

Salient Features

The National Council of Educational Research and Training has to advise and assist the Government of India in formulating and implementing policies and programmes in the field of education, particularly school education. To that end, it has been preparing, after the interval of roughly every decade, a national curriculum framework for school education and giving broad guidelines about how to address the major concerns and issues before the nation. The states have been, subsequently, adopting or adapting these curricular guidelines to develop their own detailed curricula, syllabi and curricular materials.

The present curriculum framework encompasses all the stages of school education from the pre-primary to the higher secondary. It is the product of an open democratic national discussions and deliberations generated through a Discussion Document produced by the NCERT after extensive and intensive multilevel consultations and debates. Almost all the sections of the Indian society have directly or indirectly contributed to the development of the present curriculum framework. These include noted educationists, experts, teachers and teacher educators, parents, representatives of voluntary organisations, boards of school education, state governments and community in general.

While the framework responds to many new societal and pedagogical changes, it remains well within the broad parameters of the National Policy on Education framed in 1986 and revised in 1992. Some of the new concerns that lay the foundations of the new framework are:

Building a cohesive society based on pillars of relevance, equity and excellence

Integrating indigenous knowledge and recognising India's contribution to the world civilizations

Inculcating and nurturing a sense of pride in being an Indian, patriotism and nationalism tempered with the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

Universalising elementary education and linking education with life skills

Value development at all stages of school education

Meeting the challenges of information and communication technology and globalisation

Reducing the curriculum load

Using culture specific pedagogy

Viewing the child as a constructor of knowledge.

Recognising the interface between cognition, emotion and action.

Empowering teachers for curriculum development and implementation.

Coordinated decentralisation of the process of curriculum development.

Some of the major recommendations made for the qualitative improvement at the different stages of school education are as follows:

Ensuring availability of pre-school education to all children in the country and prohibiting formal teaching and testing of different subjects at this level.

Integration of environmental education with languages, mathematics and other activities in the first two years of the primary stage

Integration of art education, health and physical education and work education into the 'Art of Healthy and Productive Living' at the primary stage.

Education about religions and inherent values of all religions to be imparted at all the stages of school education.

Integration of science and technology up to the secondary stage.

Bringing mathematics closer to life and setting up of mathematics corner in the existing science laboratory for practical mathematics upto the secondary stage.

Integrated, thematic approach to the teaching of social sciences upto the secondary stage.

Sticking to the basic policy of three language formula and emphasising the teaching of Hindi as the official language of India and Samskrit as the language of traditional wisdom and culture of the country.

Emphasising the implementation of semesterisation at the secondary and higher secondary stages.

Provision for wide flexibility and freedom in the choice of subjects among the courses to be offered at the higher secondary stage.

Providing a strong vocational stream for enhancing employability and entrepreneurship at the higher secondary stage.

Provision for general academic and specialised elective language courses at the higher secondary stage.

Evolving a humane, learner friendly, error-free, responsive and transparent evaluation system.

Reducing the predominance of external examinations and removal of the pass and fail categories upto Class.

Use of different methods of grading scholastic and co-scholastic areas of learning.

Use of alternative evaluation procedures for learners with special needs.

Toward the effective implementation of the framework the following specific recommendations have been made:

Adoption of suitable implementation strategies for the orientation, participation and accountability of teachers, parents, community and the managers of the system.

Suggestions for specific implementation strategies for promoting values, ensuring the inclusion of learners with various challenges in the mainstream, and mobilising the requisite resources for achieving the educational goals of the country.