



भारतीय शिक्षक प्रशिक्षण संस्थान Indian Institute of Teacher Education

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FOUNDATIONAL STAGE WITH REFERENCE TO NEP-2020 FOR VIKSIT BHARAT@2047

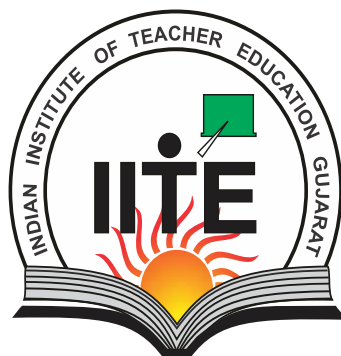
CENTER OF RESEARCH

Editors

Prof. Viral Jadav
Dr. Rajesh Rathod
Dr. Dipti Khanna

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Vice Chancellor's Message



Foundational Stage with Reference to NEP-2020 for Viksit Bharat@2047

It is with great pleasure and immense pride that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Centre of Research for successfully organizing the National Seminar on the Foundational Stage with Reference to the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020. This significant seminar, which focuses on the foundational stage of education, plays a crucial role in shaping the future of our nation. The timely discussions and insightful contributions presented here reflect the vision of our leadership to build a 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India) by 2047, as envisioned in the roadmap for an inclusive, equitable, and quality education system.

The book containing the collective research papers is a remarkable outcome of this seminar, and it serves as a testament to the dedication, commitment, and scholarly endeavors of all the contributors. It brings together a wealth of knowledge and diverse perspectives that will help further our understanding of how foundational education can be revitalized and aligned with the goals of NEP-2020.

The NEP-2020 emphasizes the importance of early childhood care and education, the integration of technology, and a multidisciplinary approach to learning. This collective work examines these dimensions critically, offering innovative solutions that can be implemented across India to enhance the educational experience for young learners. The idea of a 'Viksit Bharat' rests upon strong foundational learning, and this research aims to inform and inspire the necessary educational reforms.

I am confident that the insights and recommendations drawn from these research papers will serve as a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and scholars alike, helping to shape a better and brighter future for our children. Let this work inspire further dialogue and collaborative efforts that will ultimately lead to the realization of the vision of Viksit Bharat.

I commend all the authors, organizers, and participants of this seminar for their tireless efforts in advancing the cause of foundational education in India. Together, let us strive to ensure that the educational aspirations of our nation are fulfilled and that we contribute meaningfully to the creation of a developed and empowered India by 2047.

Best Regards

Prof. R. C. Patel
Vice Chancellor
IITE- Gandhinagar

Preface

Education is the cornerstone of every progressive society which starts at early ages. The National Education Policy 2020 highlights 'foundational stage' as a key for building a strong base for lifelong learning. It recognizes that early years are crucial for a child's cognitive, social and emotional development. NEP 2020 emphasizes child-cantered learning, inclusivity, integration of art and technology to make education more engaging and effective at foundational stage. In line with the vision of NEP 2020, present National Seminar aspired to explore innovative methodologies, community-driven approaches and evidence-based practices that would empower teachers, educators and stakeholders to build a robust and inclusive educational framework for the nation.

Tagline of the National Seminar 'Viksit Bharat@2047' denotes the golden timeframe of Indian history 'from Freedom to Development' which resonates deeply as we aspire to shape a nation that is educated as well as enlightened. The seminar served as a dynamic platform where researchers, practitioners, visionaries came together to exchange insights for a sustainable, inclusive and equitable future. By focusing on foundational stage, we can ensure that every child has an equal opportunity to receive the foundation they deserve and succeed regardless of their backgrounds. Let us work together to build a strong foundation for India's future- a foundation that nurtures curiosity, creativity, confidence, critical thinking and a love for learning in children from the very beginning.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Kalpesh Pathak, Honourable Vice Chancellor (I/c) of IITE, distinguished speakers and panellists who enriched the National Seminar. My sincere thanks to all the participants who have joined us in this endeavour. I convey my deepest appreciation to the organizing committee members, administrative and non-teaching staffs for their unconditional help to make this seminar a grand success.

