

## **A Study on an Ideal Curriculum for Foundational Stage of NEP 2020**

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### **Abstract:**

Education is essential for intellectual and physical development of the human civilization. The responsibility of education generally lies on both the teacher & the learner. But in the case of early education, it is crucial for the learner to feel comfortable with the process of learning. International organizations such as UNESCO, European Convention of Human Rights as well as national frameworks such as the Constitution of India played an important role in the field of education and establishing the right to education. Figures such as Maria Montessori, Tarabai Modak, Gijubhai Badheka played a significant role in overall development of children through education. The National Education Policy, 2020 focused on internationalization of education. It also aims to ensure quality early childhood care & education for all children between the age of 3 to 6 yrs. This paper covers an ideal curriculum of a foundation course for children with the study of comparable successful curriculum patterns available across the globe.

### **Keywords:**

education, Montessori, internationalization, foundation, curriculum.

### **Introduction:**

National Education Policy (NEP) has been announced on 29 July, 2020 with the purpose of various reforms in overall education system. NEP aims to increase GER to 100% in preschool to secondary level by 2030. After completion of 3 years age, child can enter preschool. First 5 years after that covers the foundation course.

Preschool methods were introduced by Madam Montessori and they were further developed by Tarabai Modak in India. Montessori method for education of young children stresses the development of a child's own initiative & natural abilities through practical approach. Kindergarten provides the basics of language, literary thinking, cognitive skills, physical, social & emotional development. Let us take a look at a few legal provisions supporting early education.

### **International & National Measures:**

- Article 26 of UDHR stated that everyone has the right to education.
- Article 14 of International Covenant on Economic, Social & Political Rights stresses that each member country should compulsorily establish a system of importing primary education to the masses free.
- Article 28 of Convention on Rights of Child speaks about giving various forms of education to all. Article 29 of the convention further explains that the education which is to be given to the children shall be directed to the development of child's personality, talents, physical & mental abilities.
- Article 10 Part III of Convention of All Forms of Discrimination against Women states that state parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education.
- Article 1 of World Declaration on Education for all states that every person, child, youth & adult shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs.
- Article 15(4) of the Constitution authorizes the state to make special provision for advancement of the socially & educationally backward class of citizens.
- Article 45 of Directive Principles of State Policy stated, "The state shall endeavor to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of the constitution, for free & compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years".

### **Pedagogical Structure under NEP 2020 Policy:**

First phase of 5 years covers foundational stage under NEP 2020

**Foundational Stage:**

Sr. No.	Class	Years	Age
1.	Play Group	1	3 to 4
2.	Jr.KG	2	4 to 5
3.	Sr.KG	3	5 to 6
4.	Std. 1	4	6 to 7
5.	Std. 2	5	7 to 8

**Ideal Curriculum:**

**Play Group – Phase 1**

Since the child is just being introduced to the learning environment, it should be designed as a more relaxed environment. The primary activities during this phase would be to mix with other students, prayer, songs, stories, games, dancing, overall language development.

**Jr. KG- Phase 2 and Sr. KG-Phase 3**

Here the child should be exposed to some theoretical & practical training. It is best to create small learning groups focused on activities such as phonic sounds, symphonic - reading, writing, drawing, painting, social activities and celebrations, craft, indoor games, flash cards, thumb painting etc.

**Std. 1 and Std. 2- Phase 4**

In this phase, the child should be exposed to slightly complex tasks and learning experiences which chain together multiple skillset such as comprehension, poetry recollection, chaining mathematical operations etc.

Here is an outline of a detailed end-to-end curriculum that incorporates education, sports, arts, and activities, while taking into consideration scientific studies, international standards, different learning preferences, and practical education. It is crucial to consult with education experts, stakeholders, and practitioners to tailor the curriculum to the specific needs of the children.

**CURRICULUM**

**1. Language and Communication Development:**

- Focus on oral language development through storytelling, rhymes, and songs. Research <sup>[1]</sup> suggests that early language exposure enhances vocabulary acquisition and literacy skills.
- Introduce phonemic awareness activities to develop early reading skills <sup>[2]</sup>
- Incorporate research-based strategies such as the "Dialogic Reading" technique to promote interactive reading sessions.

