



NEW EDUCATION POLICY:

**PRINCIPLES,
PRIORITIES
& PRACTICES**



CENTRE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
Social Change Through Public Policy

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CONTEXT

In keeping with the Directive Principles in the Constitution of India, the government has been working towards providing universal access to and participation in education. The government has since endeavoured to build a National System of Education through certain instruments of large public purpose schemes that include several influential and high-level expert committee reports, two National Policies and an Action Plan on Education that built on each of these, an earmarked cess to fund education, and lastly passing the Right to Education Act.

Each of these instruments helped tackle a particular contemporary challenge, be it access to primary education, increasing school enrolments especially for underprivileged communities, creating distinct financial support and funding streams for public schooling, or reducing inequities in access through physical infrastructure and financial incentives. The government has built a formidable institutional architecture around the overarching goal of a National Education System comprising curriculum development, research & planning, and teacher training. Each measure has brought us a step closer to universal education, mass literacy, and skilling of the general population.

The previous National Policy on Education (NPE) was passed in 1986, and amended in 1992. The 1986 Policy was an outcome of a review of National Policy of Education 1968, conducted at the time of Parliamentary Budget Session of 1985. This policy focused on universal access, enrolment and retention particularly among disadvantaged segments, and achieving essential levels of learning. In 1992, NPE 1986 was modified into the National Programme of Action following the recommendations of the Ramamurthy Committee and the J N Reddy Committee. 23 years after the National Programme of Action, India is gearing up for a New Education Policy.



1

STATUS CHECK

A. Progress on Education: High Enrolment, High Drop-outs and Low Learning Levels

Achievements

1. Near universal enrolment at the elementary level:

During the period 1968 to 2015, India made remarkable progress in creating universal access to education, first by making universal enrolment a central goal in the 1968 and 1986 policies, and then giving this ambition constitutional teeth through the RTE. Annual Status of Education (ASER-2014) as well as latest unified Distance Information System for Education (U-DISE) data report that 96.7% children are enrolled in schools at the elementary level, indicating a huge distance covered from the 1968 Policy. The challenge now is keeping children in school and improving the transition rate of elementary education to secondary and higher education.

In crafting the New Education Policy, there is a need to understand – one, how far India has come on its education goals and what remains to be done; and two, what the expectations of the Policy are. This will help to create a cogent, progressive, and pragmatic New Education Policy.

2. Increased public expenditure on education:

Over the years, public investment in education has steadily increased, though still short of the target of 6% of GDP. In the last five years alone, MHRD's proposed budget has increased from INR 31,906 crores to INR 54,735 crores.¹ In 2004, Government of India began levying a 2% education cess towards funding the *Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh*, an earmarked fund to support primary education. While a substantial portion of this fund remains underutilised year on year, it remains an important indicator of government commitment to Education for All.² The next step is ensuring economic and social returns to this investment, using learning outcomes as the key metric and setting standards for value-for-money.

3. Improved School Infrastructure:

The 1968 and 1986 Policies both stressed on strengthening the school ecosystem in India, increasing the number of government schools and improving school facilities such as infrastructure, with reasonable success on both counts. The number of public schools imparting elementary education has nearly doubled from 845,007 in 2001 to 1,448,712 in 2014. 98% of rural habitations have a school within 1 kilometre. Alongside, Operation Blackboard equipped schools with better hard infrastructure and tools. Norms governing the implementation of RTE also focus on minimum requirements for school infrastructure. As per

¹ MHRD proposed budget for school education: 2010-11: INR 31,906 / 2011-12: INR 40,841 / 2012-13: INR 48,605 / 2013-14: INR 52,008 / 2014-15: INR 54,735 (all figures in crores). Source: MHRD website.

² The CESS has been subsumed into service tax as of June 2015.

our analysis nearly 18% of SSA budget (second only after teacher salaries which are 59%) is spent on improving school infrastructure. Recently collected U-DISE data shows that approximately 65% of schools in India comply with RTE norms and the compliance is improving every year in both government and private schools.