Prof. Viral Jadav
Director, Center of Research

Editorial

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes an innovative framework for education in India, emphasising set up a strong foundation for lifelong learning. The foundational stage, surrounding children aged 3 to 8 years, is vital for developing fundamental cognitive, social, and emotional competencies. This book is the crucial of creative and inclusive methods in determining the future of education for Viksit Bharat @ 2047.

This book explores a diverse range of subjects fundamental to basic education. The significance of family involvement, as highlighted in “પાયાના તબક્કામાં અભ્યાસ કરતા બાળકોના પરિવાર પ્રશિક્ષણનો અનોખો આયામ : ફેમીલી ટોક”, highlights the contribution of families to early childhood development. Similarly, “Acceptance of Children with Disabilities by Teachers for Inclusive Education” explores the crucial aspect of inclusive practices to ensure the inclusion of all children. The linguistic diversity of India is highlighted in “પ્રારંભિક બાળશિક્ષણમાં બહુભાષાવાદ અને ભાષા વિકાસ,” which emphasises multilingualism and its impact on language development, whereas “Baalsaahity Ane Padkaaro” examines the importance of children’s literature in influencing early learning experiences. “B.Ed. Students Awareness about Foundational Literacy and Numeracy” reviews foundational literacy and numeracy, a fundamental aspect of NEP 2020, highlighting educators’ readiness.

Themes such as “Cultivating Growth Mindset Through Healthy Risk Taking” and “The Influence of Culturally Relevant Examples on Learning Outcomes in Early Childhood Education” exemplify the transformative power of education. The incorporation of Gandhian principles, as expressed in “Integrating Gandhian Ideas for Inclusive Education at the Foundational Stages,” emphasizes the necessity of addressing the needs of the most marginalized children within India’s varied educational framework.

The article “The Potential of AI-Driven Performance Management to Foster Early Childhood Educator Engagement and Development in a Technology-Integrated Learning Environment” examines technological breakthroughs, particularly AI-driven tools, highlighting the convergence of technology and pedagogy. “Technological Intervention in Teaching at the Foundational Stage: Learners” emphasizes the potential of digital tools to improve educational achievements.

Holistic development is a core focus of this book, emphasized in chapters like “Integrating Holistic Education in the Foundational Stage” and “Social and Emotional Development at the Primary School Level,” which stress nurturing all aspects of a child’s growth. Perspectives on tribal education, multilingual classrooms, and cultural influences enrich the discourse, as explored in “The Approach to Education Among Tribal Communities Living in Western Ghats” and “Teaching and Learning in Multilingual Settings.” Innovative methods such as integrating yoga, art, and play are detailed in “Integrating Yoga into Early Childhood Education” and “Exploring Resilience in Learning through Play.” Additionally, works like “Teacher Awareness Regarding the National Curricular Framework in Foundational Learning” highlight the importance of teacher training, assessment strategies, and policy execution.

This comprehensive exploration aligns with NEP 2020’s vision, fostering a strong foundational education system to support India’s progress toward Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Seminar Note

The Center of Research, IITE, Gandhinagar organised a two-day National seminar on “Foundational Stage with Reference to NEP-2020 for Viksit Bharat@2047” on July 26–27, 2024. The National Seminar was focused on transformative role of foundational education as envisioned by National Education Policy 2020.

Objectives and Scope of National Seminar:

The National Seminar was a dynamic forum to:

- Exploring innovative pedagogies and best practices for early childhood education.
- Highlighting holistic assessment methods and inclusive teaching approaches.
- Encouraging community participation and stakeholder collaboration in foundational education.
- Emphasizing technology integration and fostering multilingualism and inclusivity.

