

SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT IN THE LIGHT OF NCF 2005

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INTRODUCTION:

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 is the document formulated by a National Steering Committee with the advice of the Ministry of Human Resource Development under the administrative fold of NCERT. This is a national document describing the suggestive ways and means for future school education in India. This document prescribes manifold action to do for pressure free and joyful learning. In this paper the writer analyses the portion of school and class room environment according to NCF 2005. We find that school education is become very stressful. Parents also want their wards as successful in every spheres of life .But it is impossible. So the environment of school and classroom should be as a sky with rainbow. There students glide freely and choose their own colour of life. The beams of rainbow must teach them about negative and positive colour of life. Those beams must not appear as the beams of a cage. In the NCF (2005) there are eight environments which affect school students. These are –physical environment, nurturing and enabling environment, participation of all children, discipline and management, space for parents and the community, curriculum sites and learning resources and time. In this paper writer illustrates these environments with their implications. School plays a vital role in our life. We often talk about our schooling, their schooling or so on. We often discuss about our experiences in school and how we spent those golden days. Classroom environment is also a topic in our get together.

In fact those colourfull experiences are the prelude and interlude of learning. Learning takes place within a web of social relationships as teachers and pupils interact both formally and informally. Curriculum is, basically, all the planned learning opportunities offered to learners by the educational institution and the experiences learners encounter when the curriculum is implemented. In present day, pupils are overburdened with tasks of syllabus. Syllabus is taken as curriculum still now. This mistake brings confusions. Students are aiming only at enhancing

the total number in their examination. They are just like the *Tota* of Tagore's " *Tota kahini*" –where people offered him only papers of some bookish knowledge but no one asked him what he wants. Our coloured schooldays are becoming grey in spite of tensions, unhealthy competition, and pressures.

Schools are institutional place for communities of learners, including both students and teachers. The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has analyzed critically the scenarios of school education in this country. Education should aim to build a commitment to these values which are based on reason and understanding. The Curriculum therefore should provide adequate experiences and spaces for dialogue and discuss in the school to build such commitment in children.

The National Curriculum Framework 2005 has five chapters where School and Classroom Environment are as chapter-4. Also National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education 2009 emphasizes on better school and classroom environment; In this paper the writer gives an intense look on it.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Main objectives are as follows:

- a) To get familiarities with eight dimensions of School and Classroom Environment.
- b) To analyze recommendations of NCFTE 2009 for School and Classroom Environment.
- c) The contradictions between theory and practice.

SOURCES OF DATA:

Different types of sources of data are used for any study .There are mainly two types of sources of data, i.e., primary sources and secondary sources. When researcher collects data direct from the field is called primary data. When researcher uses data from other sources like other's research papers, books, periodicals, journals or data used in similar studies by another person for another purposes are called secondary data. For this study the writer used only secondary data. She consults different types of books, journals, papers and the main document of NCF 2005 for the paper.

METHODOLOGY:

Every research paper has to be dependent on specific methodology. We find three types of research methodology: Historical, Experimental and Descriptive. Also, there are another two types i.e., Qualitative and Quantitative. For the sake of this study the writer follows historical as well as qualitative methodology.

EIGHT DIMENSIONS of SCHOOL and CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT:

In National Curriculum Framework, 2005 classroom and school environment is a prime chapter. In this chapter there are eight different areas to follow for better environment in school as well as in classroom. Here the writer analyses those areas:

1) **Physical Environment:** Students are continuously interacting with the physical environment of their schools during reutilized and non-reutilized time. They interact consciously and sometimes unconsciously. Inappropriate school design adversely affects the productive output of the teachers and also classroom management. Children preferred colourful places. Bright and airy classroom with enormous space for their articles and free movements are most preferable to the students.

Buildings are the most expensive physical assets of a school. Maximum educational value should be derived from them. Creative and practical solutions can be used to maximize educational value. Permanent pictures become monotonous and cease to enhance the quality of the space. If most of the wall-display area utilize for children's own work, or chart made by teachers and these will replaced after some months. These activities can be enhanced the learning capacity of the children. NCF 2005 recognizes different semi outdoor activities like playing with mud and sand, space exploration and discovery etc.

Class size is an important factor that influences the choice of desirable methods and practices of curriculum transaction. Teacher – student ration is not desirable more than 1:30 at any cost. Recommendation of DPEP was that the physical layout of the class room could be altered, so that children can sit together in small group for carrying their activities. For this arrangement chairs, desks and tables should be differently designed. The maximum use of pedagogic resources can be available to the school. For example, the walls of the primary schools may be black coloured up to 4 feet, that the students can use the walls as their canvas.