Challenges

4. Out-of-School Children and Drop-outs:

MHRD's Report of 2014 on Education for All suggests 3.2% children are out of school at the elementary level. Among the 3.2% out-of-school children, nearly 50% children have been enrolled in schools at least once and have dropped out much before completing eight years of education. The real challenge is transition to secondary schooling or after class 5, particularly among girls, SCs, STs and minorities. MHRD recently published outcomes of Out-of-School survey which suggest only 12% of total children enrolled at the elementary level actually make it to higher education. The gap between 96.7% enrolment in elementary education to 12% in secondary education is huge.

5. Low levels of learning:

ASER-2014, followed by National Achievement Survey-2014 (NAS-2014), report that nearly 45% of children in government schools cannot read, write or solve simple mathematical problems after reaching 5th class. In 2009, Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh (two better performing states) participated in OECD's international student assessment (PISA). The Indian states ranked 72 and 73 out of 74 countries, well below fellow BRICs and emerging economies. Private schools typically outperform government schools on reading, writing and mathematical abilities, though the margin of difference is bitterly contested. None of our policies have defined 'quality education' in clear, specific terms. Better quality education has remained just one of several policy goals, suggesting that this is a 'good-to-achieve' goal but not the most critical goal.

6. Face-off between Government and Private Schools:

There are few topics as fiercely debated as the role of private schools in India. In enrolments, private schools have outnumbered government schools in states such as Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Where government continues to have more schools and greater enrolments, parental inclination towards private schools is on a steady rise, alongside a steady decline in enrolments at government schools. According to ASER-2014, between 2010 and 2014 government school enrolments decreased by 6.2% whereas private school enrolments increased by 6.5%. This has led to an unnecessary turf battle at the cost of student and parent interest; rather than competing to do better by children and parents, government institutions often focus on rationalising own performance failure.

B. Change in Context: High Aspiration, Preference for English Education, Willingness to Pay

1. Economic growth, higher incomes, and a growing middle class:

The World Bank says India has been the biggest contributor to poverty reduction between 2008 and 2011, with around 140 million or so lifted out of absolute poverty.³ India is now a \$2.3 trillion economy, with a large and growing middle income population.

In the time between the 1986 Policy and RTE 2009, India underwent dramatic changes that demand recognition and voice in the New Education Policy – not just as a footnote, but tactically to ensure better quality results from investment in education.

2. Increased personal investment in education:

Private expenditure on elementary education which comprises that incurred by households on school fees, exam fees, private tutoring, books & stationery, and conveyance is estimated to be INR 5,959 per child per year.⁴ Consumer Pyramids data from The Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy finds that across almost every income group, personal investment in education averages 3% of monthly income. Even the poorest income group (the key target population for public schooling) spends approximately 2% of income, a figure that has remained steady over recent years.

3. Greater preference for private schools:

Parents across economic class have recognised the value of English education in the knowledge economy of the 21st century. Unaided private schools have grown from 254,178 in 2009-10 to 319,990 in 2013-14. Enrolments in unaided private schools have gone up from 5.7 million in 2009-10 to 7.1 million in 2013-14 (from 30.4% to 35.2% of all children enrolled).⁵ The growth of private tuitions and preference toward fee-charging private schools indicates a high degree of parental dissatisfaction with free government schools. Low-cost unaided private schools have emerged as an alternative to government schools, particularly for poorer parents in urban and rural areas.

4. Competition and the role of markets post liberalisation:

Since the reforms in 1991, India has witnessed the emergence of private service providers across all domains. What were previously considered commonplace public goods are no longer solely in the domain of public provisioning, be it water, banking or electricity; in most areas supply is led by private players or Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The government has changed its role from sole provider to regulator and financier. In education too, private entities have slowly but surely established a growing presence across different price points

³ *Global Monitoring Report for 2014-15 on the Millennium Development Goals.*

⁴ *Accountability Initiative, 2014.*

⁵ *U-DISE, 2014.*

and despite significant regulatory barriers. The increasing role of private service providers in education indicates a willingness and ability of parents to pay for services currently available free or highly subsidized through the government.