Highlights of the National Seminar:

The seminar commenced with an auspicious lamp lighting ceremony with esteemed presence of Dr. Neerja Gupta, Vice-Chancellor of Gujarat University, Ahmedabad and followed by keynote sessions. Dr. Gupta emphasized NEP 2020’s transformative potential in shaping foundational education, connecting its principles to India’s rich heritage. Keynote addresses from eminent speakers enriched the seminar with diverse perspectives. Prof. Malavika Kapur, Visiting Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bengaluru explored multilingualism and its benefits for young learners, referencing Chomsky’s language acquisition model. Prof. Sudeshna Lahiri, Professor, Department of Education, University of Calcutta, Kolkata advocated for parental and community partnerships in early childhood care. Shri Bharat Dhokai, Director, Kutch Kalyan Sangh, Gandhidham stressed the importance of developmentally appropriate pedagogy under NEP 2020. Dr. T.S. Joshi, Chair, Gijubhai Badheka, Children’s Research University, Gandhinagar and Ex. Director, GCERT, Gandhinagar highlighted the connection between sensory-based learning and foundational education inspired by Gijubhai Badheka’s Montessori principles.

During Panel Discussions and Plenary Sessions topics were ranged from developing responsive Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) models to global perspectives on formal education. The technical sessions featured 33 thought-provoking paper presentations across themes such as inclusive education, multilingual learning, technology integration, and holistic assessment. The seminar concluded with encouraging words from Prof. Sanjay Gupta, Vice-Chancellor of Children’s Research University, Gandhinagar who congratulated the organizers for facilitating this impactful academic dialogue.

Key Takeaways:

- Foundational education is pivotal for holistic development.
- Responsive and developmentally appropriate ECCE models must be prioritized.
- Curriculum revitalization and value-based education are essential for overcoming systemic challenges.
- Integrating the Indian Knowledge System into modern education offers a pathway to global problem-solving.
- Activity-based and experiential learning should be emphasized over assessment-driven approaches.

The National Seminar celebrated vision of NEP 2020 and fostered actionable strategies for making foundational education the cornerstone of India’s journey to becoming a developed nation by 2047.

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B.ED. STUDENTS AWARENESS ABOUT FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY AND NUMERACY

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Abstract

NEP 2020 has given highest priority to foundational stage of school education and recognised Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning. The foundational stage (FS) of schooling aims to nurture physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, and cultural development, alongside literacy and numeracy skills among children. Teaching at this stage should be active and interactive, Use of toys, puzzles, and hands-on activities both indoors and outdoors dominate the teaching-learning process. Children at this stage require tenderness, nurturing and love. Teachers teaching in this school stage need to be patient listeners, model different behaviours for children. They need to engage children in conversations, storytelling, singing songs and rhymes, dancing and movements, art and craft, indoor and outdoor games, spending time with nature. As per the current scenario, students who have done B.Ed. are eligible to teach in standards I to V. However, are these students trained for adopting pedagogy that is appropriate for the children from age groups of 6 to 11? With this question in mind, the present study explored about the awareness of B.Ed. students regarding FLN and pedagogy adopted in foundational school stage. The findings revealed that B.Ed. students have medium to low level of awareness regarding various aspects of FLN. Further gender, location of the institution and the course pursued had significant influence on awareness scores of students.

Introduction

Achievement of hundred per cent enrolment, retention and improvement in learning outcomes are the core objectives of elementary education. Strengthening support for children as part of the school curriculum to improve child mental health is also an important objective of school education (NITI Aayog, 2018). The RTE Act, 2009 and its various amendments emphasize that it aims to achieve not merely 'free' and 'compulsory' elementary education, but equally important would be the 'Quality' of this education. A decade since the implementation of the Right to Education (RTE) Act, we are strongly successful in providing near-universal access to education with over 96.2% enrollment maintained for students in age group 6-10 years. However, this universal access has not translated into improved quality of education (NITI Aayog, 2021) and thus quality education remains a distant dream (NITI Aayog, 2017). Various governmental, as well as non-governmental surveys indicate that the country is currently in a learning crisis with a huge number of elementary grade students lacking foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) which will have a carryover effect in higher grades of schooling (Government of India [GoI], 2020). Hence actions to improve education quality can no longer be delayed.