Play ground for children is lacking in many schools especially in rented private schools. This is harmful for quality education. Affinity with green and play in open land make the children open minded. Children can be

encouraged to participate in activities to make the school and class room attractive. To understand and internalize 'we-feeling' student should participate in various cultural activities.

- 2) **Nurturing Enabling Environment:** In school and classroom situation pupils spend approximately 5 to 6 hours in a day. Also they should utilize their energies and be enabling to do tasks in equal opportunities. They come from different segments of society. So, teachers and administrators must keep in mind the ideas of child rights. An enabling environment is one where children feel secure and which is governed by the relationships of equality. Class room environment would be fear free to the children where they can freely interact with teacher on their queries, so that self esteem and self confidence can be enhanced easily.
- 3) **Participation of all children:** India is one of the largest and oldest democratic countries in the world. Education defines the fabric of a nation and has the capacity to provide each child a positive experience of democratic function. It is difficult to think that a child wakes up one fine morning when s/he is eighteen and know how to participate, preserve a democracy. Adults of the country have the liabilities to bring up the generation with democratic outlook. Every person learns what s/he experience at home and in the world around him or her. The school can play the role model to give the proper experiences to form a genuine secular egalitarian and democratic country.

Unhealthy competition in school is dangerous to the values, enshrined in our Constitution. Enabling democratic participation is a means of empowering weak and marginalized. NCF 2005 give emphasize and policy of inclusion.

a) **Child Rights:** The three most important principles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) are the right to participation, to association or organization and to information. Right to participation depends on the realization of different primary rights like access to information, the freedom of association and the right to formulate opinions from influence and coercions. Organize participation of children and youth, especially the disadvantaged group, gives strength, confidence, identity and ownership. Coming or gathering together gives visibility and collective voice.

b) **Policy of inclusion:** Right to Education ensures education is a fundamental right to every one. Pupils come from different socio economic strata with various capacities and interest. This is very challenging to the school teachers and administrators. This heterogeneous condition can be handled with care and affection. In school or classroom environment, there is a tendency to select same children over and over again for different

events. Excellence may be singled out for appreciation but at the same time opportunities need to be given to all children. Their specific abilities need to be recognized and appreciated.

- 4) **Discipline and Participatory Management:** For maintaining discipline and controlling the class teacher selects monitor. They are responsible to maintain orders of the authority. Those who question the rule are punished. It is important to rationalize the rules and re – evaluate the same according to the pupils view. Self discipline is very much important for systematic pursuit of learning. Discipline should enable freedom, choice and autonomy for both teachers and students.

It is necessary to involve children in ruling process by giving representative. System for the participatory management of the school by students, teachers and administrators need to be evolved. In school environment children can learn the process of setting codes and self governance and the skills required to participate in decision making and democratic function.

- 5) **Space for Parents and Community:** school is miniature form of community and curriculum should extend beyond the school premises. It is necessary to plan different types of activities in school which reinforce the children and the parents as well. This will help the community as well as parents to feel that what school wants to provide to their students for future.

Schools also may arrange seminars and gatherings where experts from community invite as resource persons to share their knowledge and experiences in relation to a particular topic being studied.

To make the school management supportive to children administrators should give emphasis on their needs. By inviting alumni and local residence, the importance of the school as a community site can increase.

Community involvement can also be sought for maintaining the school and its facilities.

- 6) **Curriculum Sites and Language Resources:** NCF 2005 gives lights on text books, libraries, educational technology, tools and laboratories, other sites and spaces, need for plurality and alternative materials and also organizing and pooling resources for classroom environment.

Improved text books which are carefully written and designed, professionally edited and tested offered interactive spaces for children. For better curriculum translation use of dictionaries, supplementary books, workbooks and extra reading can lighten up extra burden of text books. Not only that such book could draw

children's attention away from the text to the world around them. *Atlases* have similar role to the children. Posters are also very interesting elements to promote general awareness.

Manuals and resources for teachers are also very important just like textbooks. Teacher's handbooks can be designed in many different ways which would be useful for lesson plan. Such source of books needs to be available in in-service training for teachers and during meetings when they plan teaching units.

If classroom is heterogeneous then mono-grade textbooks are useless. So, there is a need for alternative types of materials to be made available to teachers as a basis of planning lessons and units:

- Thematic lesson with a variety of exercises and activities at different levels for different groups.
- Graded self - access materials that children can engage with on their own with minimum scaffolding from the teacher, allowing them to work on their own or with other children.
- Whole - group activity plans, say, storytelling or performing a small drama, based on which children can do different activities.

