

Teacher Education in NCFFS (2022)

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ABSTRACT

The country received its third National Education Policy in 2020 after a gap of 34 years. Among its major recommendations the most eye catching and transformative is its recommendation for structural change. It recommended for school structure as 5+3+3+4 instead of existing structure of 10+2. The major aspect of this structural change was the addition of three more school years before class -1. The pre-school years became an integral part of the school structure and there was felt the need for education of these young kids of 3-6 years. Consequently, country with the help of NCERT prepared its National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCFFS) in 2022. This document also talks on Teacher and Teacher Education which is more focused in section 10.1 of the document in the name of Enabling and Empowering Teachers. Teacher and Teacher related issues are undertaken through Six Paras, Table 10.1A & B and Annexure-2. These Paras talk in terms of Enabling Environment for Teachers, Conducive Facilities and Work Environment, Pre-service Teacher Education, In-service Teacher Education, Professional Development, and Autonomy & Accountability. The framework is scientifically framed keeping in view research based on Developmental Psychology, but what is more needed is to implement it with required investment in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Keywords: NCFFS, Teacher, Teacher Education, ECCE, Professional Development.

Introduction:

NCFFS (2022)— National Curriculum Framework for Foundation Stage was launched by the Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan across the country on 20th October 2022 at New Delhi. At the same time the Pilot Project of Balvatika 49 Kendriya Vidyalayas were launched. It is the first ever Integrated Curriculum Framework for Children between ages 3-8 years. It has been developed on the line of 5+3+3+4 curriculum and pedagogical structure as reflected in National Education Policy (2020). It is an integral part of the overall National Curriculum Framework for School Education to be developed to replace NCF (2005), and to address the other three stages of the 5+3+3+4 structure covering the entire school education up to the age of 18 years. Now it has occurred as NCFSE (2023). Need for the education and care for early childhood is in demand since long. NCF (2005) also stresses upon its need. NCF (2005) states, “Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) requires that young children be provided care, opportunities and experiences that lead to their all-round development- physical, mental, social and emotional, and school readiness”.

The NCERT has developed this curriculum framework which can be named as the National Curriculum Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCFECCE) as well. It is one of the four National Curriculum Framework (NCFs) to be prepared to transact NEP (2020). NCERT while developing this framework- NCFFS (2022) has made extensive consultative process with states and UTs up to grass root level and various institutions and organizations. Admission has been given in the Balvatika classes as per priority specified in the admission guidelines and norms for reservation of KVS. Curriculum and resource materials prepared by NCERT are being used in KVS classes. National Curriculum Framework for Adult Education (NCFAE), and National Curriculum for Teacher Education (NCFTE) besides National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) (rest 3 parts) are to come the minister said during launch.

National Curriculum Framework for Foundation Stage (2022) starts with a Foreword that informs about its outlook and agenda along with its way of preparation and its relationship with NPE

(2020) and NCF to come against three remaining stages of the structure of 5+3+3+4. This has been presented by Shri K. Kasturirangan on behalf of the National Steering Committee for National Curriculum Framework. The NCFFS (2022) states that it is the first ever integrated Curriculum Framework for Children between ages 3-8 in India. The Foreword claims that the Foundational Stage envisions an integrated approach to Early Childhood Care and Education and is based on cutting-edge research from across the world in multiple disciplines which includes among other things better understanding in the fields of neurosciences, brain study, and cognitive sciences. It further asserts that the NCF is due to accumulated insights from the practice of Early Childhood Care and Education, and the wisdom and knowledge from diverse Indian traditions as well. NEP (2020) narrates the importance of ECCE, “Over 85% of a child’s cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of 6, indicating the critical importance of appropriate care and stimulation of the brain in the early years in order to ensure healthy brain development and growth.” It believes that it has considered the spirit and philosophy of NPE (2020) and uses “play” at the core of the conceptual, operational, and transactional approaches to curriculum organization, pedagogy, time and content organization, and the overall experience of the child. It claims that the (NCFFS, 2022) will be able to achieve the goal of foundational literacy and numeracy as articulated in NEP 2020, with age-appropriate strategies. It expresses the process of its development in terms of consultations with stake holders across the nation, expert groups, theme papers, etc. The framework assures through the Foreword that this curriculum framework will be an integral part of the overall curriculum framework for school Education, which is under development, and will address the remaining three stages of the 5+3+3+4 structure, covering education for children up to the age of 18. It means, it asserts and ensures that this NCF is complete and simultaneously connected with other stages of structure 5+3+3+4. It further assures that this independent NCF with remaining three stage- specific NCF will complete the overall National Curriculum Framework for School Education, and simultaneously will guide the preparation of the teachers for this stage of education. Advocating this structure having ECCE what Singh