As per the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) which is the academic authority in India to determine the minimum qualification for school teachers, a person who has senior secondary education and possesses a teacher education degree (D.Ed./ E.El. Ed. / B.El.Ed. by whatever name known) is eligible to become teacher in standard I to V (NCTE, 2010). Through an amendment given in 2018, it has notified that persons with B.Ed. degree would be eligible for teaching in standard I to V, but within two years of appointment, they must "mandatorily" undergo and complete a six-month bridge course

in elementary education recognised by the NCTE (NCTE, 2018). However, such bridge course as stated in NCTE, 2018 notification is not offered by any institution in India. Further, in August 2023, the honourable Supreme Court of India gave a verdict that the relevant qualification for teaching in standards 1 to 5 are Diploma in Education (DEd), Diploma in Elementary Education (DEEd), or Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEEd) (by whatever name known) and hence the B.Ed. degree holders are not eligible to teach in standards 1 to 5. The court holds that a person holding a B.Ed. degree is qualified to teach secondary and upper secondary students and is not expected to teach primary school pupils. It went on to say that the RTE Act of 2009's core objectives and vision would be weakened by the addition of the B.Ed. as a qualification, which would equate to a reduction in the "quality" of primary education (Devesh Sharma v. Union of India and ORS, 2023). However, since then, NCTE has not yet published any new gazette / amendments notification regarding minimum qualification of school teacher and many debates and questions are being raised regarding the implications of this verdict and also regarding the ideology of preparing stage specific teachers. There cannot be a quality education system without quality teachers and hence there is a high need to re-look into the minimum qualification for a school teacher.

With the restructured design of curricular and pedagogical structure of school education i.e. 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 as suggested by NEP 2020, the preparation of stage specific teachers is gaining importance. This necessitates tailoring teacher training programmes to suit the specific requirements and characteristics of a specific school stage.

NEP 2020 has given highest priority to foundational stage of school education and recognised Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) as an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning. It strongly says that the highest priority of the education system should be to achieve universal FLN in primary school by 2025 and the vision of the rest of policy can be achieved only if this most basic learning requirement is first achieved. The foundational stage (FS) of schooling aims to nurture physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, and cultural development, alongside literacy and numeracy skills among children. Teaching at this stage should be active and interactive and hence textbooks are used minimally in Grades 1 & 2. Use of toys, puzzles, and hands-on activities both indoors and outdoors dominate the teaching-learning process. Children at this stage require tenderness, nurturing and love. Apart from the family and community members, teachers play a significant role in this school stage. Teachers teaching in this school stage need to be patient listeners, model different behaviours for children, help in scaffolding childrens' imagination and creative skills, proactive to questions and provoke and provide alternate perspectives and aim to make children independent. For all this, teachers need to engage children in conversations, storytelling, singing songs and rhymes, dancing and movements, art and craft, indoor and outdoor games, spending time with nature (National Steering Committee for National Curriculum Frameworks, 2022).

The NIPUN Bharat mission launched in 2021 aims to ensure that every child attains the desired level of FLN by the end of grade 3 by 2026-27. A detailed 332 pages guidelines of the mission mention various academic and administrative aspects to be considered in achieving the mission successfully (GoI, 2021). It is a universally accepted fact that success of such mission to a greater extent lies in the hands of the teachers. The efforts put by the teacher into improving the FLN of children will help in their all-round development.

The importance of FLN is rightly focused in elementary teacher education programme but are the B.Ed. students aware of this? Are the B.Ed. students who are trained for teaching in secondary and senior secondary schools aware about various aspects of FLN? These questions have motivated the researchers to undertake the present study on awareness about FLN among B.Ed. Students.

