

SHIKSHAK PARV 2021

**Technical Session: Quality and Sustainable Schools – Learning from Schools in India
7 September, 2021 Time -11:55AM- 1:45PM**

Rapporteurs: Prof. Mily Roy Anand, Department of Gender Studies, NCERT

Prof. Neeraja Rashmi, Department of Education in Social Sciences, NCERT

Address by Chief Guest Smt. Annpurna Devi, Minister of State for Education

The session started with an address by the chief guest Smt. Annpurna Devi, Minister of State for Education. She welcomed the Chairperson, officials of the Ministry other dignitaries and speakers of the session. On the occasion of Shikshak Parv and Teacher's Day she wished all teachers and expressed gratitude for their hard work. She stated that the goal of the Shikshak Parv is to reflect over the main issues related to education. In the NEP 2020 quality education has been given the main focus. Along with content knowledge, the policy also emphasises on personality development of the child. The NEP also lays stress on making best use of technology and digital learning. She highlighted that the Policy focuses on the need for encouragement to innovation and entrepreneurship in education.

The Hon'ble Minister of State for Education pointed out that there have been interventions in the field of education during the pandemic period, such as PM e-Vidya, and digital and ICT based technologies that can reach every child. The Ministry of Education has also made efforts to strengthen the digital aspects of learning. She mentioned ICT libraries, online modules and books for adults. Since the development of a nation is dependent on education, education is an important tool for national character building. Therefore, capacity building of children is essential. She stated that it is also important that both teachers and students learn together. They must also learn the local skills and acquire experience-based learning to make education more relevant in present times. She remarked that quality and sustainability are two sides of the same coin. She concluded by saying that the discussions and ideas that emerge out of this conclave will help in realising the vision of our Honourable Prime Minister in strengthening the education system of our country.

Address by Sh. K. Kasturiangan, Chairperson

The Chairperson began by highlighting the efforts of the Ministry of Education in organising this important Conclave with the Prime Minister setting the tone of the deliberations for the forthcoming sessions. He lauded the initiatives that have been launched to realise the vision of NEP 2020. He also appreciated the steps taken by Sh. Dharendra Pradhan, Honourable Minister of Education to realise the goals of NEP in such a short span of time. He congratulated Smt. Anita Karwal, Secretary of School Education and Literacy for her tremendous efforts in transforming school education. He remarked that the overarching theme of the Shikshak Parv, which will be deliberated upon during this technical session, as well as

the diverse themes of the nine national webinars that will be held over the next 11 days, had been thoughtfully chosen.

Dr. Kasturirangan drew attention to the fact that owing to the outbreak of Covid 19 there were some disruptions as well as learning loss among children. He hoped that many of these issues and challenges will be addressed during the Conclave. He discussed four issues in this context. Firstly, Foundational Literacy and Numeracy is an important aspect mentioned in NEP 2020 and technology can help in minimising the learning loss in this area. Secondly, community engagement and support is also required to ensure that all children are retained in school. Thirdly, curricular transformation with regard to which the NEP focuses on building fundamental capacities so that there is more scope for genuine learning which is meaningful and less burdensome. Fourthly, teachers are central to the education system and have an important role to play in bridging the gap of learning loss. Thus, restoring quality education and maintaining sustainability are the two major challenges, beside the challenges posed by the pandemic. He concluded by saying that the rich experiences of those running the most well-known institutions of the country, will be shared in the upcoming sessions of the Shikshak Parv and will be valuable for all.

Address by Presenter Prof. J.S. Rajput

Prof. J.S. Rajput began by summarising the key takeaways from the addresses of the Prime Minister, Minister of State, and the Chairperson. He stated that though we have achieved 90 percent literacy rate, there are children who are out of school and there are more children in schools who are unlearning. They are challenging groups and much needs to be done for those who are not learning in school. He then gave a brief history of education policies in India. After Independence, India's thrust in the education sector was on access to school and appointment of teachers. Later it was realised that mere enrolment is not enough and the child must participate. The National Policy on Education 1986 focused on access, participation and attainment. He highlighted that the experience gained over last 30 years has made us realise the importance of quality in education and need to understand what is quality?

Prof. Rajput stated that the focus of his work is teachers and that NEP 2020 says that teachers must be re-established. He agreed with Dr. Kasturirangan's assessment that four years of B.Ed is absolutely essential to become a teacher. He also referred to the major step taken by Dr. Kothari in making science and mathematics accessible for girls up to class 10. There is a need to restore respect for teachers. Teachers must also remember that they must first know the child, understand the mind of the child and remember that nothing can be taught but only learnt. He remarked that learning is the treasure within, teachers can only inspire the learners to realise the treasure from within.

Prof. Rajput emphasized that there is a social responsibility of parents, principals, teachers and community to feel a sense of belonging towards the school. The pandemic has given us a chance to improve the environment of government schools in terms of access, security and quality of teaching, teacher student ratio, etc. He concluded by saying that three things are

key to re-establish the glory of the rich educational heritage of India in the world: Lifelong Learning, Learning to Learn and Learning to Live Together.

