

# Aligning the current education system with NEP 2020

The aim is to make quality education accessible and affordable to all, writes **Maneesh Garg**

**T**he centrally sponsored integrated scheme for school education, Samagra Shiksha has been extended for the next five years with many fundamental changes that will help it get aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

## Streamline pre-primary

Presently, out of the nearly 9.26 lakh government and aided schools with primary classes, about 50% have either a co-located anganwadi centre or a pre-primary section. Enrolment in pre-primary sections in government and aided primary schools covers about 4% of the total population of children in the age-group of 3-6 years. After including independent anganwadi centres and private primary schools, this covers about 50% of the specified age-group.

Samagra Shiksha provides upgradation of primary schools to include pre-primary sections in gap areas, identified through mapping of existing facilities. Hence, both backward linkage in terms of pre-schools and forward in terms of senior secondary education have now been enabled to cover the entire gamut of school education.

Foundatio-

## Infrastructure changes are being planned based on the gaps identified from the UDISE+ database

nal learning will be strengthened through NIPUN Bharat Mission to enable children to gain desired competencies in literacy and numeracy early on.

## Filling up gaps

Although universal coverage has been achieved at an elementary level, gaps remain at secondary and senior secondary levels, where Gross Access Ratios are in the range of 95% and 90% respectively. Planning for new or upgradation of schools will be done based on evidence from GIS mapping of schools and use of technology to identify unserved villages. To bridge the gaps, especially in remote areas, the scheme now extends transport facility to students up to class XII, to access a school near their village.

Further, for children in the age-group 16-19 years, for

whom it is not possible to join a regular school, assistance will be provided to complete their education through open schooling. Earlier, focus was on identification and mainstreaming of out of school children (OoSC) at elementary level, whereas the same has now been extended to secondary level as well.

## Strengthen infrastructure

Plans to develop infrastructure are being made based on gaps identified from the UDISE+ database, which is based on actual enrolment and facilities. This includes provision of labs, arts/craft rooms, library, drinking water facility, separate toilets for boys, girls and CWSN, ramps with handrails, and more. The scheme provides support to children at the elementary stage in the form of free textbooks and uniforms to achieve the objectives of free and compulsory education. However, there will be greater emphasis on providing these benefits in a timely manner directly to eligible children through DBT. For children in distress, the scheme supports their education through the component of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Awasiya Vidyalaya, under which more than 1000 residential schools/hostels are currently functioning across the country. For girls from socially and economically weaker groups, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas are being extended up to class XII to enable completion of their education.

Also, safety of children in schools is of utmost importance. Thus, financial support has been extended to commissions for Protection of Child Rights in states.

(The author is joint secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education)

