

EDITORIAL

The school education system in India is oriented to provide quality education to all. The policy recommendations and their implementation have a wide impact on students' educational experiences. Despite the implementation of various policies, there exist certain gaps in the educational outcomes due to the diverse demographic and social contexts. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 ensures to adopt a systematic approach in order to mitigate issues of access, affordability, equity, and quality in education. The policy has a vision to manage human resources, making students self-reliable to adjust to global changes. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 prioritises cultivating character development to enhance the well-being of students. The NEP 2020 is crucial for attaining inclusivity in education towards Sustainable Development Goals in India. The policy aims for the development of the *atmanirbhar* (self-reliance) value and achieve the 'Viksit Bharat' (developed India) goal by 2047. It aspires to build a strong foundation of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education, and reaffirms that the school should be the centre of learning.

The present issue of the Indian Educational Review is published by combining Volume 62, Issue no. 2 with Volume 63, Issue no. 1. This combined issue includes five research papers and two summaries of ERIC Projects, which were funded by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The first research paper authored by Moni Monjuri Phukan and Subash Chander presented an exploration of the educational experiences of the Mising Tribe learners and the factors influencing their experiences. This tribal community dominates the socio-cultural landscape of Majuli Island. The findings revealed that the learners from the Mising community face significant barriers to education due to flooding disruptions, a lack of mother tongue instruction, inadequate school infrastructure and socio-economic hardships. Limited awareness about government schemes, gender biases, and low parental support further hindered the learners' consistent attendance and academic progress. Emphasis should be laid on the implementation of relevant pedagogy and educational policies to provide opportunities for their academic learning, and the development of social capital within the school context.

Inclusive education for children with disabilities is a key initiative under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan. Sandeep Berwal, Yad Ram and Jasmer Singh highlighted that one of the basic requirements for inclusive education is ensuring barrier-free access to schools. The authors surveyed the physical access of

children with disabilities to inclusive schools in Haryana. The survey results indicate that the overall situation regarding physical access to schools needs a significant improvement. Schools have to comply with statutory provisions that ensure adequate access for children with disabilities to drinking water areas, ramps, stairs, and toilet facilities, independently and safely. The study recommends increasing awareness among school administrators, school management committees, special educators, civil engineers, and other construction personnel about the norms and standards established by the government for creating accessible school infrastructure.

Schools of Specialised Excellence (SoSEs) were established in Delhi to serve students with an interest and aptitude in specialised domains. These institutions offer a variety of disciplines, like STEM education, humanities, 21st century skills, performing and visual arts, from Grades 9 to 12. A study by Sunita Singh, Deepika Pradeep Chaurasiya, and Rashmi Pal explored teachers' perceptions towards STEM and Vidya Mandir Classes (VMCs) initiatives in SoSEs of Delhi. The findings revealed that most SoSE teachers viewed STEM education and VMC as a positive initiative to assist parents, who could not afford the high costs of private coaching to compete in examinations, such as IIT JEE and NEET. Additionally, SoSE teachers faced challenges like managing timetables, competitive reading material of VMC, and their own identity and responsibility. The study suggested recruiting teachers with an advanced understanding of STEM-related content and pedagogy.

India's freedom struggle had many phases and personalities, with diverse contribution and recognition, who made the movement memorable for all times to come. An attempt has been made by Gouri Srivastava to weave in the role of the students in various age groups and discuss the nature of their involvement in different provinces through her study titled 'Odyssey of Childhood from the Pages of August Kranti: A Narrative of Students' Participation'. In this paper, she describes the government records, private papers, oral accounts, and newspaper clippings that mention their engagement with different phases of the movement. The names of some of the children who laid down their lives are mentioned, but the finer details about their roles are often overlooked. However, the manner of their participation captured the attention of the authorities, and thus, the names of the few who became the legend makers are mentioned.

Mental Health is recognised as essential for holistic human development. Rita A. Parmar, in her paper titled 'Mental Health in Bhartiya Perspective and its Implications', pointed out the crisis

of declining mental health among adolescents despite scholarly emphasis in academic forums. In response, she presented the *Bhartiya* viewpoint needed to counter the issue. Her perspective included a person's spirituality towards one's well-being. She argued that a person's mental health is determined by blissfulness, happiness and peace of mind. She oriented the qualities arising from the combination of the *sattvadi* mind, and the body and soul of the *karma purusha*. Therefore, an environment for attaining sattvic-spirituality is implied.

The summaries of two completed ERIC research projects have been included in this issue. These research projects are; (i) Exploration of Culturally Relevant Teaching to Develop Science Process Skills and Knowledge among Tribal School Students of Standard VI in the State of Madhya Pradesh, and (ii) Developing Science Process Skills of Secondary Students through E-content Package. The first study report concluded that culturally relevant teaching significantly improved students' process skills and scientific knowledge. Hence, it is required that the teaching should be culturally supported, in which students' culture is identified, nurtured and imbibed. In the second research project, the investigator developed and explained the effectiveness of e-content package for improving science process skills among secondary students. The findings revealed that the e-content package enables in creating a self-paced, self-supporting, self-study and self-evaluative mode of learning.

Academic Editor