

FROM THE EDITOR



In a recent interview, Sonam Wangchuk, engineer, activist and educational reformer, spoke of how he did not go to school till age 9 but how much he learned of life from being with his parents, grandparents and community members during those years. He quipped that when he was working in the fields watching plants grow, other children his age were learning root-shoot-leaves from their blackboards and textbooks. So, it is very exciting to see that play and activity are the primary ways of learning and development in the National Curricular Framework for Foundation Stage (NCF-FS).

But first things first. What is NCF-FS? Who is it for? The NCF-FS is a key component of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the Foundational Stage (ages 3-8 years) is the first stage in the (5+3+3+4) curricular and pedagogical restructuring envisioned in it. The NCF-FS has been created to facilitate an integrated, uniform and high-quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for 'all' children. The NCF-FS, simply put, is a detailed guidelines document that speaks directly to the teacher and other practitioners to facilitate the implementation of NEP 2020.

Every new policy document is viewed with circumspection because it comes to us surrounded by myths and preconceived notions, added to this is our cynicism towards change and whether it will eventually change anything on the ground.

So, when we attended a presentation on the approach and structure of NCF-FS, we liked it so much that we decided to bring it to you in the same plain and simple manner in which it was communicated to us. The presentation was made by Ramchandrar Krishnamurthy, Principal, Azim Premji School, Bengaluru and we enlisted his help to put this issue together. He has written a focus piece on how to read

the document and has created a 'ready reference' for teachers to access specific parts of it.

In other articles, we have one illustrating how and why play, that is at the heart of childhood, is recommended as pedagogy for this stage; and another, while establishing the criticality of foundational literacy and numeracy as the basis for all learning, has very succinctly asserted why we need a document such as this to achieve uniformity in the broader goals of learning. One author has gone behind the need of art for socio-emotional and ethical learning (SEEL) to explain how art classes need to be transacted to be effective. The emphasis on teacher autonomy in modifying learning outcomes for their contexts has been delineated very precisely in an article underscoring another focal aspect of the NEP – that children learn at their own pace.

The document has not reached all teachers and is yet to be translated into regional languages. But as we wait for this, we thought we could start to understand it and the experiences of some teachers in Azim Premji Schools and those who we work with in government schools in several states who have been implementing these in their classrooms.

Overall, it has been a very gratifying experience to understand this document in detail and see how focussed it is on transforming the school experience for our young children in the age group of 3 to 8 years.

We bring to you, from this issue onwards, a leaner version of the Learning Curve that we hope is more, and directly focussed on the work that you do in (or related to) primary school education.

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