Editor's Note

The National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023 (NCFSE 2023) as a follow-up of National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP 2020) has made practical and systematic recommendations to realise the vision of transforming India's education system to contribute in the construction of an equitable and diverse knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all. The curricular and pedagogical reforms suggested by NCFSE 2023, focuses on transforming school education holistic, multidisciplinary, flexible and to make India a knowledge super power. To achieve its purpose appropriate and feasible action plans were suggested under NCFSE 2023 to emphasise on school curricula and pedagogy for the holistic development of students by equipping them with vital 21st century skills through diversifying the learning and reducing the curriculum load by including core essentials while focusing on experiential learning, critical thinking, reflective practice, curiosity and creativity of the learners. The present issue of the *Journal of Indian Education* includes papers based on some of the themes highlighted in the NEP 2020 such as curricular and pedagogical innovations, functional literacy and numeracy, ICT integration, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), inclusive education, teacher education, vocational education, etc.

Strong foundational learning is essential for the holistic education that Benudhar Chinara and Manjira Bagchi in their study on 'Foundational Numeracy among Rural Elementary School Children: A Case of Birbhum in West Bengal', examine through accomplishment of Grade II specific basic learning outcomes in foundational numeracy on arithmetic test by Grades IV, VI and VIII. The study indicates that majority of them were not able to recognise the numbers, one-fifth of them accomplished foundational numeracy poorly, only one-fourth of children could achieve 'excellent level' and 'mastery level' and foundational numeracy were higher among girls than boys. It showcase that universal accomplishment of basic foundational numeracy still appears elusive among the rural elementary school children.

Similarly, an exploratory study titled, 'Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Skills of Students of Nayagarh District of Odisha', by Madhusmita Sathua and Dhanya Krishnan analysed the literacy and numeracy skills of students. The study elicited better levels of foundational literacy than foundational numeracy, however, there was no considerable difference both in literacy and numeracy skills of students with respect to gender. It identified a positive relationship between literacy and numeracy skills, and recommends innovative and interdisciplinary pedagogical strategies for improving foundational literacy and numeracy.

Sujata Bhan and Apoorva Panshikar through the paper titled, 'Inclusive Education in Tripura: Perception of Special Educators and Children with Special Needs', highlight that the special educators are working hard to reach out to all children with special needs and feel ill-equipped to teach children with special needs as they are not trained to teach and seek collaboration from regular teachers.

Another paper titled, 'Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs: Some Reflections from Odisha, India', by Ansuman Das and Tattwamasi Paltasingh examines the challenges confronted by the CwSNs in pursuing their education due to several obstructing factors, such as inappropriate curriculum, lack of trained teachers, insufficient financial provisions, unfitting infrastructure and classroom environment, etc., along with assessment of the degree of parental and teachers' awareness on inclusive education.

Jeena K. G. in the study titled, 'Techno-Pedagogy for Promoting Problem Solving Ability and Scientific Creativity among Secondary School Students' examines the effectiveness of techno-pedagogy on secondary school students' on problem solving ability and scientific creativity. The study revealed that learning techno-pedagogy enhances the problem solving ability and scientific creativity among learners.

Development of the adequate foundational learning among learners can foster creativity as 21st century skill highlighted by Komal Gehlawat and R. S. Pandey in their experimental study on 'Effectiveness of Thinking Strategy on the basis of Creativity of Commerce Students', to learn about the effect of thinking strategy, i.e., Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT) strategy on the creativity of students studying in Grade XII from government-aided schools. The study examined the control group through continued conventional lecture method and revealed that the CoRT strategy had a significant effect on the creativity of students when compared with the traditional lecture method. It was concluded that CoRT strategy can play a substantial role in the cognitive development of students.

Manmeet Randhawa in the paper titled, 'Colonial Framework of Industrial Education and Contemporary Vocational Education in India', provides historical context of the dialogue between the traditional skills and modern techniques in colonial India that transmitted, and circulated modern technical knowledge to the domestic craftsmen. The paper further relates it to the contemporary problems and suggestions observed by educationist, and NEP 2020 to decolonise vocational education by adequately integrating it into mainstream education across education institutions to overcome the social status hierarchy associated with vocational education.

Achieving foundational literacy, numeracy and inclusive education is possible by recognising the role and impact of education in sustainable development and vice-versa. Siddharth Kharbanda in the paper titled, 'Quality Education and Impact on Sustainable Development Goals', considers the need of the hour and the importance of education in sustainable development while delving into the factors affecting quality education with a statistical outcome. The paper recognises the need to provide quality education for all, especially vulnerable population, including the poor, children living in rural areas, persons with disabilities, indigenous community and refugees, and understands the critical importance of quality education and its transformative effects on other SDGs.

However, merely recognising the role of education in sustainable development may not suffice; it requires development of sustainable consciousness about the same among student teachers. Alapati Lahari and Anil Kumar K. in their study, 'A Study on Sustainability Consciousness among Student Teachers', explore sustainability consciousness of student-teachers with respect to different dimensions and constructs of sustainability, and differential effect of major subjects of study and gender on sustainability consciousness. The findings observed that majority of the student-teachers have only 'average level' of sustainability consciousness and differences in the level of consciousness with respect to the various dimensions such as environment, social and economic. It suggests that teachers play a major role in developing sustainability consciousness among the students through developing various curricular and non-curricular means that are aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Ensuring inclusive education requires empowering teacher and teacher education through inculcating leadership abilities among teacher argued by Seema Yadav in theoretical paper, 'Teachers' Leadership Skills for Positive Learning Environment among Teachers and Students' Learning Outcome'. The paper explores the multifaceted role of teachers as leaders in education, their responsibilities in instructing, guiding, and shaping the learning environment through fostering innovation, contributing to collective leadership within schools, and extending beyond traditional administrative roles.

R. K. Sharma and R. B. Pareek in their paper on, 'Experiential Learning Interventions for In-Service Teachers and Teacher Educators in Science at Secondary Level' elaborate on the experiences of capacity-building programme for the State Resource Groups (SRGs) from Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh on experiential learning process in Science at Secondary level. During the intervention, Kolb's experiential learning cycle was exercised to give hands-on

experiences and capacity building of SRGs in the area of chemical reactions in classroom situations followed by various stages of experiential learning which result into successful operationalisation of experiential learning.

Experiential learning entails the principles of equity and social justice, Roohi Fatima through the paper titled, 'Investigating Equity and Social Justice Concerns in Teaching and Teacher Education: A Comprehensive Analysis', conceptually engages with the issues of equity and social justice in teaching, and teacher education in India. The study states that despite constitutional safeguards, historical inequities based on caste and religion persist, impacting education as well. However, teacher education emerges as a pivotal factor in addressing social justice issues, acting as a catalyst for change by shaping the perspectives and practices of future educators.

Pooja Jain and Meera in their paper titled, 'Mapping of Research Projects Conducted by National Council of Educational Research and Training: An Analytical Study', analyses the research projects carried out by NCERT faculty members in different areas of school education during a period of five years, i.e., 2017–2022 as reflected in the annual reports published by the NCERT. It would act as a guide to NCERT to identify the focused areas and gaps in research, and will provide a base for same kind of research for other institutions of such kind with prime mandate of research.

We expect that our readers would be able to relate their personal experiences with the issues and concerns discussed by the authors of the articles, and research papers presented in the current issue. We invite our readers from different levels of school education and teacher education to contribute in the journal by sharing their knowledge in the form of articles, action research reports, theoretical papers, book reviews, etc. Your valuable suggestions and comments for improvement of the quality of the journal are welcome.

Academic Editor