5. Changing expectations from government:

Recent elections have underlined the changing demands of the population; development, economic opportunity and personal choice have received overwhelming public support, while conventional welfare themes, particularly those that emphasize the 'provider' role of the government have resonated less. Popular expectations have been recalibrated toward functioning markets, a level playing field, consistent rule of law, and consumer information and protection. Education too is slowly but steadily moving toward this paradigm, evident from the growing demand for private education, not just among higher income groups but also the economically and socially weaker sections of society.



2

DRAFTING THE NEW EDUCATION POLICY

India has made unprecedented gains in expanding educational access⁶; since 2003 primary enrolment has increased by over 63 million children. We have fulfilled the demands of previous policies through schemes such as Operation Blackboard and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA). A large concerted effort on enrolments over the years placed emphasis on creating public education infrastructure, setting up schools, and managing every aspect of service delivery. The focus thus far has been on intensification of the public education effort, particularly provisioning through a common schooling system. The results have been mixed: for India's early challenges with illiteracy, it was essential to jumpstart the education revolution through a largely top-down approach. As the economy and the expectations of the population change, it is time to redefine the central idea governing education in the country. India needs an education policy that will help keep children in school, and ensure consistent and high learning outcomes - demanding higher returns from public investment, ensuring the public school system is accountable and performing, creating a regulatory framework that respects and enables parents' choices, and encouraging social inclusion in the school system.

Key Challenges NEP should help Address

A. Missing Motivation for Performance in Government Schools

1. Superficial school performance standards:

Include parameters such as number of days schools should be open, number of teaching hours, syllabus completion, and the timely submission of various reports to local education administrators; school inspections involve measuring compliance against these metrics. The most important parameter of performance is unfortunately not a significant part of the consideration - learning outcomes regularly monitored through independent assessments. While board examination results are broadly used as performance indicators, they don't point to grade-wise remediation needs and by then it is too late to take corrective measures.

The government school system lacks credible and effective performance management including setting measurable standards, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of performance, training and other inputs for performance improvement, and finally incentives for rewarding good performance.

2. Ad-hoc tick-box pre-service training and constrained in-service upskilling:

Are missed opportunities to improve teaching consistently. In-service training for example is defined by the number of days for each government teacher every year and not by content. Most trainings conducted by District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and Cluster &

⁶ The UN Global Monitoring Report 2012, UNESCO 2011, p. 3.

Block Resource Centres are detached from actual training needs or evaluations of teacher performance, and conducted by senior teachers, not qualified trainers. Also, class schedules and teacher vacancies mean schools are reluctant to encourage trainings outside, and teacher unions object to using vacations for training courses, leaving very few options for quality in-service coaching.

3. Lack of monitoring and accountability measures and heavy politicisation:

Has meant high rates of teacher absenteeism, and not enough time on task in the classroom. Several reports highlight absence of teachers and the presence of proxy teachers; yet there are fewer instances of any action taken. A 2005 study in UP found that at the time of visit only 45% teachers were involved in teaching activity.⁷ In a similar study in Rajasthan across 3000 schools, teachers attended classes only 65% of the time, while only one principal reported taking disciplinary action against absent teachers.⁸ A 2008 NUEPA study on teachers reiterates the nexus between teacher unions, local administrators and political representatives that bias most decisions, including recruitment, transfers and promotions.⁹

4. Absence of performance-linked incentives:

means there are few inducements for teachers to excel and self-motivate. Raises are linked to Pay Commission recommendations and applied to all teachers, while promotions are driven by years of service and recommendations of school principals. Performance evaluations such as school inspections, annual reports of school principals are not linked to individual development needs or in-service training received. Similarly, there are few avenues for recognising and correcting low performance; non-increase in salary is used as a punitive measure only for extreme disciplinary issues.

