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REIMAGINING SCHOOL EDUCATION: ANALYSING THE NEW NCERT ENGLISH TEXTBOOK *POORVI* (CLASS 8) IN LIGHT OF NEP 2020 AND NCF-SE 2023

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 envision changing Indian school education through experiential, inclusive, and culturally embedded learning. Poorvi, the recently released Class 8 English textbook by NCERT, captures this vision. The NCERT Class 8 English textbook Poorvi captures the visionary agendas of NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023, focusing on competency-based learning, cultural integration, and student participation. This paper critically examines the content of the textbook, pedagogy, and conformity to these policy guidelines. It highlights strengths of cultural representation and competency-based education, as well as challenges of implementation. The paper makes recommendations for improving teacher capability and equitable access in order to support the role of the textbook in reimagining Indian education. It also helps to shed light on how curriculum reform can transform English education in Indian classrooms.

Keywords: NCERT Textbook, Poorvi, NEP 2020, NCF-SE 2023, English Language Teaching, Curriculum Reform, Pedagogy of Language Education, Indian Knowledge Systems, School Education

1. Introduction

The education system in India through NEP 2020 and NCF 2023 promotes a learner-centred multidisciplinary approach which focuses on competencies. School curriculum implementation of NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023 is an important milestone towards transformative education in India. English language textbooks, being instruments of pedagogy and culture transmission, are central to this change. *Poorvi*, the recently introduced Class 8 NCERT English textbook, is a great example of this change. It shifts English education from a colonial, content-dominant approach to an experiential, inclusive, and

competency-based approach. This paper critically examines and analyse how *Poorvi* addresses objectives set out by recent policy guidelines.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this paper are:

- To examine the thematic and pedagogic structure of *Poorvi* within the framework of NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023.
- To identify the ways in which *Poorvi* addresses key educational goals such as multilingualism, inclusivity, and experiential learning.
- To assess the implementation viability of the textbook in diverse school settings.
- To discuss how *Poorvi* can affect student engagement and instructional practice.
- To recommend solutions for successful implementation of the textbook in accordance with national education reforms.

3. Research Questions

- How does *Poorvi* mirror the vision of NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023?
- What are the primary themes and pedagogical approaches employed in the textbook?
- How does the textbook encourage values, skills, and cultural sensitivity?
- What are the challenges in implementation of *Poorvi* in diverse educational settings?
- How can teachers and schools maximise the effectiveness of this book to learning outcomes?

4. Research Design

This analytical study utilises qualitative research methods that prioritise the interpretation and understanding of information, rendering it appropriate for the analysis of texts and instructional content. It uses two methods: documentary content analysis and thematic analysis.

5. Literature and Policy Context

In discussions about education worldwide, including in India, the necessity of teaching English to ready students for the challenges of the 21st century has been extensively acknowledged. Evidence reveals the significance of language in various contexts. Language education must go beyond focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary. Additionally, it should enhance students' abilities in critical areas like teamwork, cultural understanding, and solving problems (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

The National Education Policy 2020 seeks to develop an education system in India that reflects Indian values and accomplishments across various fields of knowledge. It also seeks to prepare students to deal with the opportunities and challenges of the modern world in the 21st century. The NCF-SE 2023 has established a solid groundwork for this optimistic vision across all subjects and educational stages. The NEP 2020 promotes an education system that is experiential, inclusive, flexible, and grounded in Indian traditions and wisdom. It promotes a shift from textbook-centred instruction to a student-centred approach. It highlights:

- Multilingualism

- Foundational literacy and numeracy
- Competency-based learning
- Integration of art, culture, and values

NCF-SE 2023 puts this plan into action by creating a skill framework that covers four levels of school education. It describes learning goals that focus on understanding ideas instead of just memorising facts. NCF emphasises the significance of allowing students to make choices and express themselves while integrating various disciplines. It priorities:

- Student agency and voice
- Interdisciplinary integration
- Reflective, creative expression
- Local-global contextual balance

The NCF-SE 2023 for Middle Stage students wants to help them learn the skills they need to succeed as they move forward in life. It aims to improve their skills in thinking clearly, describing things, and telling stories, while getting them ready for challenges and opportunities that are waiting for them. A varied curriculum includes nine subjects, such as three languages (including at least two Indian languages), Science, Math, Social Studies, Art Education, Physical and Health Education, Health, and Vocational Education related to job skills. This contributes to their academic development.

To transform and advance, a learning environment requires specific critical factors. One important thing is to have the right textbooks for different subjects. Textbooks are not just pedagogical resources but also cultural tools that define worldviews and identities. (Apple, 1992; Kumar, 2004). Therefore, how textbooks like *Poorvi* reflect national policy is central to realising education reform. With the evolution of English language teaching moving away from traditional grammar and translation methods towards more engaging, student-centred strategies, it's crucial to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of current textbooks (Anand & Kuruvilla, 2025). These textbooks are important because they help teachers explain the material clearly, while also allowing students to explore and ask questions. The arrangement of the classroom and the preparedness of the teacher play a crucial role in enhancing students' comprehension of concepts in different subjects and areas of learning.

