

An Overview of the
National Curriculum Framework
Mandate Document

(Released on April 29, 2022)

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What is the Mandate Document?

- ▶ The **Mandate Document** is the bridge between the **National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020)** and the **National Curriculum Framework (NCF)**.
- ▶ The Mandate Document provides clear and specific anchors for the NCF to the vision and principles of the NEP 2020.
- ▶ The aim is to ensure coherence and synergy of the NCF with all the varied aspects of NEP implementation, and amongst the four different (but closely related) parts of the NCF: the **NCFSE, NCFECCE, NCFTE, and NCFAE**.
- ▶ This **Mandate Document** sets the mechanisms for the development of a coherent and comprehensive NCF, fully leveraging the widespread consultations already under way (including the work of the National and State Focus Groups), which are expected to result in over 15,000 documents and over 1,50,000 total inputs, from stakeholders ranging from teachers and communities to education experts and researchers.

Introduction - Background

There is much ongoing work on the ground towards the preparation of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and the State Curriculum Frameworks (SCFs).

There are currently 25 National Focus Groups formed by NCERT at the National level. Additionally, each State has 25 Focus Groups, all of which will be preparing inputs for integration into the National Curricular Framework.

There will also be numerous other expert consultations taking place.

It is thus necessary that there be a mechanism to ensure that all contributors and stakeholders to the NCF are on the same page and are working in synergy towards clear and common goals.

There must also be a clear operationalizing process for the work of the Steering Committee to develop the NCFSE, NCFECCE, NCFTE, and NFAE, that are in coherence with each other and work harmoniously together, on the basis of these various inputs.

→ This led to the idea of having a [Mandate Document](#).

Introduction - Purpose of the NCF Mandate Document

The purpose of the [NCF Mandate Document](#) is to set forth the guiding principles, strategies, procedures, and timelines for the successful development of a high-quality NCFSE, NCFECE, NCFTE, and NFAE that are in consonance with each other and with the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020.

It is hoped that this document will make the jobs of the various [National and State Focus Groups](#) and other consultations easier, clearer, more focused, and more efficient, by clearly specifying what we (the Steering Committee) are requesting of the Focus Groups, and of other expert consultations, and how these inputs will then be processed to formulate the NCF.

Thus the Mandate Document will aim to provide a [common platform](#) and a [clear operational process](#) for all to work together to provide valuable inputs and expertise that can then be integrated into one holistic and coherent NCF.

Contents of the Mandate Document

The Mandate Document describes:

- (a) the major overall paradigm shifts in school education described by the NEP that should guide the formation of the NCF;
- (b) our current vision for the objectives, structure and contents of the new NCF, and the expected deliverables of the new NCF;
- (c) the intended approach to developing the NCF for the 4-stage school system (5+3+3+4), including timelines;
- (d) the input desired from Focus Groups and other expert consultations in the development process of the new NCF.

The expectation from Focus Groups at this time is to contribute a set of high-quality, well-thought-out, innovative inputs that can help guide the formation of an NCF of the highest quality that is in consonance with the vision of the NEP.

States may then use the final consolidated NCF (which will incorporate suggestions of all States and National Focus Groups and other expert consultations) in finalizing their own SCFs.

Major paradigm shifts in school education recommended by NEP 2020

- ▶ **Transitioning to a more multidisciplinary and holistic education.**
Holistic development of the child in all capacities – intellectual, social, physical, ethical, and emotional. The goal is to develop good human beings, capable of independent rational thought and action, with compassion and humaneness, with courage and creative imagination, based on sound ethical moorings and a rootedness in India.
- ▶ **Transitioning to an emphasis on analytical and creative thinking rather than rote learning.**
Students must develop the ability to think analytically and creatively, participate in discussions, and become adept at speaking, writing, and other 21st century skills; and “learn how to learn”.
- ▶ **Transitioning to a new curricular/pedagogical structure (5+3+3+4).**
Curriculum and pedagogical approaches should be in line with the developmental stage of the child.

Other key paradigm shifts

Other key paradigm shifts include:

- ▶ emphasis on ensuring **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy** for all students;
- ▶ emphasis on the **mother tongue** as the primary medium of instruction, particularly in the early years, along with high-quality teaching-learning of all languages;
- ▶ integration of **vocational education** in all stages of education;
- ▶ rootedness in India;
- ▶ criticality of the **culture of schools** and the system for achieving educational goals; and
- ▶ centrality of the **role of the teacher**, and the transformation of the teacher education system.

Transitioning to a more multidisciplinary and holistic education

- ▶ Develop well-rounded human beings who are both analytical and creative, are courageous and compassionate, have 21st century skills, and have a rootedness and deep pride in India while being truly global citizens.
- ▶ Develop in students all of their capacities – aesthetic, analytical, social, physical, ethical, and emotional – in an integrated manner.
- ▶ Evidence-based and scientific thinking
- ▶ Any education emphasizing creativity and innovation must include the arts.