...Systemic issues of DIET faculty recruitment, promotional avenues, career advancement issues, linking admissions into BTC with job assurance, government control and patronage over the BTC institutions form a web of conditions that give legitimacy and reinforcement to political interference. Elementary teacher training institutions thus become hubs of reinforcing a culture of status-quo and resistance to change.

-Critical Systemic Concerns discussed in MHRD report on Teacher Education in UP

⁷ Karthik Muralidharan, *Study in UP, 2005-06*.

⁸ McArthur Foundation, *Study in Rajasthan, 2006*.

⁹ Vimala Ramachandran, *NUEPA, 2008 study, 'Primary School Teachers: Twists and Turns of Everyday Life'*.

B. Low Economic Efficiency of Public Expenditure in Education

1. Despite increasing education spending, learning outcomes in India have not improved:

A 2009 study by Tara Iyer¹⁰ in 115 districts in India concluded that increased expenditure shows a 'mixed to positive' impact on enrolment rates and transition rates (from primary to upper primary) but no impact on learning outcomes. Accountability Initiative's research indicates that in the last 15 years, the central government's expenditure on education has increased over nine-fold, but "comparing per student costs and learning outcomes in government and private schools, indicates that, in every state, learning outcomes in private schools are better than the government schools, while per student spending is much lower as compared to government schools."¹¹ As a recent World Bank report observes, it is not about how much you spend but how efficiently and effectively you spend¹² - India doesn't spend the allocated amounts, and spends with little 'bang for the buck'.

2. There is consistent underutilisation of education budgets:

Particularly the *Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh*, a non-lapsable fund formed largely out of the education cess. Between 2009 and 2014, at best, government managed to spend 68% of funds collected through the education cess. Of this, 78% was spent on teacher and personnel salaries and 14% on infrastructure, whereas a meagre 5% was spent on quality of education. States, districts, and most importantly schools have little say in when and how the grants are to be utilised, and there are significant delays in fund disbursement.

3. There is consistent underutilisation of education budgets:

On account of large centrally managed education schemes such as SSA and *Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan* (RMSA). For example, the bulk of state budgets for elementary education are now used for paying teacher salaries (e.g., in Rajasthan, this accounts for over 90% of the total elementary education budget), leaving states entirely dependent on the SSA for non-wage related expenditure.

4. The budgeting process itself is flawed:

States are rarely given a budget envelope in advance of planning, and the final budget approved by Gol has little bearing on what states ask for - in some years the gap between demanded provision and actual allocation can be as much as 50%, leaving states with little incentive to articulate, measure, assess and remedy their real learning needs.

5. The budgeting process itself is flawed:

states struggle to hold on to decision-making power, and in the process many good ideas have failed to get implemented. More egregiously, central funding has entrenched a "one size fits all" approach where centralised norms undermine state-specific needs and priorities, and makes a focus on learning difficult. Building an outcome-focused system requires grappling with complex issues of curriculum design, pedagogical practice and teacher accountability systems, none of which are conducive to the one-size-fits-all centralised approach.

¹⁰ Tara Iyer, *Is Public Expenditure on Primary Education Effective? Evidence from Districts across India*, Duke University, 2009.

¹¹ Accountability Initiative in its 2014 report on Education Expenditure.

¹² *Spending More or Spending Better: Improving Education Financing in Indonesia*, Extended Executive Summary. World Bank, Jakarta, World Bank. 2013.

C. Expanding Private Schools amid Uncertain and Counter-productive Regulatory Framework

1. Increasing enrolments in unaided private schools is established as fact:

By ASER-2014 and U-DISE-2014 survey data. In states like UP and Haryana over 50% of children are enrolled in unaided private schools. Ernst & Young 2012 Report on K-12 education in India estimates that private school enrolments are increasing at a CAGR of 4% per year.

