

## EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION THROUGH NEP 2019

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### Abstract

*Various new education policies were formed to modify the educational scenario suitable to prepare our youth to meet present and upcoming challenges. NEP 2019 is based on the components of easy access in school, justice to all, maintaining education quality, low expenditures and accountability. NEP 2019 restructured school curriculum and pedagogy from 10+2 to 5+3+3+4. These changes are made to make students alert and appropriate to their developmental needs. This article will focus on Equitable and Inclusive Education.*



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In NEP 2019, students' interest as per their developmental stages has also been considered. Following are the different stages of education as per this policy.

Sr. No.	Age (Year)	Name of the Stage	Grade
1.	3 to 8	Foundational stage	Nursery, L.K.G, U.K.G, Grade 1 and 2
2.	8 to 11	Preparatory stage	Grade 3 to 5
3.	11 to 14	Upper primarystage	Grade 6 to 8
4.	14 to 18	Secondary and higher secondary stage	Grade 9 to 12

Let's focus on the secondary and higher secondary stage.

According to Piaget, (1896 to 1980) at this stage, students start to form hypothesis, understand cause and effect relationship. There is flexibility of subject options at this level. Students can select subjects as per their interest. Subject knowledge will be at deep level. Some subjects will

be common to all. From 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, each year will be divided into two semesters. Students will study 5 to 6 subjects in each semester. Elective courses will be included like arts, vocational subjects, physical education etc. Scope is given to students' interest and talent. Grades 11 and 12 will be considered as an integral part of the secondary stage. It is the preparation for livelihood and higher education.

Actual implementation of policy recommendations can be done in following ways.

### **Equitable and Inclusive Education**

Equitable and Inclusive Education is nothing but 'Learning for all'. If we are thinking about education to all, then we must avoid gender bias, socio-cultural differences, socio-economic conditions etc.

Teaching strategies should be useful to all due to which students will feel equally valued. For this, teachers should be able to connect and engage with a variety of students. Course material which is going to be used should be relevant from the point of view of all students. Proper care should be taken by teachers so that all students will feel comfortable in the classroom environment to tell their ideas. Activities prepared should support learning modalities, abilities and backgrounds. It is essential to train teachers in their pre-service training about how to make best interactions with all type of students, how to find out effect of students' previous experiences on motivation and engagement in classroom, how to modify course materials, activities, assignments and exam which will be useful to all.

Teacher must be trained in using variety of instructional formats. Some tips for teachers are as follows:

- 1) While planning your teaching, include different languages, socio-cultural contents, images, pictures that reflect human diversity. Whenever possible, include examples of contribution by any person or group that have been historically under-represented in the field.
- 2) Communicate clearly with your students. Tell them guidelines for contributing ideas and questions. Teach them how to respond respectfully to the ideas and questions of others.
- 3) Take efforts to understand all students and their perspectives, skills, experiences and ideas. Always show high respect for all questions and comments. Motivate students to think deeply and use verbal and non-verbal signals to encourage participation.

Equity in education is not only giving equal opportunities but it is the consideration of individual differences among students. It is the assurance to get access to the same opportunity, while inclusion is including within a group. In this group every individual is treated fairly and respectfully. Everyone gets equal opportunities towards all available resources. It enables students to participate and achieve despite their learning differences. Let us focus what are the provisions made in NEP 2019 for the equity and inclusion in secondary and higher secondary education.

As per RTE, children are having right to free and compulsory education till completion of elementary education. It ensures compulsory admission, attendance and completion of elementary education to every child in the six to fourteen age group.

Premature withdrawal of students from schools at any stage before completion of course is known as wastage. While failure of students in same class is called as stagnation. This can be observed at any stages. Probable reasons behind this are as follows:

#### **Wastage and Stagnation**

- Economical Conditions: Poverty, Source of income, Lack of minimum diet
- Social Causes: Castism, Early marriage of girls, Orthodox views about girls, Co-education
- Educational Causes: Frequent transfers of teacher, Unequipped schools, Uncontrolled admissions, Overcrowding schools, Single teacher school, inefficient teaching, Lack of teacher pupil contact, Defective exams, Heavy and uninteresting curriculum.
- Miscellaneous: Disease suffering, Orphan children, Single parents/ Death of parent.

#### **Remedial Measures:**

- Appointment of qualified teachers
- Modest, simple and interesting curriculum.
- Pre- and in-service trainings to school teachers.
- Adequate and attractive infrastructure of school.
- Well equipped laboratories.
- Proper ratio of teacher and pupil.
- Availability of part time schooling.

- Effective supervisions and inspections in school.
- Grading system to schools as per as per efficiency and standard of school.
- Use of technology and new techniques in teaching.

### **Inclusive Education:**

Inclusive education means that all students regardless of their abilities, disabilities or health care needs, are placed in age- appropriate general classes to receive instruction, interventions and support to enable them to meet success in core curriculum.

It is the access to quality education for all students. Main objective of inclusive education is to provide all students the most appropriate learning environments and opportunities to achieve their potential.

We can observe following things in inclusive classroom.

- All students receive instruction in general classroom.
- Special need students participate in extracurricular activities with necessary supports.
- School approach ensures that each student receives the appropriate help when needed.
- Resources are available throughout the school not just in specialized settings or classrooms.

If practices well, inclusive education is very important as it develops a sense of belonging in all children. It provides better learning in all children. It provides better learning opportunities. All children can be a part of their community.

Inclusive education helps us in following way:

- Every child in the classroom feels accepted.
- Inclusive classroom is a supportive and caring learning community.
- Students with special needs have opportunities for forming wide friend circles.
- Students find out that they can master many activities.
- Students without disabilities have opportunity for realizing that each person has gifts, talents and challenges.
- They also develop better understanding of citizenship for all people.
- They try to solve real life problems by finding creative approaches to problems faced by students with disabilities.
- All students get increased social initiations and relationships.
- It fosters a culture of respect and belonging.

- Students enhance their emotional quotient as they develop patience, tolerance and compassion for their peers.
- They learn to accept strengths and weaknesses of others.
- Students learn about teamwork and collaboration.
- Such school provides opportunities for playing, learning, growing and being together with diverse communities.

As per NEP 2019, learning should be Holistic, Integrated, Enjoyable and Engaging. School curriculum and pedagogy are restructured in a new 5+3+3+4 design.

Foundational stage (5 yrs) is a play- based learning which is gradually converted into formal but interactive classroom learning in preparatory stage (3 yrs). In middle stage students will be introduced to abstract concepts in various subjects. The high school or secondary stage is four years multidisciplinary study. There is greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater flexibility and student choice.

One of the main purposes of this policy is 'Development for All' (Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas) that's why equity and inclusion are the important aspects to transform our nation sustainability into as equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high quality education to all.

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