Presentations by Speakers

Dr. Anantha Jyoti quoted J. Krishnamurti who believed that “.... the child should be rightly related to people, things and ideas, to the whole of life. To live is to be related. She then explained to the viewers what it implies in the context of school life. It is important to have a connect with: land and nature, the community and one’s own self. She presented some of the initiatives taken by Rishi Valley School in this regard such as water conservation, waste management, bird watching, tree planting and seasonal rhythms. She emphasized that nurturing love for nature should start from the beginning. She shared attractive pictures of wildlife around the school to illustrate her point that children must be taught that they are occupying the space of animals and to not be fearful of them. Some of the other salient initiatives that have been taken by the school are: international backyard, nature track, art work, kitchen garden and talks by eminent ecologists. She concluded by stating that children need to be in sync with nature.

Dr. Arunabh Singh started his presentation by remarking that what he will say will resonate with the addresses before him, particularly the deliberations on life-long learning, holistic approach and social responsibility. He explained with the help of some examples what a holistic approach may look in a classroom, particularly how a teacher can introduce the theme of rain through an imagination activity. He pointed out that every classroom should start with excitement for children to learn and there is a need to create love for learning to ensure lifelong learning. He stated that India is a vast country; everyone is trying to solve the riddle of learning according to each child’s capabilities. He shared the “Circle of Learning” technique adopted in Nehru World School, which consists of three components- enable, build upon and consolidate. He described some of the initiatives taken by the school such as videos on Maths Around You, Start-up Superstar and I Can, which help ignite the creativity and curiosity in students. He reiterated that reflecting on one’s experiences is more important. He concluded by saying that mere teaching is not enough, but teachers must reflect on their teaching and all teachers must become and create lifelong learners.

Ms. Sudha Painuli introduced the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) which is a scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to give quality education to talented and underprivileged tribal children and bring them in to the mainstream. According to her the role of teacher is to provide quality education for holistic development, along with imparting moral values and skill development, to build good citizens. The special challenge that her school faces is to bring first generational learners into the mainstream. She elaborated on some of the innovative experiments undertaken in her school such as Birthday Garden where students nurture plants for 7 years, Theatre in Education which builds students confidence as they perform outside the school, Skill Development with a focus on tribal arts and culture, Eklavya Tribal Museum for preservation of cultural heritage and linking the future with the past, Music Performance at Rashtrapati Bhawan, Word Stock and Shramdaan.

Question & Answer Session

The chairperson then put up some questions to be addressed by the speakers. First, Dr. Kasturirangan asked how is e-learning and new methods of education going to change the structure and roots of our education system. Prof. Rajput responded that these new methods will provide alternatives in the long run and reduce the load of the school bag. Dr. Arunabh responded that IT is like energy that can be used or misused. To use technology, we need to have internet which must first reach even the most isolated regions. He stated that while technology cannot replace teachers, teachers who use technology may replace those who don't.

Dr. Kasturirangna then asked how is environmental education, sustainability and citizenship education related. Dr. Jyoti responded that it is important to teach children to preserve and love nature. She gave the example of observing the night sky and its wonders. Dr. Sudha stated that environmental education plays an important role in creating a sense of belongingness in students to the local environment. This aids the learning process greatly.

The chairperson concluded the session by lauding the good ideas and practices of the speakers. He thanked Prof. Rajput, the Minister for State of Education as well as Secretary of School Education and speakers for making the session interesting and valuable for the viewers.

Concluding remarks

Prof. Shridhar Srivastava, Director, NCERT, welcomed the participants to the concluding session of the Conclave. He highlighted the active role played by NCERT during the pandemic situation by supporting the education in the online mode, developing teaching-learning resources such as the Alternative Academic Calendar, PRAGYATA Guidelines and NISHTHA 2.0 online training modules for supporting teachers. He also stated that NCERT has worked hard on the UDL based ISL Dictionary of 10,000 words, Talking Books, NISHTHA 3.0 (FLN) and Vidyanjali 2.0. NCERT in collaboration with ISLRTC have created metadata for ISL dictionary and the dictionary words are uploaded on DIKSHA portal in alphabetical order for wider access and dissemination among all the stakeholders. He pointed out that following the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), NCERT has started to augment these resources with addition of relevant audios, subtitles and images for supplementing the visual ISL dictionary. He added that the guidelines and framework for NIPUN Bharat (FLN mission) were developed.

Prof. Srivastava further said that this year's Shikshak Parv adopts a "whole-school" approach; one that extends beyond the curriculum and addresses the entire planning, operation and management of the school facility. The upcoming nine National Webinars during Shikshak Parv will focus on various themes that will help all those connected to the Parv learn from schools and teachers. He concluded by saying that NCERT will incorporate the learning from schools into the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which is under development at present.

Smt. Anita Karwal thanked the Hon'ble Prime Ministers, the Ministers of Education, the Minister of State for Education, Dr. Kasturirangan, Prof. J.S. Rajput and all the speakers. She remarked that she was humbled by speakers' presentations and their experiences and ideas. She said that the initiatives taken by teachers are eye openers such as starting entrepreneurship for grade I, exposure to nature and others shared today. These are excellent examples of connecting learning to real life. There is need to build capacity of school, society and of parents to participate hand in hand to bring sustainability. She concluded by saying that Shikshak Parv is off to a great start.