(2022) is saying for NEP (2020) is also true to NCF (2022). Singh, A.K. (2022) states about NEP, “It recommends modifying the existing 10+2 Pedagogical structure in the form of a new structure of 5+3+3+4, having a strong base of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from the age of 3 years.” He appreciates the inclusion of ECCE in the school curriculum structure.

Besides the knowledge giving Foreword this NCF contains Acronyms; Table of Contents showing Foreword to all ten chapters list with related sub-heads; About the National Curriculum Framework; Descriptions and Deliberations of all 10 Chapters. Annexure-1; Annexure-2; Annexure-3; Annexure-4; Glossary of Terms; References; Bibliography; Acknowledgement; Wide and Inclusive Process for Development of the National Curriculum Framework; and the Words of NEP (2020). It starts with Cover page and the Cover page also appears to declare its end.

About the National Curriculum Framework

About the National Curriculum Framework moves further on the line the Preface has initiated. It expresses that NCFFS (2022) is developed based on the Vision of the National Education Policy 2020. About the Objectives of this NCF the framework says that it is to help in positively transforming the School Education System of India as envisioned in NEP (2020), through corresponding positive changes in the curriculum including Pedagogy. While talking on the characteristics of NCFFS (2022) the framework asserts that it is to provide the interested reader a reasonable understanding of what education should look like in our new vision for schools, and why, and what role individuals could play in different individual and social roles. NCFFS (2022) finds teacher in special category and admits indirectly Teacher Education’s role in the implementation of any educational plan. It asserts that in NCF teacher is the primary focus as teacher is at the heart of the practice of education. The document admits that it is the perspective of teacher that must be carried by all, including syllabus and content developers, textbook writers, administrations, and others. Based upon this saying it can be concluded that all ten chapters are linked and related to teacher and teacher education as teacher is in every act, and teachers have to be everywhere — curriculum planning, curriculum transaction, and the evaluation. This framework

besides having teacher education and teacher spread in all the chapters is more particularly placed at 10.1 under the head Enabling and Empowering Teachers. This para is comprehensively targeted against teacher and teacher education.

As stated, the framework contains 10 chapters. Chapter-1 with the head “Preamble and Introduction” besides initiating introduces Early Childhood Care and Education, and Foundational Stage as concepts along with related concepts. Chapter-2 deals with Aims, Curricular Goals, Competencies and Learning Outcomes in the Foundational Stage context. Chapter-3 describes Approach to Language Education and Literacy related to Foundational Stage. Chapter-4 is in the name of Pedagogy that the teachers must internalize to manage and teach. In this regard this chapter is closer to the scope of teacher education in comparison to other chapters. Chapter-5 with the head “Choosing, Organizing, and Contextualizing Content for Teaching” is very close to the Pedagogical affairs of teaching and learning, and in this sense very near to the teacher education as a concept. “Assessment for Furthering Learning Objectives” as the chapter-6 is about evaluation and the most important job for a teacher after teaching. If one believes in teaching and testing, go together it is easy to conclude that this aspect (Assessment) is also close to the areas of teacher education as a concept. Chapter-7 is Organizing Time; chapter-8 “Additional Critical Areas”; and Chapter-9 “Linkages to the Preparatory Stage”. All these three chapters and their related concepts are associated with teacher and teacher education in some way or other. Chapter-10 under the head “Creating a Supportive Eco-system” bears five sub-heads as Enabling and Empowering Teachers; Ensuring an Appropriate Environment for Learning; Role of Academic Administrative Functionaries; Role of Parents and Community; and Leveraging Technology. Out of these five sub-heads the target of the teacher is the first one which is directly associated with Teacher Education as Concept. This aspect is more particular to the scope of teacher education and concerns of teachers.