In Pakistan, the government has effectively engaged with affordable schools by providing them with certain concessions from standard recognition norms in return for commitment to quality education as reflected in third party assessments. In India, Punjab introduced the concept of Associated Schools for schools that could not get recognition until 10th standard. In both, cases representatives of affordable private schools were involved in developing regulations.

2. Of particular policy interest are Budget Private Schools that have emerged:

In all parts of the country over the last few decades. Most of these are unaided private schools, typically catering to low-income neighbourhoods, providing English medium education at fees ranging between Rs. 100-1500 per child per month. Budget Private Schools are criticised on account of their poor infrastructure, use of untrained teachers paid a fraction of public school teacher salaries, poor teaching practices and focus on English education, and a lack of accountability towards the government or parents (such as non-maintenance of financial records). The main criticism levied on these schools is that they operate without proper recognition.

3. Currently, the education policy does not sufficiently acknowledge the role and contribution of private schools in universalising elementary education:

And force-fits them into the structure of common schooling through stifling input-centric regulation. The current regulatory approach is unclear in its intention and relies on textbook compliance on inputs. It does a great disservice particularly to economically and socially weaker (ESW) parents who send their wards to these private schools, and who are making a conscious choice of not sending their children to government schools. In the current regulatory environment, it is nearly impossible to meet school recognition norms without political patronage or exceeding the affordability constraints of parents; as an unintended consequence, well-meaning and competent schools are shut out of the market.

4. The current regulatory approach relies on instruments such as fee caps, restrictions on medium of instruction, insistence on non-profit structure, and heavy requirements on inputs:

In Rajasthan for example, nearly 26,000 private schools qualify for 25% reservations under the RTE.¹³ Out of these, 21,000 schools charge fees lesser than government per child cost of Rs 17,500 per child per year. Yet the state government introduced fees control regulating what the schools can charge their students. In Karnataka, private schools are forced to use Kannada as a medium of instruction although Honourable Supreme Court has instructed state governments to allow parents to choose the medium of instruction for their children. In Punjab 1,196 such schools were closed down in 2013 on account of non-compliance to infrastructure and input norms of RTE, and in Haryana notices were issued to 1,376 schools.¹⁴ All of this creates an environment of regulatory uncertainty and results in local rent seeking, not to mention distress to children and parents alike.

5. Poor parents choose these private schools over government schools with an aspiration:

To provide English medium education to their children. Studies conducted by James Tooley in Hyderabad and Punjab report that parents also prefer these schools owing to easier access to school teachers and principals, faster grievance redress, and visibility into children's academic progress. In a democracy, it is ironic that the voter's political choice is sovereign, but the education choice of the same voter gets scant respect.

¹³ Out of approximately 33,000 private unaided schools.

¹⁴ In the case of Haryana, a HC judgement ruled that these schools cannot be closed down unless government provides an alternative to children currently enrolled there. Secondly, the HC specifically asked the government to identify areas of non-compliance in individual cases as against closing down thousands of schools at a time.



3

WHAT WOULD A GOOD POLICY ACHIEVE?

For our Education Policy to be impactful, it will need to learn from our previous efforts, and be rooted on the evidence of what has worked. It will need to close the gap between 'Legislation, Roadmap, Implementation', the three parts to any successful government action, and converge around a central idea guiding decision-making and initiatives at every rung. Its broad purpose should be clear, well-defined, and results-oriented. The New Education Policy will need to set up a system that delivers learning outcomes to large numbers of people, particularly the poor, encourages diversity in learning and teaching, spurts curiosity and discovery, and ensures functionality and skills for 21st century jobs.