Method

Based on various academic aspects presented in NIPUN Bharat guidelines like vision and objectives, FLN skills, pedagogy, school preparation module, developmental goals and learning outcomes, basic life skills, an online 20 MCQs test with 4 options in each question was developed to know the awareness of B.Ed. students regarding FLN. The components that were included in the test are shown in table 1. Thus, the maximum score that can be obtained is 20 and minimum is zero. Apart from this, the demographic information about the gender and location of the institution (LoI) of the students and the course being pursued by them was also collected. The data was collected from B.Ed. college students of Gujarat for a period of around 20 days. SPSS version 22 was used for data analysis. In all 230 students pursuing B.Ed. in these institutions participated in the study and they constitute the sample of the study.

Table 1: The components included in the MCQ test

S.no	Component	Question number
1	About NIPUN BHARAT	1
2	Vision and objectives of the mission	2
3	Developmental goals and learning outcomes	3,4,5,6,7,11,12, 15,20
4	Pedagogy & Assessment	8,9,10,13,17,18, 19
6	School preparation module	14
7	Basic life skills	16

Results

In total 230 students participated in the online study. Table 2 shows the profile of these students. Around 13% of students who participated in the online study are from teacher education institutions located in rural areas. As high as 82% of students who participated in the online study are from institutions located in urban areas. Further, around 85% of students who participated in online study are female students. Around 49% of students are from B.Ed. first year and 46% are from second year B.Ed. course.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of participants of the study

		Course							
		B.Ed. (1st Year)		B.Ed. (2nd Year)		Any other		Total	
		LoI		LoI		LoI		LoI	
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Gender	Male	7	15	3	4	0	0	10	19
	Female	17	71	13	83	0	12	30	166
	Prefer not to say	0	2	0	2	1	0	1	4

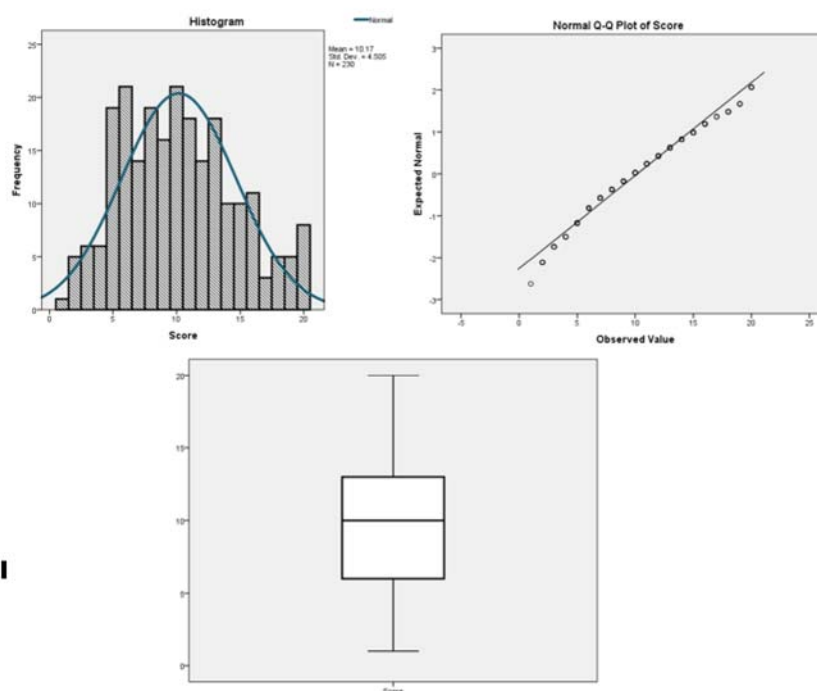
The descriptive statistics about the score obtained by the students in the awareness test about FLN is shown in table 3. The mean score is 10.17 which is almost equal to median. Further, the range and variance scores show a higher spread-out from its mean value. The standard error of mean indicates a low difference between population mean and sample mean. Both skewness and kurtosis lie between +1 and -1. All these values indicate that the scores are normally distributed.