Annexure-1 is comprehensive and is about Illustrative Learning Outcomes. Annexure-2 bears Illustrative Practices as its heading and is represented as (1) Planning for Learning; (2) In the Classroom; (3) Understanding Learning; and (4) Enabling the

Teacher. Annexure-2 is Comprehensive Knowledge Oriented to Teachers, Student Teacher, and Teachers Educators. Parts-4 is particularly useful that reflects the mechanism of teacher education (a) Teacher Seminars; (b) Teacher Mela; (c) Decentralized Continuous Teacher Professional Development. and (d) Workshop on Puppetry. Annexure-3 bears the head Mapping Competencies of NIPUN Bharat and NCF for the Foundational Stage in the light of the three Nipun Bharat Developmental Goal (Goal- 1, 2 & 3). Annexure-4 bears the head Research on ECCE from India and Across the World. Annexure-3, and 4 is useful for the academicians and researchers. Glossary of Terms, References, Bibliography, and Acknowledgement is properly placed. Wide and Inclusive Process for Development of the National Curriculum Framework is about the description of the work done in the process of completion of the NCF. In brief it is already narrated through “Foreword” and “About the National Curriculum Framework”. Serious academicians may go through if they wish to know involvement of different stake holders in more specific manner.

Teacher Education in NCFFS (2022)

NCFFS (2022) states that implementation of NCF requires several actions around Content, Pedagogy, and Assessment. Further it finds role to be played by teacher important and urgent around Content, Pedagogy, and Assessment. Teachers need education, training and learning experience to perform around the task related to content, pedagogy, and assessment. Section 10.1 under the head “Enabling and Empowering Teachers” talks about the input to be given to the teachers to perform objectively. Teacher of the foundational stage needs certain qualities to deal with young children to do justice with the job intellectually and ethically. The framework suggests for teacher’s professional development inevitable for the implementation of NCF, and suggests working on following aspects as:

1. To Ensure an Enabling Environment for Teachers

Teachers need resource- rich, motivating environments along with continuous opportunities to professionally grow. Teacher’s sense of pride must be assured and preserved so that they could find themselves members of a vibrant professional group.

2. To Manage for Conducive Facilities and Work Environment

Teachers are to be supported with sound infrastructure in the light of the content coverage requirements, essential facilities, and modernization of the teaching learning process so that their individual in-put potential be channelized for learners' development and learning.

3. Pre-Service Teacher Education

In the present context it is necessary to estimate demand and supply of foundational stage teachers as it is a new part and new phenomenon. Four-year integrated Teacher Education Programme with specialization in Foundational Stage is the need of the hour. Maruwada, S (2022) also focuses on the need of early childhood education in the same way, "Now is the moment in India to target the challenge of quality early childhood education. With a decreasing child demographic, the problem is a solvable one."

In the process of teacher preparation Curriculum and Pedagogy of the NCF for the Foundational Stage need to be worked out. The Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) needs to be extended to cover Foundational Stage and it is also needed to make certification suitable to cover this stage as well. Teachers' recruitment be following a rigorous process supported by a written test and followed by interview and classroom demonstration.

4. In-Service Teacher Education, Mentoring and Support

Teacher professional development is a continuous and lifelong process where there are so many junctures of acquiring knowledge and skills to remain useful for the system, and specially to the students. Teachers must grow every day and the framework puts emphasis on this aspect by talking about Components of Professional Development and Models of Professional Development. NCF (2005) in the context of In-service Teacher Education demands professional development of teacher. NCF (2005) speaks about in-service education of teacher as, "In-service education can play a significant role in the professional growth of teachers and function as an agent for change in school-related practices. It helps teachers gain confidence by engaging with their practices and reaffirming their experiences. It provides opportunities to engage with other teachers

professionally and to update knowledge." The framework (2022) also suggests looking into the Annexure-2 to obtain experiences related to teachers and their desired activities.