Making a sound policy choice is an exercise in matching evidence of what has worked and what is being desired with available and feasible alternatives. Policies, institutions, processes, and inputs interact with each other in complex and fast-moving ways. Every single policy choice has practical consequences, some desirable and some not so. A good policy aligns public policy goals and stakeholder incentives. It will avoid privileging unintended beneficiaries over intended beneficiaries, and prevent entrenchment of vested interests. It will also deliver value for taxpayer money, allow for innovation, and help frame an effective administrative mechanism.

A well-drafted New Education Policy should help:

- make government responsible for all children and all schools.
- put students and their interests at the centre and not the comfort of those who run the education system.
- achieve the highest degree of decentralisation and depoliticisation.
- make learning achievements and holistic development among the students the core focus.
- build a governance structure that promotes autonomy and innovation with clear accountability.

BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A RESULTS-ORIENTED NEW EDUCATION POLICY

A. An Idea Shift: Paradigm Change instead of Intensification of Effort

One approach is to continue intensifying the resource investment into providing education without paying adequate attention to learning assessments, school accountability and a growing move to private schools. Global research has shown that inputs in education including government expenditure have little connection with learning outcomes. Studies suggest little to no link between increasing the budgetary allocation and performance of students. There is not enough reason to believe that more of the same will bring about different and better results. Instead, India should choose to jumpstart system-wide education reform and build links in delivery across different levels of education. This will require applying new public management strategies to education, away from 'mission mode' to systemic transformation - building capacity, incentives and tools for quality improvement, insisting on innovative and effective delivery, monitoring performance and accountability, and targeting resource to individual students. A central pillar of this shift is to choose whether the government should 'make or source', and to what extent. With either choice, a focus on learning outcome improvement, parental and student choice, and school improvement through competition, autonomy and performance will help create an enabling environment for quality education delivery.

B. System Shift: Evolve towards Decentralisation, Competition and Parental Choice

For year-on-year learning outcome improvements, we need to build an education system that incentivises accountability and performance, irrespective of the school type. Making strides on both counts will need a shift away from centralised planning to decentralisation, more competition and parental choice.

First, states currently have a large budget spending and execution role in education that should be backed by decentralisation of decisions on syllabus, teacher service norms, and use of ICT. The FFC is devolving spending to the states further; the NEP should in this spirit allow states to develop distinct accountability and pedagogical strategies.

Second, government needs to separate its role as provider and financier of education from its mandate as a regulator. Conflicting responsibilities has resulted in a lack of independent and neutral monitoring of government and private schools, favourable treatment of government schools, and missing accountability in the financing of education. These three roles should be separated and in an ideal scenario handled by three independent entities.

¹⁵ Such as: Ambrish Dongre, Vibhu Tewary, 'Has the relationship between Allocations and Outcomes broken?; Do schools get their money?', 2012.

Third, government and private schools should be treated on equal footing, held to high standards and rigour, and made to compete for parent and child preferences. Using competition constructively will lift outcomes for the whole system. Alongside, the government should equip parents to make better decisions through instruments such as access to finance, school rating systems, independent learning assessments, and allowing for more schools to offer differentiated options to children with different abilities.

C. In-School Shift: Encouraging School Autonomy, Leadership and Customised Teaching

India needs to top its unprecedented enrolment gains with an **emphasis on raising learning levels, checking dropouts, and using new models and technology to improve access and delivery of education**. Both public and private schools need to emphasise a better educational experience in the classrooms, moving away from literacy toward the acquisition of skills and competencies that will increase economic productivity and growth. This requires an unwavering commitment from parents, teachers, school principals, administrators and policy makers alike toward the children of India.

A better and consistent in-classroom experience is key to checking dropouts and ensuring better transition rates; this will only come about through diversified and innovative schools, each catering to individual child needs, using a variety of teaching and learning methods, and operating under different management and governance arrangements.

Autonomy Contracts in Portugal: Portugal recently introduced autonomy contracts to formalise and define the scope of the autonomy yielded to the schools in line with their specific conditions and their performance on agreed targets. The aim is to implement a process that gradually increases autonomy of schools, in different phases, in line with achievement in meeting their unique challenges.

