

EDITOR'S NOTE

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has placed much importance to the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), and has recommended that the first three years of Pre-Primary Education has to be a part of school education. The development of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) has been considered as a crucial area. Efforts has been made by Ministry of Education and various states to improve the quality of children in the learning outcomes based on FLN. Apart from the importance given to ECCE, the policy has emphasised the use of play-based, child-centric and activity-based pedagogy in the classroom by providing opportunities to the students to enjoy learning through experience. For this to be implemented in the true and right spirit, the preparation and continuous support to be given to the teachers also has been explained in the policy. The present issue of the Journal of Indian Education includes papers based on some of these themes such as early literacy, teacher preparation and development, activity-based pedagogical strategies, etc.

The NEP 2020 has given much importance to the development of early literacy skills among the children of foundational stage. Noyonika Gupta and Arushi Sharma delves with the effectiveness of a multi-modal intervention utilising digital storytelling in their study titled, 'Exploring Digital Storytelling as a Pedagogical Tool for Emergent Literacy Skills' that observes positive changes and attributes success to music in stories, word frequency, familiar contexts, reinforcing concepts through art, child-centric approach, and active adult-child engagement in the learning process. It concludes that digital storytelling and art-based pedagogies has proved to be potentially significant and beneficial in developing emergent literacy skills among children during the foundational stage. Nidhi Kunwar deliberates on the significance of development perspective through a paper titled, 'Understanding Developmental Perspective of Writing as a Framework for Early Grades Writing Pedagogy', which discusses underlying theoretical framework of developmental perspective and offers educational implications specifically for early-grade writing pedagogy. The author also focuses on the core ideas of developmental perspective, with respect to writing pedagogy popularly practiced in our classrooms. Beyond the role of teacher in contextual learning, it is also influenced by parental attitudes, beliefs and practices regarding literacy. An empirical paper by Mincy Ruby Mathew and

Sunita Singh based on their study titled, 'The Relationship between Parents' Literacy Beliefs and Practices and Children's Responses to Literature' indicated a supportive, print-rich environment in the homes enables the parents to effectively engage with children's literature while demonstrating intertextual, personal and expressive responses.

Education needs to be context specific; it implies that methods of teaching and learning changes with time and space. The phase of COVID-19 pandemic altered the modes of teaching and learning to a newer prospect of blending it. Meena Sehrawat and M. M. Roy in their study titled, 'Exploring Digital Resources to Maximise Students' Engagement for Facilitating Effective Learning in Remote Classroom', examines the significant shift that occurred with the adoption of online teaching and learning by exploring some ways where teachers can use the digital resources to engage students for enhancing their learning by taking an active role in their own learning using digital resources. Development perspective requires to be accompanied by the activeness and consciousness of the teacher. It is advanced by the teacher's self efficacy to effectively regulate emotions while being mindful of the surroundings. The paper by Chinu Agrawal, Rakesh Kumar and Aashi Jain titled, 'Relationship between Mindfulness, Emotional Regulation and Teaching Efficacy in School Teachers', concludes that mindfulness and emotional regulation were significantly and positively correlated with teachers' sense of efficacy. The study suggests that teachers who are more mindful and have a higher ability to regulate and manage emotions, leads to higher teaching effectiveness and efficiency in the classroom.

Context specific learning requires a rigorous and competent teacher education programmes that could develop capacities among teachers to adapt towards dynamic contextual variations among learners that may arise from different social structures of our society. Education aims to eliminate those structures that cause gender-based inequalities and other kinds of injustice through means of curriculum, rules and regulations in educational institutions. Ruksana K. and Antony Palackal through their paper titled, 'Teacher Education and Gender Sensitivity Training: A Study on the B.Ed. Programmes in Kerala', analyses the efforts made in this direction in secondary teacher education curriculum of three major universities of Kerala. The paper concludes that curriculum and the course need further modification to equip the prospective teachers to be more gender-sensitive during their classroom activities alongside creating an institutional and attitudinal shift among educators as well.