The framework states that teachers need sustained change in their practice, and move to the next phase, simultaneously it suggests the professional development of teachers be in the way they could become competent and reflective individuals with the ability to drive educational improvement. The document asserts that for teachers' professional development support structures and enablers must be in place to facilitate their work and their further learning. Teachers need and need to know variety of means of their development and for peer learning and mentoring institutions like NCERT, SCERTs, DIETs, BITEs, BRCs, CRCs, etc. They are to play vital role by developing, managing, and placing for support material, capacity building sessions, on-site visits, and quality monitoring and supervision. These institutions are vital to provide continuous professional development. Teachers' professional development be made in the light of the nature and characteristics of Foundational Stage that focus on helping young children learn in a safe, stimulating, and engaging environment that emphasizes play and discovery. In this regard the sad state of affair is reflected by Position Paper on NCF (2007). Position Paper on NCF (2007) feels sorry on the status of primary level teacher educators, "There are also no established mechanism to create a Professional cadre of teacher educators, especially at pre-primary and the elementary stage. Most teacher educators, training pre-primary and elementary school teachers for example, are themselves trained in secondary education."

The name of "Professional Development for Teachers – Illustrative Component and Modes", and "Modes of Professional Development" respectively reflect comprehensively about the components and modes of professional development of teachers particularly important for the professional development of teachers.

A reflects the component useful for teachers to learn and grow as Facts Collection from Global Research based on Stage Specific Findings and Suggestions; Understanding of Content needed for the Stage whether it is Domain of Development or

Language or Early Mathematics; stage specific knowledge in terms of competencies and learning outcomes; Stage Specific Pedagogy; Learning of Selection and Presentation of Content related Knowledge; Stage Specific Assessment Knowledge in terms of Purpose, Mode and Process; Learning of Child-centric Approach to take care of Child's Risk; Stage Specific Planning; Capability of building Relationship with Parents and Community; Knowledge about Teacher's Learning Forums; and Learning of using Research Literature and Case Studies Writing.

Table 10.1B presents modes of Professional development as School-based Activities Arrangements; Workshops for Material Development and Formal Learning; Teacher's Forum and Social Media Groups; Handbooks and Use of DIKSHA Platform (NCERT); Mentoring of Experienced Teachers, and Teacher Seminars. Table 10.1A & B with Annexure-2 of the framework sufficiently focus about the teachers in service education.

5. Career Ladder and Professional Development Opportunities

The framework admits that early stages of school education need highly qualified teachers and it demands career and professional development of concerned teachers. Pay and service condition of teacher must be commensurate with their social and professional responsibilities and attractive to the talented aspirants. Teachers must have opportunity to grow in their professional career in terms of salary, promotions, etc. The framework on the line of NEP (2020) asserts on the career moves of teachers across stages so that teachers working in early stages could move to higher later stage.

6. Teacher Autonomy and Teacher Accountability

The framework particularly asserts on the teacher's autonomy attached with their accountability. It states that the teacher must have pedagogic autonomy to plan and organize content, decide sequence, and select suitable methods of transactions in the light of the nature of the content, along with the selection of the suitable mode of assessment and evaluation. The framework wants to make the teacher's autonomy more meaningful by attaching their accountability in terms of Curricular Goals, Competencies, Learning Outcomes, and Pedagogical Approaches and Principles of Foundational Learning.

Conclusion:

We have received our National Curriculum Framework for Foundational State (NCFFS) to implement our National Education Policy (2020) keeping in view the Early Childhood Care and Education. The framework has been implemented and through Balvatika has been started in our Kendriya Vidyalayas employing the curriculum based upon it. Still, it is big challenge before the nation that how this stage education will be qualitatively managed. This needs manpower, Infrastructure, and other needed resources. We need to enable and enlighten our teachers and large amount of investment to facilitate structural requirement. If we invest in man and material resources judiciously only then we may find the required benefit of our this scientifically prepared National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage NCFFS (2022). Tilak, JBG (2016) judiciously suggests about the government investment in education, "Both states and the union government should seriously feel the responsibility of reaching the target of six percent of GDP to education." Without investing in man and material sufficiently we cannot transact the educational provisions related to Early Childhood Care and Education as reflected in NEP (2020) and now in NCFFS (2022)

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