6. Textbook Overview

The 2025 *Poorvi* Class 8 English textbook, published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), greatly differs from previous English textbooks such as *Honeydew* and *It So Happened*. *Poorvi* has been developed to adhere to the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023, heralding a transition to a more thorough, India-focused, and competency-based educational model. The term "Poorvi" is taken from a traditional form of music, Raaga Poorvi (NCERT, 2025). It symbolises a balance of aesthetic appeal and harmony, merging traditional values with contemporary educational objectives. This textbook is designed not

only to teach English but also to encourage curiosity, values, creativity, and a connection to Indian culture and identity.

7. Thematic Structure and Content Analysis of *Poorvi*

The *Poorvi* textbook for Class 8 is divided into five thematic units:

- Wit and Wisdom
- Values and Dispositions
- Mystery and Magic
- Environment
- Science and Curiosity

Each unit includes poems, stories, and nonfiction texts; and many of the texts are centred on Indian icons and narratives. Examples include:

- Bibha Chowdhuri (India's first woman physicist)
- Major Somnath Sharma (India's first Param Vir Chakra awardee)
- Verghese Kurien (hailed as the 'Father of the White Revolution')

In this way the textbook definitely promotes national identity, role models to follow, and value education. NCERT emphasises that the goal of this inclusion is to educate young students on the significance of courage, accountability and love for their nation. Lessons in the book also include themes like gender equality, empathy, environmental ethics, scientific curiosity and so on.

8. Pedagogical Features

From the 2025-2026 school year, *Poorvi* is the new replacement for *Honeysuckle* in CBSE schools throughout India. The comparative analysis of both the textbooks clearly show that the objectives and pedagogical features of new textbook *Poorvi* are in strong agreement with the central concepts of NEP 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework of School Education, 2023 (Anand & Kuruvilla, 2025). The textbook incorporates a range of pedagogical strategies while addressing the specific needs of its learners.

- QR-coded audio stories help improve listening skills by making classroom practices more interactive and accessible (Mishra & Koehler, 2006; Warschauer & Ames, 2010).
- Writing prompts and projects encourage students to engage in deeper thinking, bringing alignment with the constructivist learning theories (Vygotsky, 1978).
- The "Language Connection" parts help students understand different languages in line with the inclusive pedagogy and the NEP's emphasis on linguistic diversity (Mohanty, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas et al., 2009).
- Exercises involve more than just understanding. In addition to grasping the content, exercises help students to converse about the subject, reflect on it critically, perform it, and investigate it more thoroughly.
- A Teacher's Handbook supports teachers with tools for lesson designs, grading assistance, and practical teaching strategies.

Table 1: Alignment with NEP 2020 and NCF-SE 2023

Policy Objectives	How <i>Poorvi</i> Aligns
Multilingualism	"Language Connection" promotes understanding of different languages.
Cultural Roots & Indian Icons	Lessons spotlight Indian scientists, heroes, and artists.
Foundational Literacy & Expression	Activities promote vocabulary, reading fluency, oral storytelling.
21st-Century Skills	Prioritises empathy, critical thinking, inquiry and collaboration.
Experiential Learning	Includes group tasks, dramatization, and community-linked assignments.
Values and Life Skills	Each unit explores the theme of honesty, compassion, service, and curiosity.

9. Strengths of *Poorvi*

• Culturally Affirming Content

The book highlights Indian culture and heritage, perspectives and narratives, moving away from Eurocentric texts which was common in previous NCERT English textbooks. Such representation aligns with calls to make the curriculum culturally responsive, enabling students to locate themselves in the knowledge they study (Banks, 2015).

• Skill Integration

The textbook serves as an effective resource for imparting essential skills required in the 21st century. It contributes to enhancing cognitive abilities (such as critical thinking, problem-solving etc.), interpersonal and emotional competencies (like empathising and collaborating), and communication skills (including writing and active listening).

• Inclusivity and Representation

Poorvi diligently seeks to engage everyone in its discussions and reflections. The textbook features narratives that showcase a variety of gender representations and social backgrounds, allowing every learner to find relatable aspects within it. Engaging with a variety of cultures in educational settings fulfils the global call for culturally responsive pedagogy (Banks, 2015; Gay, 2010) and findings also suggest that having their backgrounds included in textbooks helps students develop a sense of belonging (Evans, 2015). Moreover, *Poorvi* employs clear and accessible language that is appropriate for various age groups. This supports students with varying levels of English language proficiency, aligning with the principles of inclusive pedagogy (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Loreman, 2017). This approach ensures that

employing simple language enhances learning without compromising its quality, enabling equal participation for all students.

