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Vidya Pravesh : A Signpost to Bridge the Learning Gap

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Context

The National Education Policy (NEP)- 2020 recommends that the learning of children should be in continuum, starting from preschool to the early primary grades I and II. This stage is termed as the foundational stage that covers children between the ages of 3 to 8 years. It is crucial to foster these early years because at this stage brain develops at a fast pace as compare to any other stage in life. Their ability to grasp the concepts, acquire new skills, and grow socially and holistically is swift and prompt. As mentioned in the NEP 2020, a large proportion of children currently in primary schools are facing learning crisis especially in the domains of foundational literacy and numeracy. One of the contributing factors is the inaccessibility to Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all children. The policy, thus recommends universal provisioning of

NIPUN Bharat Mission

The NIPUN Bharat Mission aims to facilitate all the children to read with comprehension, independently write with understanding, understand the reasoning in the domains of number, measurement, and shapes, become independent in problem-solving and develop holistically. Mission is targeted to ensure, that every child in the country, achieves foundational literacy and numeracy skills by the end of Grade-III and not later than Grade-V by 2027.

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quality early childhood development, care and education by 2030. According to the policy, prior to age of 5, every child should move to a 'Preparatory Class' or 'Balvatika' that is before Grade-I where the focus should be given on developing cognitive, affective and psychomotor abilities and early literacy and numeracy. Further, policy recommends development of an interim 3-month play-based 'school preparation module' to support children and ensure they are school ready until the universal provisioning of ECCE is achieved. 'Vidya-Pravesh' is the name given to this three month school preparation programme that is an integral part of NIPUN Bharat— A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN Mission) of the Government of India.

'Vidya Pravesh' Programme was launched by the Honorable Prime Minister on 29th July, 2021 during the celebration of one year of completion of the National Education Policy. It is an attempt to make children learn necessary concepts and strengthen their skills vital to prepare them for Grade I. The purpose is to help teachers ensure that all children are exposed to a warm and welcoming environment when they enter Grade-I, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to their smooth transition to school. Activities or learning opportunities given in the Vidya Pravesh Module are well aligned to the developmental goal-wise key competencies and the learning outcomes of Preschool 3 (Balvatika) i.e. Level 3 as per the NIPUN Bharat Mission Implementation Guidelines. These developmental goals are aimed at maintaining good health and wellbeing of children, making them a good communicator and ensuring that they become involved learners and are able to connect with their immediate environment. This shows the interlinkage and interdependency of each domain of development and also helps children to develop holistically. An

attempt has been made to address the inclusion mainly in terms of gender and children with special needs or disabilities (Divyang).



Fig 1: NIPUN Bharat Mission Implementation Guidelines, Vidya Pravesh Guidelines and Vidya Pravesh Module

Source

Vidya Pravesh ‘Guidelines’ and ‘Module’ have been developed and available on DIKSHA FLN portal and NCERT’s website which can be accessed using the following links:

- Vidya Pravesh Guidelines: https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/VidyaPravesh_Guidelines_GradeI.pdf.
- Vidya Pravesh Module: <https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/vidyapravesh.pdf>

Note: Since whole ‘Vidya Pravesh programme’ is built upon the learning outcomes of preschool 3 (Balvatika) i.e. Level 3 of NIPUN Bharat Mission Implementation Guidelines, Vidya Pravesh ‘Guidelines’ and ‘Module’ can be used in one year of ‘Balvatika’ programme also.