**2. Mathematics and Logical Thinking:**

- Introduce mathematical concepts through hands-on activities, puzzles, and games.
- Utilize research-supported techniques such as manipulatives to develop number sense and problem-solving skills <sup>[3]</sup>.
- Foster spatial reasoning and pattern recognition through activities involving shapes and patterns <sup>[4]</sup>.

**3. Science and Nature Exploration:**

- Encourage hands-on exploration and inquiry-based learning to develop scientific thinking and curiosity.
- Incorporate age-appropriate experiments, observations, and nature walks to foster a love for science.

**4. Social and Emotional Development:**

- Promote social skills through play-based activities, group interactions, and cooperative games.
- Emphasize emotional intelligence, empathy through storytelling and role-playing <sup>[5]</sup>.
- Incorporate mindfulness exercises to develop self-regulation and resilience.

**5. Physical Education and Sports:**

- Provide a range of physical activities promoting gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and fitness<sup>[6]</sup>.
- Introduce age-appropriate sports, games, and yoga to enhance physical development and instill a love for an active lifestyle.

**6. Introduction to Indian History and Culture:**

- Incorporating history and knowledge of Indian culture into the curriculum for children aged 3-6 is crucial for fostering a sense of identity, cultural appreciation, and historical understanding.
- Introduce age-appropriate stories, folktales, and legends from Indian history and mythology to spark interest and curiosity.
- Incorporate visual aids, such as pictures, maps, and artifacts, to enhance understanding and engagement.
- Celebrate and explore major Indian festivals and cultural celebrations, such as Diwali, Holi, Eid, Christmas, and regional festivals.
- Organize field trips to historical sites, museums, and cultural centers to provide experiential learning opportunities.

**Phase wise Structure:**

**Phase 1:**

1. Language and Communication Development:

- Subject: Oral Language Development
- Topics: Listening skills and comprehension, Vocabulary development, Phonemic awareness, and letter recognition, Storytelling and retelling

2. Mathematics and Logical Thinking:

- Subject: Introduction to Numbers and Shapes
- Topics: Counting and number recognition, Sorting and classifying objects, Basic shapes and spatial awareness, Patterns & sequencing

3. Science and Nature Exploration:

- Subject: Introduction to the Natural World
- Topics: Senses and observation skills, Plants and animals, Weather and seasons. Simple experiments and hands-on exploration.

4. Social and Emotional Development:

- Subject: Social Skills and Emotional Awareness
- Topics: Sharing and taking turns, Identifying and expressing emotions, Building empathy and cooperation, Self-regulation and problem-solving

5. Physical Education and Sports:

- Subject: Gross Motor Skills Development
- Topics: Basic body movements and coordination, Balancing and spatial awareness, Basic sports skills (running, jumping, throwing), Active play and team-building games

6. Introduction to Indian History and Culture:

- Subject: Indian Folktales and Festivals
- Topics: Traditional Indian stories and legends, Major Indian festivals and their significance, Cultural traditions and customs, Introduction to Indian music and dance forms

**Phase 2:**

1. Language and Communication Development:

- Subject: Language and Literacy Skills
- Topics: Phonics and early reading skills, Writing and letter formation, Building sentences and storytelling, Familiarity with basic sight words

2. Mathematics and Logical Thinking:

- Subject: Numbers and Counting Skills
- Topics: Number operations (addition and subtraction), Number sense and place value, Measurement and comparison, Problem-solving and critical thinking

3. Science and Nature Exploration:

- Subject: Our Environment and Habitats
- Topics: Living and non-living things, Animal habitats and adaptations, Earth and its resources, Environmental awareness and conservation.
- 4. Social and Emotional Development:
  - Subject: Character Education and Relationships
  - Topics: Building positive relationships and friendships, Respect and empathy for others, Conflict resolution and problem-solving, Understanding diversity and inclusivity.
- 5. Physical Education and Sports:
  - Subject: Fundamental Movement Skills
  - Topics: Locomotor skills (walking, running, hopping), Manipulative skills (catching, throwing, kicking), Spatial awareness and body control, Introduction to structured games and team play
- 6. Introduction to Indian History and Culture:
  - Subject: Indian Festivals and Traditions
  - Topics: Deepening understanding of major festivals, Traditional art and craft forms, Cultural diversity and regional traditions, Introduction to Indian historical figures and their contributions