Table 3: Mean, Range, Sd of the score obtained by B.Ed. students in the awareness regarding FLN test

Statistic	Std. Error	
Mean	10.17	.297
Median	10.00	
Variance	20.293	
Std. Deviation	4.505	
Minimum	1	
Maximum	20	
Range	19	
Skewness	.327	.160
Kurtosis	-.562	.320

The normality of the scores is further shown in figure 1 through the normality curve, Q-Q plot and box plot. The Q-Q plot and the box plot shows that there are no outliers in the data.

Figure 1: Normality curve, Q-Q plot and Box plot of FLN awareness score



Further, the obtained scores revealed that, around 18%, 67% and 16% students have high, medium and low level of awareness regarding FLN. A further analysis of questions as shown in table 4, show that students have least awareness about the school readiness module, developmental goals, learning outcomes and other academic aspects related to FLN. Majority of students were aware about the assessment aspects of FLN.

Table 4: Percentage of correct responses regarding various academic aspects of FLN

Item	% of correct response
14. Which of the following statements is not correct related to School Readiness/School Preparation Module	23.91
9. “Awareness of self; Development of positive self-concept; Self-regulation; Development of pro-social behavior” are the competencies related to _____developmental goal.	28.26
2. Which of the following is not the objective of FLN mission	30.00
4. The following figure describes.....	32.17
13. Which of the following is not a characteristic of Competency based learning	38.26
5. “Talking and Listening; Reading with comprehension; Writing with purpose” are the competencies related to _____ developmental goal.	45.22
3. Which of the following is the correct order	46.96
12. Which of the following domain includes the competencies of “word awareness, rhyme awareness, and awareness of sounds” etc.	49.57
6. Cognitive Skills; Data Handling ; Concept Formation are the competencies related to _____ developmental goal.	50.43
20. Which of the following statement is not correct about learning outcomes at foundational stage	51.74
15. Which of the following domain deals with competencies of understanding text and retrieving information from them?	52.61
8.Which of the following should not be used for assessment at foundational stage?	53.48
7.In the foundational stage of education, a teacher should	53.91
17. Which of the following is not a correct pedagogic practice at foundational stage?	55.22
10. Which of the following pedagogical ideas do you agree with at foundational level?	61.30
18. At foundational stage, a teacher can	63.91
16. Which of the following is not true about life skills?	64.35
1. NIPUN BHARAT is a mission related to	70.00
11. Which of the following point is correct regarding free indoor play of children?	70.43
19. At foundational stage,	71.74

Impact of Demographic Variables

The information about three demographic variables i.e., gender, location of institution and course was collected. The gender was categorized into three categories i.e., male, female and prefer not to say. Location of the institution was categorized into two

i.e., rural and urban. The course that the students are pursuing currently was categories into three categories i.e., B.Ed. 1st year, B.Ed. 2nd year and Other (which included B.Ed., M.Ed.; B.El.Ed. etc.). To study the impact of these variables on awareness regarding FLN, the general linear model i.e., the UNIANOVA was used. The results are presented in tables 5, 6, 7. From table 6, it is evident that all the three demographic variables i.e., gender, location of the institution and course have significant influence on the awareness scores.

A further analysis to understand about the differences in the sub-categories as shown in table 7 reveals that when compared to the students who did not prefer to reveal their gender, males scored -0.663 less than them and females scored 1.532 more than them. Further, the difference between the scores of male students and students who preferred not to reveal their gender is not significant. However, the difference in the score of female students and students who preferred not to reveal their gender is significant. Similarly, the score of students from institutions located in rural areas is 1.567 less than that of students from institutions located in urban areas and this difference is significant. Students from both B.Ed. 1st year and B.Ed. 2nd year scored 3.377 and 3.335 less than the students from Other B.Ed. course and these differences are significant.