About Vidya Pravesh Guidelines and Module

- Both the documents intend to create a stimulating learning environment that is joyful, safe, ensures emotional security and provides support to all the children in school and at home.
 - The play-based pedagogy and enriching interaction are the significant aspects of the Vidya Pravesh programme that plays a vital role in creating a joyful, interactive and stress-free environment for all children to learn and also in addressing the learning needs of children with special needs or disabilities (Divyang).
 - Focus is also given on learning in mother tongue or home language and allowing as many languages as children bring to the classroom, including sign language.
 - The documents suggest three months or 12 weeks implementation of the Vidya Pravesh programme.
 - It is recommended that the programme should be implemented for five days a week and four hours per day. However, in schools which function on Saturdays, the teachers may recapitulate the activities done and also plan for the next week.
 - The focus of the module is to help teachers understand the aims and objectives of Vidya Pravesh programme; how to plan or design the programme as per the need and context; development, planning and transaction process of the age and developmentally appropriate activities and experiences for children; and tracking of children's progress.
 - The module focuses on the process of delivery of experiences to the children to make them learn necessary skills and concepts around all three developmental goals in play way and interactive manner where they get ample opportunities to explore the environment and phenomenon around them and also participate and engage in learning.
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- Continuous assessment of learning and tracking the progress of children helps teachers to customize the teaching-learning strategies, play material; activity areas, etc. to ensure that the learning is timely. In order to track the progress of each child, a month-wise assessment schedule for all three months is provided in Vidya Pravesh guidelines and module.
 - Teachers are expected to be the bridge between the home and the school. Therefore, it is important to chalk out the ways to get the help and support from the parents and the community to support learning of children. In this regard, guidelines for parent and community engagement are also given in Vidya Pravesh guidelines and module.
 - In order to ensure positive emotional and mental well-being among young children some tips for parents and teachers are given for taking care of emotional needs and mental well-being of their children at this tender stage of life.
 - Everyone, including the parents would find the content that includes pedagogy, activities, illustrations, and worksheets easy to understand and transact even when children are at home.
 - The module may also be treated as handbook or the guidelines to help teachers and parents understand the process of providing learning experiences to all the children in a joyful way.
 - Teachers may develop their own detailed set of contextualised activities and worksheets based on the key competencies given in the module leading to the achievement of learning outcomes. They are also expected to follow the pedagogy and the process of transaction given in the module and guidelines atleast till Grade-III to make sure joy in learning continues.
 - The Vidya Pravesh programme is designed as an exemplar and the States/Union Territories/schools have been
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requested to ensure timely adoption/adaptation of the Vidya Pravesh Guidelines and Module so that the programme could be launched in all schools of the country by the next academic session i.e., 2022-23.

Nature of Activities

Developmental goal-wise, competency based activities which are aligned to the learning outcomes are designed to familiarise children with the school environment and provide experiences to:

- maintain well-being through practicing yoga, health, nutrition, hygiene, healthy habits, and safety protocols.
- socialize and gain emotional control by learning of ethical values, cultural diversity and pro-social behaviour, such as caring; sharing; helping; etc.
- build the foundations of mathematics and understanding environment through experience of numbers, shapes, colours, patterns, space, opportunities for comparing, ordering, matching, problem solving and direct experiences and interaction with the physical, social and natural environment.
- lay the foundations of language and literacy by making them effective communicator through opportunities for interaction, engagement in stories/poems/rhymes, exposure for print awareness, scribbling, drawing and writing etc.

Some of the activities are supported with black and white worksheets to give wider scope for children to learn. As per the need and availability of time, children may be asked to colour them or fill them with different patterns, such as zig-zag, dots, dashes, slant lines, horizontal lines, vertical lines, etc. The unique feature of the activities given in Vidya Pravesh Module is that each activity addresses different competencies and learning outcomes. Also, as per the need, interest and learning level of children, teachers can modify, contextualize or add more activities. Vidya Pravesh

Programme also focuses on the holistic development of the children, nurturing Sanskar, values, love, freedom of expression, spontaneity and a feeling of togetherness amongst children. It also provides opportunities for experimentation, exploration, investigation, observation, critical thinking, rational thought, imagination, learning cultural diversity and ethical values. Efforts have been made to ensure that learning is happening in an inclusive and joyful environment to help children get a smooth and successful start in the early primary grades. It is hoped that Vidya Pravesh programme would be helpful to the teachers and those who are involved in shaping the young lives wherever they are.

Conclusion

Since Vidya Pravesh is development to ensure linkages between preschool and primary education and also prepare young children for their smooth transition to school education, the programme has been conducted in most of the states and UTs in the year 2021-22. Further, states and UTs are also planning to implement it for the upcoming academic year too. Hope this paper would help you to understand the importance and objectives of Vidya Pravesh Programme and can facilitate in building an understanding of Vidya Pravesh programme among all stakeholders.

References

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