

# Editorial

The fundamental requirement of school education is that all students acquire basic linguistic and mathematical skills. However, due to various practical challenges on the ground, many students are unable to attain efficiency in Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN). Ensuring that each child acquires FLN is one of the most pressing challenges for teachers today. Given this challenge, the Government of India has launched *NIPUN* (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) *Bharat Mission* in collaboration with the state governments to achieve the target of FLN by 2026-27.

This challenge existed even before the pandemic, but COVID-19 deepened it significantly. Though the worst of the pandemic is now behind us, and teachers have worked tirelessly to recover lost ground, the journey to foundational learning for all is still far from complete.

The challenge of FLN is particularly acute in government schools, where children often lack a home environment that supports learning and are burdened with the responsibility of earning along with their parents. Teachers face several additional obstacles – irregular attendance, delayed enrolments, students admitted directly to classes III, IV, or V without prior schooling, indifference of parents, etc. This means that whatever opportunities students have are available only in schools. This increases the responsibility of teachers. However, the responsibility does not lie with teachers alone. It lies with the entire educational system, from school-level leadership to district and state-level academic support structures. It lies in the deeper understanding of FLN shared through discussion in meetings and workshops with academic colleagues and supporters at all levels of the system.

Meeting this collective responsibility requires two key enablers: a clear and shared understanding of FLN for a collaborative and supportive academic environment at all levels, and secondly, a positive, supportive academic environment for individuals committed to the mission at all levels through responsible and intensive monitoring.

It is evident in the concept of FLN that foundational skills are not just about grasping language or learning a few mathematical operations; rather, it is about helping children make sense of their world, develop the ability to reason and reflect, and prepare to face real-life challenges. It is about enabling children to think mathematically and engage meaningfully with their learning. When language and mathematical skills are developed early in students, they take an interest in different subjects, and their eagerness to learn new subjects increases in higher classes.

It is our responsibility to ensure that every student achieves the desired levels of FLN. For this, it is important to understand FLN not only as a process but also as a core idea. This understanding forms the essence of this issue. You will find articles that centre around the concept of FLN, classroom experiences, and the challenges faced

by teachers in making foundational learning a reality. Also, these articles explore the true meaning of FLN along with the strategies that can be adopted to work on this with children. One of the articles specifically highlights the value of learning through interaction and association with materials, like a mathematics kit, rather than relying solely on mechanical methods.

Other articles explore themes like meaningful dialogues and their usefulness in the teaching process, how creative writing can deepen children's engagement with learning, and how thoughtful lesson planning supports better outcomes. There is also the inspiring story of a school that saw both enrolment and learning levels rise after adopting specific practices tailored to its context. As always, this issue includes a piece on Early Childhood Education (ECE), sharing the experience of an *anganwadi* centre and how these create enabling environments for young children.

In our regular column, 'In the Spotlight', a teacher from Madhya Pradesh tells us about the processes they have used to enhance learning. The much-loved 'Pages from Teachers' Diaries' section carries classroom experiences from teachers across Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Karnataka. You will also find reviews of two intriguing books in the 'In the Company of Books' column, and the activities section has a range of activities that are skill-based and interesting. Your valuable letters are included in the 'We've Got Mail' section of the magazine.

With the publication of this issue, *Pathshala Bheetar aur Bahar* has completed 24 amazing issues, and we are excited to share that the 25<sup>th</sup> one will be a special edition! In this issue, your favourite column, 'Pages from Teachers' Diaries' will feature reflections of 25 teachers. They will talk about their classroom experiences and school journeys, along with some significant articles on primary school education.

In addition to this, we will be coming up with a special December edition focused on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), in line with the National Education Policy 2020, which places strong emphasis on quality education for children aged 3 to 6 years.

Both the upcoming issues will be special issues! For both these issues, we look forward to your contributions – articles, reflections, diary entries, and activities drawn from your own experiences. Your letters, questions, and articles from across the country continue to inspire and energise us and assure us that we are connected. Let us keep reading, writing, and sharing your experiences.

With warm wishes,

**Pratibha Katiyar**  
Editor-in-Chief

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