Table 5: Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
Gender	1	Male	29
	2	Female	196
	3	Prefer not to say	5
Location_of_Institution	1	Rural	41
	2	Urban	189
Course	1	B.Ed. (1st Year)	112
	2	B.Ed. (2nd Year)	105
	6	Any other	13

Table 6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Score					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	416.591 ^a	5	83.318	4.412	.001
Intercept	2716.885	1	2716.885	143.858	.000
Gender	121.816	2	60.908	3.225	.042*
Location_of_Institution	80.029	1	80.029	4.237	.041*
Course	135.555	2	67.778	3.589	.029*

Dependent Variable: Score					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Error	4230.452	224	18.886		
Total	28454.000	230			
Corrected Total	4647.043	229			
a. R Squared = .090 (Adjusted R Squared = .069)					

Table 7: Association of FLN awareness scores with predictor variables

Parameter Estimates				
Dependent Variable: Score				
Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Intercept	12.399	2.188	5.666	.000
[Gender=-Male]	-.663	2.127	-.312	.755
[Gender=Female]	1.532	1.976	.775	.439*
[Gender=Prefer not to say]	0 ^a	.	.	.
[Location_of_Institution=Rural]	-1.567	.761	-2.059	.041*
[Location_of_Institution=Urban]	0 ^a	.	.	.
[Course= B.Ed. (1st Year)]	-3.377	1.292	-2.614	.010*
[Course= B.Ed. (2nd Year)]	-3.335	1.285	-2.596	.010*
[Course= Any other]	0 ^a	.	.	.
a. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.				

Discussion

The honorable supreme court of India gave a judgment in year 2023 that only those who are trained for teaching in elementary education should be recruited as teachers in standards one to five. It believes that “the pedagogical approach required from a teacher at primary level is unique and a candidate who has a degree in elementary education is trained specifically to handle students at this level”. This judgment has provoked the researchers to take up this micro research to study about the awareness of currently B.Ed. pursuing students about FLN which is one of the core components of foundational

school stage and is strongly linked to the performance of students in higher school stages. Manning et al. (2019) claimed that the education level of teachers or caregivers, program structure, language, and reasoning are some of the factors which are correlated to overall ECEC qualities. The results of the study revealed that B.Ed. students have medium to low level of awareness regarding FLN. Further, very few have high level of awareness regarding FLN. Students were also lacking awareness regarding various aspects like school readiness modules; relationship between Developmental Goals, Key Competencies, Learning outcomes; knowledge about competencies and learning outcomes in foundational school stage; FLN skills etc. Thus, it appears that students who pursue B.Ed. and are recruited as teachers in standard I to V need to be given a special intensive training regarding the foundational school stage pedagogy and also about various aspects related to FLN.

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FOSTERING GROWTH MINDSET THROUGH HEALTHY RISK TAKING

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Abstract:

Young children's minds are highly malleable, making them easy to shape and influence. Unfortunately, we often emphasise the importance of performing well and only praise children when they achieve high scores or win competitions. This focus on results instilled the belief that outcomes are what truly matter, often overlooking the value of effort. Consequently, children may develop a fear of challenges, associating them with the threat of failure. They begin to see new challenges as daunting, fearing that failing at a task makes them failures themselves. This fear can lead to the development of a fixed mindset, where children believe their intelligence and abilities are static and unchangeable. Over time, this mindset erodes their confidence and limits their willingness to try new things.

As educators, we have the power to cultivate a growth mindset in our students. A growth mindset encourages the belief that intelligence, abilities, and talents can be developed with effort and persistence. By fostering this mindset, we help students build confidence and resilience, enabling them to embrace challenges as opportunities for growth rather than threats. This change in mindset or developing growth mindset is crucial at the foundational stage.

This paper explores the significance of fostering a growth mindset through healthy risk-taking, highlighting its impact on personal and academic development.