The school library should be conceptualized as an intellectual space for both teachers and students which can help to deepen their knowledge and imagination. NCF proposed that one period of a week for library can develop pupils' reading habit. Who have a library room can sit and read silently and who have not can lend the book and return this after a week. Library books can be brought onto the language class. Pupils can be asked to write about the books or share the story they have read. For project they may look up references from library. Where a room is available for library it must be full of light and good seating arrangements. Not only that, NCF 2005 suggested that the school library should be open during vacation.

Use of educational technology in classroom teaching can demolish the boredom of monotonous teaching learning. Interactive CDs, Net enabled computers can facilitate a meaningful integration and enhancement of school curriculum in rural as well as urban areas. These facilities can minimize the mental gap between rural – urban and regional language and English medium schools. Governments and other agencies responsible for financial planning need to take the ET's demands and benefits.

School and classroom environment would facilitate the creativity of the students. So the curricular areas can contribute to achieving the aim of making the school space as creative space with resources. For better science laboratories, equipments for mathematical activities and art and craft activities proper tools are required.

To enhance and make interesting the teaching learning process, imaginative use of different sites and spaces directly affects the quality of education in school. These sites are like local monuments, museums, natural features like rivers, hills etc., everyday spaces like market, post office. Exchange visits between schools in different part of country and even neighboring countries could become meaningful ways of promoting mutual understanding. This will help to take excursions, arts and craft activities as not merely extracurricular but as co-curricular activities.

India is a multi cultural and multi religious country. This diversity is an important characteristic of India. Single text book can not satisfy this pluralistic need of the society. *Plurality and alternatives in materials* are very much essential for the different group students.

To make the teaching learning process more interesting teachers can use different *teaching aids*. Enough readymade materials are available. Some NGOs are producing these materials. A resource library in cluster centre will help the teachers to make different *teaching aids*.

- 7) **Time:** Annual calendar for school is very important. Several suggestions have been made for the proper utilization of the annual calendar. One of the best suggestions is to make the calendar in a decentralized manner. Local weather must be considered for the pupil. Local holidays should be planned at the block level. Scheduling of different school events would planned in presence of all faculty together along with outer community members. NCF 2005 recommended different study time for the students like no home work for the children up to class II or two hours study time a day for secondary and HS students.

Morning assembly is a very common picture to school. Here sometime may spend for news headlines for physical exercise or real life story from community members. These will enable the students to get familiarity with outer world. Time span of a period also must be decided by the need of the subjects. Practical oriented subjects and art and craft classes need more hour than other subjects. Language and mathematics need regular classes but other may vary with the routine. Weekly time table could allow for variation from the regular routine, but should be balanced over the week.

8) **Teachers Autonomy and Professional Independence:**

Teaching is a process of twice learning. So just like students teachers' autonomy is essential for ensuring quality education. Educational environment should enable the teachers in exercising their choice for fulfilling students' diverse needs. Teachers are not only always following the orders and information of management

but also they should have the right to give suggestions. Relationship with head or principal must be based on equality and mutual respect. Decisions making also should based on discussion. Collaborative efforts among the teachers need to be encouraged. There are some suggestions for teachers for time management and planning:

- On a daily basis (at least 45 minutes) to review the day, make notes on children to follow up the next day, and organize materials for the next day's lessons (this is in addition to the time that they may need to correct homework).
- On a weekly basis (at least two/three hours) to take stock of learning, to work out details of activities and projects proposed, and to plan a group of lessons (unit) for the coming week.
- On a monthly/term basis (minimum of one day) to review their own work, children's learning, and map the contours of the learning activities planned for the groups they teach.
- At the beginning and the end of the year, two or three days each need to be allocated to evolve an annual plan for the school, in which they locate activities such as local holidays, annual events (national events, sports days, cultural events) and days for parent-teacher meetings that would involve the whole school. They would also plan excursions and field trips for their class groups, and for any projects that two or more classes would do together. They would also be involved in activities of preparing the school and class environment, putting up and changing posters and displays, organizing children's work, etc. Such planning time is also essential for the school to review its relationship with the community, and identify points of focused action in the year such as enrolment, retention, school attendance and school achievement.
- Current in-service training-related time allocation (compulsory 20 days per year) could be partly diverted towards making time available for such reviewing, reflecting and planning.