The common schooling system dictates a top-down cookie-cutter approach towards education; while we cannot underestimate the role of common minimum standards in achieving results at scale, schools need to be empowered to customise learning and shift away from centrally developed syllabi, teacher qualifications, use of technology merely as a teaching tool and unsubstantiated belief in the role of inputs.

The current regulatory framework for private schools and the central and constraining dicta for public schools limit the opportunities for school principals to adapt to the local context, and make the most of their resources. Charter schooling is one example for developing

impactful community schools that empower school leaders to innovate and deliver while ensuring accountability to parents.

Similarly, the current policy for use of technology in education is limiting as it largely looks at technology as yet another input into education. Technology in education has gone much beyond classrooms and gameification to include other areas such as teacher training and certification, school management, assessments, and tracking of students. Teacher autonomy in syllabus delivery for example could encourage newer ways to integrate technology into classroom activity.

D. Minimum Government, Maximum Governance in Education: Key Values, Principles and Policy Suggestions as per the MHRD NEP Themes

The crisis of outcomes in education is a direct result of good intentions of a large government presence matched with an improper meta-structure for effective governance. To realign incentives and place premium on performance, the New Education Policy needs to be grounded in market values, sound principles, and good governance practices.

Three Values

CHOICE & Competition

Article 26 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights states that parents have a prior right to choose the type of education their children receive. We must design a framework that respects and enables all stakeholders to exercise the power of choice - for parents, students, teachers, principals and schools. Funding students and not schools is the best method to provide choice to parents and students. The flipside of choice is competition: all schools - government and private - compete to attract and retain all students, those who pay for themselves as well as those whose fees are paid through public funds.

AUTONOMY & Accountability

To make the education system student-centric by offering them choices, it is imperative that all providers of education at all levels - from teachers, principals to regulators - have the highest degree of autonomy. The principal should have the autonomy to be a genuine leader of the school. This autonomy would be tied to accountability by focusing on outcomes and not inputs. Student feedback and learning should be an important part of accountability.

INNOVATIONS & Communities

The education system, so critical to individuals, economy and society, has seen very little innovation. Disruptive technologies, blended learning, gamification, mobile apps that can help meet the delivery challenges as well as personalise education are critical. At the same time, we need to think about a completely different education system for the 21st century than just re-engineering the 20th century factory model of education. Innovation would occur and sustain if embedded in relevant communities of students, parents, teachers and principals. The first innovation would have to be in building these communities.

Five Principles

Fund students, not schools

Government funding in education needs to take a new approach in which the unit of fund allocation and spending is a 'child' and not a 'school.' Currently the government budgets on the basis of historical costs and routes funds through education departments. School vouchers, direct cash transfers, scholarships, education credit accounts could all serve as instruments to effect per-child funding.

In the current system, schools are accountable to the government and not to the parents, since funds come from the government. In the per-child funding model, funds are allocated and disbursed directly to students, and students pay for their own education. Schools are thus obligated to be accountable to students and parents. If the student does not like the school, she can take the voucher to another school. Under the voucher system, the money follows the student. In addition to bringing more accountability and transparency in expenditure, funding students also facilitates healthy competition between different schools to attract and retain more students, with the net outcome being improved quality of education.

Track outcomes, not inputs

The current approach to school regulation is largely inputs-driven. The focus of recognition and regulation is on infrastructure, teacher salaries, and compliance with various input-related government norms. Many of these norms have little connection with learning outcomes of students. India must introduce a system of regulation where learning outcomes become the key factor in regulation of schools, both government and private. Gujarat is one example where school recognition and regulation are driven by learning outcomes.