Keywords: Foundational stage, healthy risk taking, fixed mindset, growth mindset

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has introduced new guidelines for the foundational stage of education, addressing a previously overlooked area. Earlier, pre-primary education lacked clear guidelines and was often undervalued. However, NEP 2020 underscores the critical importance of the foundational stage, bringing it to the forefront of educational reform.

In today's rapidly growing world, the ability to adapt, learn, and grow is more crucial than ever. Central to this adaptability is the concept of a growth mindset—the belief that one's abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work. One powerful way to cultivate a growth mindset is by encouraging healthy risk-taking. By stepping out of their comfort zones and embracing challenges, individuals not only build resilience but also discover their potential. When children gain the ability to evaluate themselves, some develop a fear of challenges, worrying that they might not be smart enough. This is why we should encourage children in healthy risk taking.

What is the Foundational stage?

It is based on the educational period of a child. The Foundational stage is the very first stage and it includes children in the age group of 3 years to 8 years. It starts with pre-school where a child is admitted to a school at the age of 3 and is there up to the age of 6. Then the child goes to grade 1 and 2 at the age of 7 and 8 years respectively. It includes 3 years of pre-school, Anganwadi or Balvatika, the average age of the student should be 3 years to 6 years. And 2 years of normal school for class-1 and class-2, the average age of

the student should be 6 years to 8 years. a total of 5 years of foundational schooling will be implemented. The average age of the foundational stage student should be 3 years to 8 years.

In the Foundational Stage the focus is on play-based, activity-based, and interactive learning, prioritising the developmental needs and natural curiosity of young children.

Learning Outcomes at foundation stage

In the foundational Stage it emphasises holistic development, including physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional growth. Its objective is to build strong foundational literacy and numeracy skills. And in the previous primary Stage the focus was often more on academic achievements and assessments, sometimes at the expense of well-rounded development.

Cultivating optimal learning environment at the foundational stage:

Young children thrive in a good quality learning environment. To be a successful learner for the rest of their lives, babies and young children should be provided an environment where they can learn, play and socialise. This environment is crucial for their development. To get the best outcomes for children, spaces should ideally be designed to nurture children both academically and socially.

A high-quality early years learning environment extends far beyond the confines of its four walls and furniture. It encompasses the social interactions and the daily routines within early childhood settings, such as child care, pre-school, nursery, or early primary school. These environments also include outdoor areas like nursery gardens, outdoor play spaces, and forest schools.

Children thrive in settings that cater to their individual and diverse developmental needs. An enabling environment, where young children can grow, develop, and flourish, provides them with security, comfort, choice, engagement, and opportunities. Children learn most effectively when they can move, act, create, imagine, demonstrate independence, and collaborate with others.

A positive learning environment is a nurturing space where young minds flourish, encompassing not just the physical surroundings but also the emotional and psychological atmosphere. Skilled and caring teachers cultivate environments where children feel valued and supported. Strong teacher-student relationships build trust, encouraging children to take healthy risks in their learning journey and explore new ideas with confidence. (Harrop, 2024)

Fostering growth mindset through healthy risk taking

Young children's minds are highly malleable, making them easy to shape and influence. Unfortunately, we often emphasise the importance of performing well and only praise children when they achieve high scores or win competitions. This focus on results instilled the belief that outcomes are what truly matter, often overlooking the value of effort. Consequently, children may develop a fear of challenges, associating them with the threat of failure. They begin to see new challenges as daunting, fearing that failing at a task makes them failures themselves. The risk that the children are exposed to should be a healthy risk. Healthy risk is one where children develop confidence, resilience towards challenges and love for learning. A healthy risk is an action or decision that involves stepping out of one's comfort zone with the potential for positive growth, learning, or development, while minimising the likelihood of significant harm. Such risks encourage individuals to try new experiences, develop new skills, and build resilience.

This fear can lead to the development of a fixed mindset, where children believe their intelligence and abilities are static and unchangeable. Over time, this mindset erodes their confidence and limits their willingness to try new things.