

EDITORIAL

School routines give children frequent and repeated practice of tasks, empowering them to gradually take on an active role in their learning journey. The past few years have witnessed twin disruptions in school routine: one, the savage pandemic that shattered the comfort zone of schooling; and two, the sudden reliance on technology for learning.

This issue of *The Primary Teacher* presents an insight into these aspects of education.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted more than routines; it reshaped landscapes. One of the most dramatic shifts witnessed the classroom transitioning from sunlit halls to flickering screens, impacting the primary level, with its inherent reliance on play, activity, and physical interaction, faced a unique challenge. This, in turn, brought into focus the critical role of evaluation of online education. How do we assess the potential of young minds in this virtual space, ensuring that their growth is nurtured? The first article, 'Effectiveness of Evaluation Used in Online Education at Primary Level: Parents' Perception' by Trisha Bhattacharya and Rekha Shukla deals with this question, exploring the perceptions of parents on the effectiveness of evaluation methods used in online education for primary-level students.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, paints a vibrant picture of a modernised technology-based learning ecosystem, in which lies the promise of quality e-learning, particularly in empowering primary education and bridging the vast access gap across the nation. E-learning holds the potential to upgrade the education system like never before, reaching even the most remote corners of India, where quality education has long remained a distant dream. In this regard, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges faced by our primary teachers. The second article, 'Challenges and Opportunities for Primary Teachers in Implementing NEP 2020's Vision for Quality Education: E-learning perspective' by Neha Saxena, Kiran Gupta and Bishan Singh Nagi, talks about how teachers may be provided with the necessary skills, support, and resources, ensuring that they become not just users of technology, but active agents in shaping a vibrant, inclusive, and future-proof educational landscape for young minds.

With the NEP 2020's vision of education as the "single greatest tool to achieve social justice and equality in society", school education plays a critical role in shaping a just and equitable space for children. India's journey towards this ideal has been marked by significant milestones, from the Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD)

Act of 2016. Yet, a closer look reveals that well-intentioned policies haven't fully translated into tangible outcomes. NEP 2020 seeks to bridge these gaps, but the success of this policy hinges on the active engagement of the primary stakeholders—parents, teachers, school heads, and even peers. The third article, 'Ensuring Equitable and Inclusive School Education: Analytical Study of Primary Stakeholder' by C Thangminlal DOUNGEL discusses education how cooperation, empathy, and a shared vision for a just and equitable education system will be the fuel to take forward to give every child the opportunity to reach their full potential, regardless of their background.

The human brain is a remarkable instrument, capable of learning, adapting, and solving complex problems. But this needs nurturing, and the foundation for future academic success is often laid in the early years. This is where preschool education plays a crucial role, particularly in fostering pre-numeracy readiness—the building blocks for later mathematical understanding. Next article, 'Enhancing Pre-Numeracy Readiness of Preschool Children' by Reetu Chandra highlights the importance of pre-numeracy readiness and suggests a set of activities to be incorporated into the curriculum, providing practical solutions for educators and policymakers.

The next article, 'Competencies of Head Teachers and SMC Chairpersons in Financial Management in Elementary Schools: A Case Study' by Swarna Prava Hota and Gitanjali Panda discusses the pursuit of quality education in Odisha's elementary schools. It talks about the transparent system of financial management, depending on two crucial stakeholders: Head Teachers and the School Management Committee (SMC). Despite their central position, both Head Teachers and SMC Chairpersons may lack the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively manage school finances, which in turn limits the ability to generate and utilize resources, ultimately impacting the quality of education delivered to students.

Another article, 'A Study of the Content Appropriateness of the Textbooks of FLN Prepared by Maharashtra in Light of NEP 2020 Recommendations' by Shruti Tripathi examines the content appropriateness of FLN textbooks developed by the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) Maharashtra through the lens of NEP 2020, prioritising the development of foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as the bedrock of lifelong learning. By pinpointing areas for improvement and offering actionable recommendations, the study provides a roadmap for SCERT to refine its FLN textbooks and make them truly NEP 2020 compliant. This includes incorporating authentic contexts, encouraging open-ended questions, and promoting learner agency through activities that require problem-solving and independent thinking.

The last article, 'The Concept of Disability Reflected in Textbooks of Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education' by Hilal Ahmad Wani, discusses

disability which has been viewed for a long time as a personal limitation, and a barrier to societal participation, rather than a product of systemic exclusion. Fortunately, India's The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, emphasises inclusive education, ensuring equal opportunities and fostering active engagement in society. For true equality, education must be accessible to all, regardless of ability. This necessitates not just accessible infrastructure and specialised support, but also a fundamental shift in how we understand and represent disability within the learning environment. This study reveals a concerning disparity in the portrayal of disability. While NCERT-adapted books demonstrate some positive strides towards inclusivity, JKBOSE-prepared textbooks lack a comprehensive representation of the concept. This discrepancy highlights the need for a more proactive approach to integrating disability into educational materials.

The journal also includes its regular features. One of the four features is the 'Book Review' of '*Brown Like Dosas, Samosas, and Sticky Chikki*' which is a children's book written by Rebecca Manari and illustrated by Heetal Dattani Joshi. It tells the story of Samaira, a young girl who is proud of her brown skin. The book challenges the idea that fair skin is more beautiful and celebrates the diversity of skin tones. The book is full of colourful illustrations and playful rhymes that will make children laugh. It is a heartwarming story that teaches children to love and appreciate themselves for who they are.

In another feature, 'My Page', the author argues for the importance of including "Bharatiya content" in Indian textbooks, meaning content that is relevant to the Indian context and environment. The author, a teacher, reflects on a lesson using a poem about animals like seals and seagulls, which were unfamiliar to her first-grade students. This experience prompted her to analyse textbooks from Classes I to V. It emphasises the need for educational resources that resonate with Indian students and connect them to their own cultural heritage.

The last feature, 'From the States', is about the challenges posited by COVID-19 on education and the efforts taken by SCERT Telangana to address learning loss and improve primary school education in the state focusing on foundational skills, active participation, and individual learning pace.

— Academic Editors