- **Interdisciplinary Relevance**

Integrating various subjects assists students in grasping complex issues such as climate change, social justice, values etc., while simultaneously enhancing their language abilities (Drake & Reid, 2020; Poon, 2021). The current textbook covers varied interdisciplinary topics, such as environmental studies, ethics, history, and science, which are effortlessly woven into the English curriculum. Examples include, Ruskin Bond's writing about nature and Bibha Chowdhuri's scientific journey- which goes beyond just being stories offering insightful lessons for the learners. This encourages thinking across different subjects and makes education stronger. It helps students comprehend real-world problems better and improves their language skills.

- **Teacher Empowerment**

Poorvi not only helps students but is also designated to support teachers. It includes additional resources such as teacher manuals, QR-coded digital supplements, and sample lesson plans. These tools make teaching better and help teachers adjust lessons for different students' needs and to check how well students are learning. Studies indicate that incorporating scaffolding, digital tools, and reflective practices together significantly improves teaching effectiveness in the classroom (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Additionally, teaching strategies that prompt educators to reflect on their methods and incorporate practical activities, as recommended in the Teacher's Handbook, align effectively with student-centered learning approaches (Vygotsky, 1978; Shulman, 1987). These approaches create vibrant and inviting classrooms that accommodate the diverse needs of every student.

10. Challenges in Implementation

- **Teacher Preparedness**

A significant number of teachers are unaware of teaching strategies that align with NEP guidelines. Multiple researches on teacher training in India often shows that teachers lack the readiness to employ practical teaching methods and concentrate on fostering skills (Anand & Kuruvilla, 2025; Singal, 2010). Without proper training, activities might go back to being done in a memorised way.

- **Digital Divide**

Accessing QR codes requires devices and internet connectivity, which may be lacking in rural regions. This problem showsRephrase larger inequalities in digital education in India, which got worse during the pandemic (Jena, 2020).

- **Assessment Gaps**

Although the textbook prioritises an educational experience that is engaging, interactive, and focused on acquiring practical skills, the existing assessments predominantly depend on rote memorisation and a substantial amount of information. This long-standing distinction between what is intended to be taught in schools and how student performance is evaluated has been highlighted in the context of Indian education (Kumar & Sarangapani, 2004; Kingdon, 2007). Researches indicate that summative exams often do not assess profound

learning skills effectively, highlighting the need for regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Singh, 2021). Therefore, if the alterations in assessments don't align with *Poorvi's* teaching enhancements, their effectiveness in making a meaningful impact will be restricted.

- **Classroom Environment**

Researches reveal that large class sizes hinder the ability to facilitate group activities and accommodate various teaching methods for students (PROBE, 1999; Govinda & Varghese, 1993).

- **Time Constraints**

Engaging in enjoyable activities requires time, something that is often lacking in hectic school schedules.

11. Recommendations

- **Invest in Teacher Training**

It's important to have regular workshops or orientations for in-service and pre-service teachers that focus on NCF guidelines and pedagogy, learning through activities, and improving how to assess students. Research indicates that training programs for teachers that emphasise instructional strategies and student assessment techniques can significantly improve classroom effectiveness. (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Shulman, 1987).

- **Bridge the Digital Gap**

Enabling offline availability of QR resources or create audio stations at educational institutions.

- **Revise Assessment Systems**

Implementing portfolio assessments, scoring rubrics, and project evaluations that align with *Poorvi's* tasks. Such kind of assessments capture competencies way better than traditional examinations (Gulikers, Bastiaens, & Kirschner, 2004).

- **Encourage Local Adaptation**

Incorporating local narratives and regional dialects into school curricula can help create a more personal and impactful learning experience for students.

- **Reduce Textbook Overload**

Simplify other subjects to allow for more time dedicated to new English lessons.

12. Limitations

This study has limitations due to the absence of actual classroom data or insights from teachers and students, as the textbook has recently been introduced.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, the modifications to the NCERT English textbooks reflect a greater attempt to re-evaluate their approach. While English education in India tries to combine worldwide teaching practices with real situations in local classrooms, this latest development in materials is a major stride in the direction of greater fairness and effectiveness for learning a

new language (Anand & Kuruvilla, 2025). By including Indian stories, values, and chances to think critically, the textbook makes learning English a way to feel empowered instead of feeling disconnected. In order to turn this potential into reality, we need considerable aid, especially in terms of teacher development, facility enhancements, and ensuring that all components work together effectively. If executed effectively, *Poorvi* could serve as an exemplary case for textbooks across various subjects and grade levels, setting the tone for truly reimagined school education in India.

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