# Draft NEP 2019: Link between Education and Nutrition

## What is the issue?

- Draft New Education Policy (NEP) 2019 seeks to reform India's education sector by providing a greater impetus to childhood learning and development.
- To know more about draft NEP, click here.
- It recommends the introduction of an extensive programme for young children called Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE).

## What is ECCE?

- Draft NEP proposes to implement the ECCE through a strategic approach that focusses on developing an excellent **curricular and pedagogical framework** for early childhood education by NCERT.
- This is to be delivered through a significantly expanded and strengthened system of early childhood educational institutions.
- An efficient delivery mechanism would be ensured through professionally trained educators.
- To make ECCE universal, the NEP recommends its inclusion in the Right to Education Act, 2009.

## What does the survey say?

- The **National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2014** results recognises the existence of a learning crisis in the current system.
- It is conducted by the **Ministry of Human Resource Development** covering 1.1 lakh schools, the national average percentage score for Class III students in language and mathematics equalled 64 per cent and 66 per cent respectively showcasing a **serious learning deficit**.

## Why does a learning crisis occur?

- A learning crisis occurs when the learning outcomes of a child are not commensurate with the expected educational qualification.
- According to the draft NEP, the learning crisis is rooted in the **gaps in childhood care and education**, which form the foundation of learning and school preparedness.

- A robust **infrastructure to provide children foundational basics** in their early years is a need of the time.

## What is the need to invest in early childhood education?

- The draft policy states that over 85% of cumulative brain development occurs prior to the age of six.
- Investment of a rupee in early childhood education reaps a **10-fold benefit** in the future. Undoubtedly, the draft NEP is a right step in this direction.

## What is the need to concentrate on nutrition?

- Any attempt to address the learning deficit without looking at nutrition factor is likely to be illusory.
- **Nutritional deficiencies impact** the mental, physical and cognitive development of a child, lower their immunity and can have serious implications on learning outcomes.
- Under-nutrition pertains to a **high economic cost** in terms of both compromised learning outcomes and productivity losses.
- **National Family Health Survey** (2015-16) data show dismal trends,
    1. Stunted children (low height-for-age) at 38.4%
    2. Wasted children (low weight-for-height) at 21%
    3. Underweight children (low weight-for-age) at 35.8%
- India faces a high incidence of under-nutrition.
- A double-edged sword of a **high learning deficit and the burden of under-nutrition** is faced by India's 158.79 million **children in the 0-6 years age group**.

## Why is there a link between education and nutrition?

- There is a strong correlation between well-nourished children and educational achievements.
- **Draft NEP** - Provides a framework for foundational literacy and numeracy to young children.
- **Integrated Child Development Scheme** - To provide adequate nutritional support through a balanced diet, supplements and physical activities complementing the efforts of the draft NEP.
- **Sustained investments** in the child's foundational stage today would yield **long-term benefits** in the form of creating a healthy and productive working population of tomorrow.

**Source: Business Line**



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
*Information is Empowering*