ANALISYS OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF NCFTE 2009:

For this type of school and classroom environment NCFTE 2009 recommended some measures for teachers' education. Teaching is a profession and is a process of professional preparation of teachers. To create free and bright environment in school professionalisation is inevitable. Teachers are concerned with the total development of human being. The implication of professionalization emphasizes on developing reflective teachers with positive attitudes, values and perspectives. This can be achieved if teacher education curriculum provides appropriate and critical opportunities for student-teachers to:

- 1) observe and engage with children, communicate and relate to children;
- 2) understand the self and the capacity for self-directed learning, be critical and to work collaboratively in group;
- 3) engage with subject content, examine disciplinary knowledge and social realities; and also relate subject matter with social context of the learner;
- 4) develop professional skills of pedagogy, observation, documentation, analysis and interpretation and reflective inquiry.

It is said by NCFTE 2009 that initial or pre-service teacher education programme should be of 4 years after higher or senior secondary and 2 years after a bachelors' degree. This would provide enough time and opportunity for self study, reflection, involvement, engagement with teachers' classroom, and pedagogic activity. Teacher Learning Centres (TLCs) will provide the necessary space for both in-service and pre-service trainings.

Renewal or up gradation in the knowledge and practices of teachers who are already in service also very important. Growth and accumulation of knowledge will be provided by in-service training which is the collaborative task of IASE, DIET and SCERT, DPEP (1995-2003)

Set up Block and cluster Resource Centres to provide in-service training. The SSM has also placed emphasis on continuous in-service training. NCF 2005 also gave stress on yearly 20 days training for each teacher. The attempt has been shifted away from the idea of subject inspectors and school inspectors to the idea if a resource person attached to an academic resource and support centre.

Use of distant media, sabbatical for study and research, professional conferences and forum, resource room and materials, faculty exchange visits and fellowships organized by DIET, CTE, IASE and Department of Education of different university can make real these recommendations.

MAJOR CONTRADICTIONS:

While it is too early to predict the effect of these latest developments in the field, yet at the implementation level some contradictions could be observed. Unfortunately the concern for change remains limited to discourse on ideational level and very little gets translated into practices.

- 1) The duration has also been cause of concern. None of the policy documents and teacher education curriculum framework contested over the need of longer time the programme for professionalism. But the ground realities never changed.
- 2) Another is constructivism is accepted but behaviouristic approach is still in practice.
- 3) Rote learning is discarded and innovation is accepted but due to several unit tests in every month and pressures of sever syllabus, this is in vain.
- 4) 20 days training programmes for in-service teachers is going on. But due to lack of proper instructors of resource persons these training programmes become get-togethers.
- 5) In teaching profession only reward is high grade or marks of the students in concerned subject. So invariably teachers give pressure on pupils. Also unit tests and remedial tests in every month create horrible condition to give emphasis on every aspect of life. Life centric education and free environment get a pushback.
- 6) Overpopulated and heterogeneous classroom make always joke to 1:30 teacher-student ratio and inclusion.
- 7) Now much in-service training are based on project based learning, life skill development, constructivist learning, peer learning, population education and so on. But parallel education system in the name of private tution is a barrier to implementations of those new approaches. Activity for the children is done by the parents or tutors not by the child himself. And also the students ask the teacher that those said or did in the class are important or not for the next test.
- 8) As a social scientist Romila Thapar stated that, Textbooks should certainly be child-friendly but it is equally necessary that the schoolteacher should be made child-friendly. Teachers need a more intensive exposure to social science concepts, changes in data and methods in history, and critical enquiry. According to Deepa A, “The new National Curriculum Framework has put the child firmly at the center of its proposals. But critics point out that it has overlooked many problems, such as the lack of infrastructure, inadequate teacher training, and continuing social biases. Some provisions have also been attacked as obscurantist.”

CONCLUSION:

Twenty-one National focus groups were constituted as part of the process of development of NCF 2005. The Habitat and Learning group especially addressed the integration of environmental concerns into the framework. There are many criticism **Of NCF 2005** from every spheres of the society. Also in version of Varma, Vijaya S. - A critique is presented of the draft of the national curriculum framework recently released by the NCERT. It is argued that the document is not sufficiently announced and is unrealistic in projecting Constructivism as the universal pedagogy for all subjects and for children of all ages. It is also not clear what kind of school it addresses

and why the reforms it is proposing are not already in place even though they have been strongly advocated many times in the past.

The NCFTE 2009 promises to translate the vision of NCF 2005 into reality. Also it promises to prepare humanistic and professional teachers who can make the future generation strong enough.

Basically the teachers can alone make school and classroom a sky with rainbow where the beams introduce success as well as failures of life. Those beams must not appear as beams of cage, because today's children need to blossom like a flower.

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