

EDITORIAL

India is socially and culturally a diverse society, built on the foundation of knowledge across different domains. Human capital is the most important asset for building such a society. Basic human competencies in literacy, numeracy, and language proficiency are vital for participation in social and educational activities. To bridge a growing knowledge gap, it is crucial to focus on ensuring diversity and inclusion in all areas of society, including education. Education is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must ensure that all students, despite inherent obstacles, are provided with various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system. Education delivers knowledge, skills, values, and agency to address global challenges. It highlights learning content and outcomes, pedagogy, and the learning environment that empower learners to make informed decisions for a sustainable future. Teachers play a crucial role in instigating change and facilitating effective learning environments.

The focus on inclusion has an impact on students, classrooms, and educational venues. Consequently, a number of approaches and strategies have been adopted to improve participation from all students. Indeed, pedagogical approaches used in the classroom, the teachers' attitude, and other elements of education can influence classrooms to be more inclusive. These approaches endorse caring for all learners' engagement, which in turn, may improve the learners' outcomes. For instance, problem-based pedagogies and game-based instructional strategies have an impact on performance gaps compared to lecture-based sessions that lack an active learning component. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, refined the vision of education to strengthen equal access to quality learning opportunities for all. From the teaching-learning perspectives, the aim is to develop active learning strategies to promote learning for all students. Therefore, the researchers should view the classroom with insights on access to learning, alternative ways of teaching and as more than a site for 'social and educational reproduction'.

This issue of *Indian Educational Review* (IER) includes articles on five studies along with a summary of findings of the NCERT-ERIC funded research project. Together the studies focused on inclusive and equitable educational landscape, active ways of instructional strategies and assessment. 'A study on the status and perspective on inclusivity of CWSN students', was reported by Debyani Mukherjee Rawal and Deepika Pradeep Chaurasiya. The study revealed that many students drop out at different transition levels due to supply-side bottlenecks, including inadequate

infrastructure and a shortage of specialised educators. However, some caregivers and guardians appreciated the recommendations outlined in the NEP 2020. They expressed optimism that schools would proactively enhance inclusivity and address these pressing concerns. Investigating the challenges students face in inclusive schools highlighted the need for increased awareness and training among teachers, to effectively support these students.

The Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) are designed to bridge the gap in educational access, ensuring tribal students can compete with the general population. The EMRSs provide a common core curriculum. They provide tribal students with access to the best educational and extracurricular opportunities. Dipak Karmakar, in his study entitled, 'Challenges and strategies in leadership and management: Insights from principals of eklavya model residential schools', explored the challenges faced by the students, including inadequate infrastructure, teacher shortages, financial constraints, and socio-cultural barriers. The findings revealed scarcity in staffing, resource management, and gaps in governance, which impede the delivery of quality education. Additionally, behavioural issues among students and limited community participation complicate school operations. Despite these challenges, notable achievements, such as a high success rate in board examinations and innovative academic programmes underscore the transformative potential of effective leadership. This research emphasises the need for systemic reforms, including timely fund allocation, capacity-building initiatives, and streamlined governance, to enhance the operational efficiency and impact of EMRSs. These insights provide a roadmap for policymakers and educators to foster a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

Tarun Kumar Tyagi studied, 'Effectiveness of problem-based learning on mathematisation of middle school students'. The findings of the study revealed that real-world problem-based mathematics learning significantly enhanced the process of mathematisation along with its dimensions, namely, understanding, organising, transforming, employing and generalising, than the traditional method. The findings underscore the significance of integrating real-world mathematics problems in school mathematics curricula to enhance the mathematisation process of students.

In another study, Sapna Pravin Iyer and Karanam Pushpanadham explored primary school Mathematics teachers' perspectives on the use of Game-based Learning (GBL). The study is entitled 'Teachers' awareness, perception and professional development towards game-based learning in primary school mathematics: A needs analysis'. Findings revealed that while most

teachers are aware of GBL and believe in its potential to enhance student engagement, many lack confidence and adequate training to implement it effectively. Teachers expressed a strong interest in professional training and emphasised the importance of access to quality resources. The study also highlights the necessity of aligning GBL strategies with constructivist principles and real-life applications to make Mathematics more meaningful for students. These findings contribute to understanding the support systems required to enhance Mathematics learning through innovative, student-centred teaching approaches.

The NEP 2020 suggests that assessment should be holistic, 360-degree, and multidimensional, reflecting students' progress in great detail and the uniqueness of each learner in all three domains. Aligning with this principle, a study entitled, '360-degree assessment practices at the secondary stage: A study of teachers' perception' was reported by Anamika Mishra and Ankita. The researchers aimed to examine the degree to which current assessment practices at the secondary school level align with the 360-degree assessment process. It was revealed that the current assessment practices are mainly based on traditional assessment methods, i.e., oral and pen-and-paper tests. Other assessment practices are not given due weight in making progress reports. Teachers pointed out that it is difficult to make holistic progress cards because of time constraints, huge workload, high student-teacher ratio, and low involvement of parents in the teaching-learning and assessment process. There is a need to train teachers and to focus on developing teachers' positive attitude towards various assessment practices for the holistic development of the students.

Children with disabilities, including Cerebral Palsy (CP), face unique challenges in maintaining physical activity. Despite many children with CP being academically capable and attending mainstream schools, their participation in physical activity is limited due to factors like lack of interest, time constraints, inadequate professional support, infrastructural deficits, and societal attitudes. Mansoor Rahman A. and Kavitha Raja introduced physical education programme using traditional folk games in a project study entitled, 'Adaptation of Indian folk games to enhance physical activity and academic performance in school-going children with cerebral palsy (aged 5–18 years)'. The project was funded by the Educational Research and Innovations Committee (ERIC) of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). The study demonstrated that adapting traditional Indian folk games into an inclusive and structured physical education framework is not only feasible, but also significantly

beneficial in enhancing both physical and academic outcomes for school-aged children with CP. By leveraging culturally relevant, cost-effective, and engaging play strategies, this approach holds promise as a scalable model for inclusive education and rehabilitation in resource-limited settings. The findings underscore the potential of traditional games as therapeutic tools that promote physical fitness, academic success, and social inclusion in children with developmental disabilities.

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Academic Editors