- ▶ There should be no hard separation between 'arts' and 'science' streams, or between 'academic' and 'vocational' streams, or between 'curricular' or 'extra-curricular' activities.
- ▶ Necessary knowledge and skills that must be learned by all students include: scientific temper; aesthetics and art; oral and written communication; ethical reasoning; sustainable living; Indian Knowledge Systems; digital literacy and computational thinking; knowledge of country, current affairs, and the critical issues facing the world.
- ▶ All children must be fully integrated into the system; equity and inclusion form a cornerstone for a successful educational system.
- ▶ Young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts most quickly in their home language/mother tongue, and hence education will be centered around the mother tongue in early years.
- ▶ Multilingualism has great cognitive benefits to students.

- ▶ Education must involve family as well as community.
- ▶ Cultural literacy and knowledge of one's country's languages, literature, culture, and traditions is important for developing a sense of identity as well as promoting an individual's creativity, empathy, humanity, etc.
- ▶ Every student has innate talents, which must be discovered, nurtured, fostered, and developed.
- ▶ Students will be given an increased flexibility and choice of subjects to study across the arts, humanities, sciences, sports, and vocational subjects.
- ▶ The system of assessment in our schooling system must shift from one that primarily tests rote memorization to one that is more formative, promotes learning and development, and tests higher-order skills.

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Transitioning to an emphasis on analytical and creative thinking rather than rote learning

The key overall thrust of curriculum and pedagogy reform across all stages will be to move the education system towards real understanding and *learning how to learn* – and away from the culture of rote learning present today.

- ▶ The overload of content will be reduced, and replaced with real learning involving experiments and play, discovery, analysis, and discussion, and competency-based learning.
- ▶ Teaching and learning will be conducted in a more interactive manner: questions will be encouraged, and classroom sessions will contain more fun, creative, collaborative, and exploratory activities for deeper and more experiential learning.
- ▶ More play-, games-, toys-, arts-, and sports-based learning.
- ▶ Extensive, appropriate and equitable use of technology.
- ▶ The teacher must be at the center of all reforms.

Transitioning to a new curricular and pedagogical structure

The curricular framework and pedagogical structure of school education will be reconfigured to be more responsive to the needs of learners at different stages of their development, and will therefore be guided by a $5 + 3 + 3 + 4$ design.

Four stages:

- ▶ **Foundational:** flexible, multilevel, play-based learning
- ▶ **Preparatory:** discovery- and activity-based learning along with some more formal interactive classroom learning, in order to lay a solid groundwork in reading, writing, speaking, physical education, art, languages, science, and mathematics.
- ▶ **Middle:** Pedagogical and curricular style of the Preparatory Stage, but with the introduction of subject teachers for learning and discussion of the more abstract concepts
- ▶ **Secondary:** Four years of multidisciplinary study with greater depth, greater analytical and creative thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility and student choice of subjects.

Some of the key deliverables of the new curriculum

Through the new curriculum, all students will develop:

- ▶ Foundational literacy and numeracy (the highest priority must be given to achieving foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3, which is a prerequisite to all learning).
 - ▶ Constitutional and other human values such as gender equality.
 - ▶ A rootedness and pride in India.
 - ▶ A sense of service (seva) to others in need, to one's country, and to the world.
 - ▶ 21st century capacities, including speaking, writing, multi-lingualism, problem-solving, sustainable living, cultural literacy, socio-emotional capacities, and, perhaps most importantly, the ability to continue to learn on one's own over a lifetime.
- Preparedness for higher education and gainful employment (a true multidisciplinary and holistic education will prepare students not just for their first job, but their second and their third!).

Objectives of the NCF

- ▶ The aim of the NCF is to help in positively transforming the school education system of India as envisioned in the NEP 2020, through corresponding positive changes in the curriculum.
- ▶ The NCF should help to positively change the **practices** in education and not just ideas; indeed, the word “curriculum” encapsulates the overall experiences that a student has in school. “Practices” thus refers to curricular content and pedagogy, but also school environment and culture.
- ▶ The NCF should be understandable and relatable to and usable by teachers, school leaders, and all academic and administrative functionaries of the education system.
- ▶ The NCF should also provide the average interested reader a reasonable understanding of what education should look like in our new vision for schools, and what role they could play, e.g., as parents, community members, and as citizens of India.
- ▶ Our aim will be to primarily target the NCF to the **teacher**, as the teacher is at the core of the practice of education.

Structure of the NCF

- ▶ The NCF must have a structure that enables the above objectives of readability, accessibility, and relevancy to the teacher. It should articulate clearly the underlying philosophy and principles behind curricular transformations—not only in abstraction but also in practice, in order to be truly useful to and relatable to the teacher.
- ▶ The NCF will account for the reality of the average teacher (including, e.g., multigrade and multilevel teaching)—and provide a realistic pathway to the ideal from the current reality.
- ▶ The NCF will also detail the expected practices of schools, school governance and leadership, funding bodies, students, family, and community that would be required to attain the envisioned learning environment and education system.