The National Education Policy 2020 has highlighted the importance of ensuring standards of teacher performance and the need to come up with a National Professional Standard for teachers. NCERT has come up with a tool for teacher appraisal titled, 'Performance Indicators for Elementary School Teachers' (PINDICS), which later evolved as Teacher's Self-Assessment Rubrics (TSAR).

Vijayan K. highlights the utilisation of Teacher's Self-Assessment Rubrics (TSAR) by teachers at different levels in his paper titled, 'Teacher's Self-Assessment Rubrics: A Tool for Reflective Practices in Teaching', which delineates the ways in which assessments of teacher performance using TSAR can help in reflecting on the teaching-learning process as well as a means for the organisation of a continuing professional development programme for teachers.

The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) through in-service teachers training is considered as an essential aspect for enhancing professional knowledge, capabilities and skills to adapt with the changing roles and newer approaches to teach. Ratikanta Senapati and Sunil Kumar Singh through their empirical paper titled, 'Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Expectations of Secondary School Teachers: A Pilot Study in Kendrapara and Cuttack Districts of Odisha', highlights that respondent teachers were in favour to include skills like academic supervision and management, communication, child psychology, laboratory activity related skill and guidance counselling in their on-going CPD programmes that could support in their professional development.

The impact of COVID-19 has been universal; however, it significantly impacted the learning loss among marginalised sections of the society. Mohmad Saleem Jahangir, Zakir Hussain Gadda and Shameem Ahamad Ganayee in the paper titled, 'Education Amid COVID-19 Pandemic: Understanding the Response of Poor and Marginalised in Kashmir' observes that the sudden shift to online education amid COVID-19 has augmented the digital marginality causing severe educational disadvantages among the poor sections of the society. Although new ways of learning and teaching have been incorporated, yet, it remains questionable how heavily our education sector got affected by COVID-19. Deepika Pradeep Chaurasiya and Sunita Singh explore those effects in the form of learning gaps among students in subjects like English, Hindi and Maths in the paper titled, 'Learning Gaps Due to COVID-19 Among Middle School Students Indicated in Pandemic Era: An Analysis.' The finding indicates that majority of learners have been suffering from the problem of learning gaps due to lack of student-teacher interaction, access to resources, lack of attentive feedback to each individual learner and other equitable facilities leading to perennial learning loss in middle schools.

Dea Pareek explores the short falls of conventional textbooks showcasing universal norms, while examining the characters portrayed in NCERT or CBSE English language textbooks for Grades I to VIII in the paper, 'Representation of Characters from an Intersectional Perspective in English Language Textbooks for Elementary Grades.'

Apart from new developments related to blended teaching and learning through digital platforms, the right to education is yet to be realised in entirety.

Md. Nijairul Islam and Ajit Mondal in their paper titled, 'Implementation of Section 12 (1) (c) of the Right to Education Act 2009 in Private Unaided Schools in India: A Reality Check', examines the current applicability of mandating private unaided schools to enroll at least 25 per cent of children in Grades I–VIII from the disadvantaged groups of society. Institutional reforms are also essentially considered due to continuous quality deterioration of the government schools which is drifting the parents to consider private schools as their first choice. Sher Singh Sangwan observes the particular trend in number of schools since 1966 and the status of students enrolled by social category in government and private schools at primary, secondary and higher secondary levels in the paper, 'Why Government Schools are Merged in Haryana?'. The author deduces that student enrolment is decreasing heavily especially at the level of primary government schools leading to increased closure of these schools. He suggests that the policy alone will not succeed; Government has to improvise monitoring and teacher training.

The research and theoretical papers on various themes covering school education and teacher education specifically mentioned in the NEP 2020 have been presented in this issue of *Journal of Indian Education*. We hope that our readers will be able to relate to their experiences and exposures gained through different times with the issues and concerns discussed by the authors of these articles and research papers. We also invite our readers from different levels of school education and teacher education to contribute to the journal by sharing their thoughts and experiences in the form of articles, action research reports, theoretical papers, book reviews, etc. Your valuable suggestions and comments for improvement of the quality of the *Journal of Indian Education* are welcome.

Academic Editor