### **Phase 3:**

1. Language and Communication Development:
  - Subject: Reading and Writing Skills
  - Topics: Fluency and comprehension in reading, Writing complete sentences and short paragraphs, Introduction to punctuation and capitalization, Expanding vocabulary and word usage.
2. Mathematics and Logical Thinking:
  - Subject: Problem-solving and Numerical Concepts
  - Topics: Addition and subtraction with regrouping, Introduction to multiplication and division, Measurement (length, weight, capacity), Analyzing and solving word problems
3. Science and Nature Exploration:
  - Subject: Earth and Space Sciences
  - Topics: Earth's layers and natural resources, Weather patterns and climate, Introduction to the solar system, Environmental conservation and sustainability
4. Social and Emotional Development:
  - Subject: Emotional Intelligence and Relationships
  - Topics: Identifying and managing emotions effectively, Conflict resolution and problem-solving in groups, Showing empathy and understanding diverse perspectives, Building positive relationships and teamwork skills
5. Physical Education and Sports:
  - Subject: Skill Development and Team Sport
  - Topics: Developing specific sports skills (e.g., throwing techniques, dribbling, catching), Introduction to team sports (e.g., soccer, basketball, cricket), Enhancing agility, balance, and coordination, Strategies for fair play and good sportsmanship
6. Introduction to Indian History and Culture:
  - Subject: Indian Heritage and Landmarks
  - Topics: Famous historical landmarks and monuments in India, Contributions of Indian scientists, artists, and leaders, Preserving and celebrating India's cultural heritage

### **Phase 4:**

1. Language and Communication Development:
  - Subject: Reading Comprehension and Writing Skills
  - Topics: Developing advanced reading comprehension strategies, Writing narratives, descriptive paragraphs, and letters, Grammar and sentence structure refinement
2. Mathematics and Logical Thinking:
  - Subject: Geometry and Problem-solving

- Topics: Geometry concepts (lines, angles, shapes), Measurement conversions and problem-solving, Introduction to data analysis and probability, Logical reasoning and critical thinking activities
- 3. Science and Nature Exploration:
  - Subject: Life Sciences and Living Organisms
  - Topics: Plant life cycles and reproduction, Animal classification and adaptations, Human body systems and health, Introduction to food chains and ecosystems
- 4. Social and Emotional Development
  - Subject: Cultural Diversity and Global Awareness
  - Topics: Recognizing and appreciating diverse cultures and backgrounds, understanding global issues and sustainable practices, developing empathy for different perspectives and experiences, engaging in community service projects
- 5. Physical Education and Sports:
  - Subject: Individual and Dual Sports
  - Topics: Developing skills in individual sports (e.g., gymnastics, swimming, athletics), Introduction to dual sports (e.g., tennis, badminton), Enhancing flexibility, strength, and endurance
- 6. Introduction to Indian History and Culture:
  - Subject: Ancient Indian Civilizations
  - Topics: Indus Valley Civilization and its features, Mauryan Empire and Ashoka's reign, Gupta Empire and contributions to art and science, Introduction to Indian classical music and dance forms

#### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, this paper sheds light on the importance of early education and the significant role it plays in the intellectual and physical development of children. By examining international and national measures, as well as influential figures in the field, we have gained insights into the legal provisions and methodologies that support early education. The outlined ideal curriculum for the foundation course provides a framework for fostering a child's holistic development through various activities and learning experiences. Moving forward, it is crucial to collaborate with education experts, stakeholders, and practitioners to tailor the curriculum to the specific needs of children, considering scientific studies, different learning preferences, and practical education. By continuously refining and implementing such a comprehensive curriculum, we can ensure that every child receives a strong educational foundation, enabling them to thrive and contribute to the betterment of society. Ultimately, investing in high-quality early education is not only an investment in the future of individuals but also in the future of the human civilization.

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