Contents of the NCF

In view of the above objectives and the desired structure of the NCF, these Contents for the NCF are proposed in the Mandate Document:

1. Aims and principles
 - ▶ Goals of education, Major paradigm shifts
2. Practices to make this happen
 - ▶ Classroom practices, School practices and environment, Timetabling and scheduling, Availability and usage of resources (including technology), Approach to assessment, Role of school leaders and officials, Role of parents and community, Equity and inclusion
3. Shifting to the new curricular and pedagogical structure (5+3+3+4)
 - ▶ Foundational Stage
 - ▶ Preparatory Stage
 - ▶ Middle Stage
 - ▶ Secondary Stage
4. Matters specific to the Foundational Stage (including recommendations for ages 0-3)

Contents of the NCF

5. School subjects (from Languages to Sports to Vocational Education to Mathematics, etc.)
 - ▶ Epistemic principles for choice of content
 - ▶ Competency-based learning rather than content loading
 - ▶ Identification of capacities, skills, values and dispositions
 - ▶ Methods for teaching-learning in the subject, with illustrations
 - ▶ Horizontal curricular / pedagogical connections across subjects to achieve integrated, holistic, multidisciplinary education
 - ▶ Assessment for learning
 - ▶ Other cross-cutting themes

Contents of the NCF

6. Teachers, teacher education, and teacher support
 - ▶ The NCF as the basis for the NCFTE
 - ▶ Institutional requirements for good teacher education programs
 - ▶ Requirements for an effective teacher education system
 - ▶ Teacher professional standards and responsibilities
 - ▶ Recruitment and career management
 - ▶ Continuous professional development
 - ▶ Working environment of teachers
 - ▶ Environment and culture required for effective work of teachers
 - ▶ Teacher support and empowerment
7. The development of high-quality teaching-learning materials
 - ▶ Textbooks, toys, workbooks, classroom spaces, libraries, laboratories, local resources, and education technology
8. Other important matters for school education
 - ▶ Ensuring basic resources at schools, Local institutional support structure, Governance and Regulation, Roles of stakeholders
 - ▶ Implementation, monitoring, and review
 - ▶ School education is not only in a school but also in the home and in the community

Approach to developing the NCF

For the 4-stage school system (5+3+3+4)

The work that has been initiated by MoE and NCERT will be the basis on which the operational process will be built.

The approach outlined by the Mandate Document is a four-phase operational process for the development of the NCF.

- ▶ Phase 1 - Mandate development phase
- ▶ Phase 2 - Stagewise curricular framework
- ▶ Phase 3 - Integrative phase
- ▶ Phase 4 - Matching of integrated curricular framework input to the objectives and principles as set out in the Mandate Document, leading to the development of the final NCF.

Phase 1 - Mandate development phase

Phase 1 includes the development of this Document and the development and collection of inputs from State and National Focus Groups and other expert consultations.

Phase 2 - Stagewise consolidation of inputs for curricular frameworks

In [Phase 2](#), inputs for curricular frameworks for the four stages will be consolidated and developed.

Work of the Focus Groups and other experts, groups, and institutions will be key inputs in this work.

The consolidated inputs for stagewise curricular frameworks will be developed by 4 Stagewise Groups set up by the Steering Committee, consisting of 10–15 experts each. Each Stagewise Group would include members of the Steering Committee, Mandate Group, NCERT, and National Focus Groups.

Consecutive Stagewise Groups would have common members to help ensure coherence across groups.

Phase 3 - Integrative phase

In **Phase 3**, the stagewise consolidated inputs would be integrated into a whole curricular framework input for NCF.

The goal will be to ensure coherence and integration of the curricular framework across subjects and stages, and to simultaneously ensure the integrity and rigor of each individual subject.

An Integration Team consisting of up to 10 experts will be constituted by the Steering Committee, consisting of members of the Stagewise Groups, the Steering Committee, NCERT, and other eminent members having school education and/or subject expertise.

Phase 4 - Final phase

In **Phase 4**, the integrated curricular framework input would be matched to the objectives and principles as set out in the Mandate Document, and carefully compiled, edited, and smoothed out to produce a final high-quality NCF.

This phase will be carried out by the Steering Committee in consultation with NCERT and school education and subject experts.

A Drafting Committee may be constituted by the Steering Committee for ensuring a coherent final draft of the NCF.

In summary, this is the process recommended by the Mandate Group to convert 1.5 lakhs of inputs into a coherent NCF (NCFSE, NCFECCE, NCFTE, and NCFAE) that is innovative, transformative, and in consonance with NEP 2020.

Thank you!! :)