involvement of the SCMC and will be made available publicly. The SDP and SCDP will be the primary mechanism to align all stakeholders of the school, including the DSE. The SMC and SCMC will use the SDP and SCDP for oversight of the functioning and direction of the school and will assist in the execution of these plans.

**NEP Para 7.10:** To further enhance cooperation and positive synergy among schools, including between public and private schools, the twinning/pairing of one public school with one private school will be adopted across the country, so that such paired schools may meet/interact with each other, learn from each other, and also share resources, if possible.

**NEP Para 7.11:** Every State will be encouraged to strengthen existing or establish “BalBhavans” 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 BalBhavans may be incorporated as a part of school complexes/clusters if possible.

**NEP Para 7.12:** The school should be a point of celebration and honour for the whole community. The dignity of the school as an institution should be restored and important dates, such as the foundation day of the school, will be celebrated along with the community and the list of important alumni may be displayed and honoured. Furthermore, the un-utilized capacity of school infrastructure could be used to
promote social, intellectual, and volunteer activities for the community and to promote social cohesion during non-teaching / schooling hours and may be used as a “SamajikChetna Kendra”.

**NEP provisions relating to Standard-setting and Accreditation for School Education**

**NEP Para 8.1:** The goal of the school education regulatory system must be to continually improve educational outcomes; it must not overly restrict schools, prevent innovation, or demoralize teachers, principals, and students.

**NEP Para 8.2:** At present, all main functions of governance and regulation of the school education system - namely, the provision of public education, the regulation of education institutions, and policymaking - are handled by a single body, i.e., the Department of School Education or its arms. This leads to conflict of interests and excessive centralized concentration of power; it also leads to ineffective management of the school system, as efforts towards quality educational provision are often diluted by the focus on the other roles, particularly regulation that the Departments of School Education also perform.

**NEP Para 8.3:** The current regulatory regime also has not been able to curb the commercialization and economic exploitation of parents by many for-profit private schools, yet at the same time it has all too often inadvertently discouraged public-spirited private/philanthropic schools.

**NEP Para 8.4:** The public education system is 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. At the same time, the private/philanthropic school sector must also be encouraged and enabled to play a significant and beneficial role.

**NEP Para 8.5:** The key principles and recommendations of this Policy regarding the State school education system, the independent responsibilities within that system, and the approach to its regulation are as follows:

(a) 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; it will not be involved with the provision and operation of schools or with the regulation of schools, in order to ensure due focus on the improvement of public schools and to eliminate conflict of interests.

(b) The educational operations and service provision for the public schooling system of the whole State will be handled by the Directorate of School Education (including the offices of the DEO and BEO, etc.); it will work independently to implement policies regarding educational operations and provision.

(c) 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 SSSA will establish a minimal set of standards based on basic parameters (namely, safety, security, basic infrastructure, number of teachers across subjects and grades, financial probity, and sound processes of governance), which shall be followed by all schools. Transparent public
self-disclosure of all the basic regulatory information, as laid down by the SSSA, will be used extensively for public oversight and accountability.

(d) Academic matters, including academic standards and curricula in the State will be led by the SCERT (with close consultation and collaboration with the NCERT), which will be reinvigorated as an institution. The SCERT will develop a School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Framework (SQAAF) through wide consultations with all stakeholders. The SCERT will also lead a “change management process” for the reinvigoration of 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. Meanwhile, certification of competencies of students at the school-leaving stage will be handled by the Boards of Assessment/Examination in each State.

NEP Para 8.6: Each stakeholder and participant of the education system will be accountable to perform their role with the highest level of integrity, full commitment, and exemplary work ethic. The assessment system will be objective and developmentally oriented, while ensuring accountability. It will have multiple sources of feedback and assessment, to ensure a full view of the performance (and will not just be linked simplistically, e.g., to ‘marks’ of students).

NEP Para 8.7: Public and private schools (except the schools that are managed/aided/controlled by the Central government) will be assessed and accredited on the same criteria, benchmarks, and processes, emphasizing online and offline public disclosure and transparency, so as to ensure that public-spirited private schools are encouraged and not stifled in any way. Private philanthropic efforts for quality education will be encouraged - thereby affirming the public-good nature of education - while protecting parents and communities from arbitrary increases in tuition fees. Public disclosure on the school website and on the SSSA website - for both public and private schools - would include (at the very least) information on the numbers of classrooms, students, and teachers, subjects taught, any fees, and overall student outcomes on standardized evaluations such as the NAS and SAS. For schools controlled/managed/aided by the Central government, the CBSE in consultation with the MHRD shall prepare a framework.

NEP Para 8.8: The standard-setting/regulatory framework and the facilitating systems for school regulation, accreditation, and governance shall be reviewed to enable improvements on the basis of the learnings and experiences gained in the last decade. This review will aim to ensure that all students, particularly students from underprivileged and disadvantaged sections, shall have universal, free and compulsory access to high-quality and equitable schooling from early childhood care and education (age 3 onwards) through higher secondary education (i.e., until Grade 12). 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.

NEP Para 8.9: The aim of the public-school education system will be to impart the highest quality education so that it becomes the most attractive option for parents from all walks of life for educating their children.

NEP Para 8.10: For a periodic health check-up of the overall system, a sample-based National Achievement Survey (NAS) of student learning levels will be carried out by the proposed new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH with suitable cooperation with other governmental bodies - such as the
NCERT- that may assist in assessment procedures as well as data analysis. The assessment will cover students across government as well as private schools.

**NEP Para 8.11:** Careful attention must be paid to their safety and rights particularly girl children - and the various difficult issues faced by adolescents, such as substance or drug abuse and forms of discrimination and harassment including violence, with clear, safe, and efficient mechanisms for reporting and for due process on any infractions against children's/adolescents' rights or safety. The development of such mechanisms that are effective, timely, and well-known to all students will be accorded high priority.