Outcomes-based regulation does not mean no input norms at all; it means higher emphasis on learning outcomes in comparison to input norms. Once these norms are established, they should be applied uniformly to ensure that public and private schools in the system are regulated on the same grounds with consequences for non-compliance being the same for all. Third-party assessments should be utilised in identifying school performance and student learning outcomes. Third-party assessments can help validate per-child learning and cost that can provide important cues for higher-level policy decisions and classroom-level education delivery strategies to be executed by teachers and principals. The National Achievement Survey (NAS) is an important tool to move toward a system centred on outcomes; alongside localised frequent third-party assessments, NAS should be expanded to cover all schools and students.

11th Five Year Plan: **Autonomy is the sine qua non of excellence.** The Plan's recommendations on higher education autonomy should now be applied to school education, both public and private, allowing for institutional autonomy in academic matters, independent but accountable governance arrangements, and financial autonomy.

Encourage innovation, not conformity

Parents make education choices on behalf of their children based on a number of criteria including but not limited to performance and learning outcomes. These include cost, curricular and delivery design, teaching style, child needs, and overall school philosophy. The current common schooling approach, in an attempt to level the playing field for all students, stifles innovation and diversity.

Most schools impart factory-style education, since the recognition is contingent on following conventional input and curricular norms. By creating universal strictures around formal schooling, India has reduced options for skills-based education, value- and faith-based education, special needs education, peer-driven schooling, or home schooling or free-range schooling.

The assumption is that higher income parents are capable of making clear conscious school choices, yet diverse schools are stifled from emerging and catering to parents who may want to break from the conventional mould. At the same time, there is an underestimation of the ability of poor parents to understand differences across schools and prevent market innovation from serving them as well.

First, to encourage informed choice, the government should collate and make publicly available information on various schooling options and relative performance of schools, including performance records. Second, government should allow parents to choose schools, by augmenting purchasing power for those whose choices are constrained by affordability. Third, by framing principles-based regulation that focus on rectifying asymmetries of information, ensuring consumer protection, and demanding minimum learning achievement, the government can stimulate a diverse and interesting education system. Fourth, the 'fund, function, functionary' norm clearly separating the government's regulatory responsibilities must be articulated and applied in the New Education Policy.

Promote autonomy, not control

In the current system school teachers, principals and school management committees have very little autonomy in terms of planning, budget and actual delivery of education in classrooms which include pedagogical decisions, local contextual application and use of

teaching aids. The NEP should devolve decision-making to school principals and teachers and give them specific control over resources such as school finances to be able to innovate and improve their schools and classrooms respectively. Principals in particular should become leaders of their schools and play a pivotal role defining and driving quality of education in their schools. In the late 1980s and early 1990s several countries across Europe introduced autonomy in public and private schools. The Belgian Constitution recognised Freedom of Education, giving room to schools to experiment with teaching methods, and human and facilities management practices. Similarly, Spain, France and UK took measures to shift control of administrative decisions including financial and human resource management from local administrative bodies to schools. Portugal introduced Autonomy Contracts between the Ministry of Education, Municipal Body and the School where all parties agreed upon conditions of school autonomy and expected performance standards.

Reward performance, not compliance

Currently, it is mandatory for a school to be a non-profit entity in India. While in most states, unaided private schools pay electricity, water and other utility charges at commercial rates, they are not allowed to make a profit since education is a non-profit activity by law.

Education should be considered as an important component of the service industry similar to health, water and electricity where entry of for-profit entities has brought immense benefits to all citizens, in terms of both access and quality of services enjoyed. The idea is not that all schools must become for-profit entities but the option to choose between a non-profit and for-profit model should be available to existing and future schools.

Many countries have had no ban on for-profit education and over the last few decades several countries have introduced for-profit education. Latin American countries such as Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Argentina have seen advantages of such schools and colleges. There are currently 2,000 for-profit educational institutions in Brazil which cater to children from all socio-economic strata. Government supports children from low-income families through scholarships to attend for-profit schools. China has several highly ranked for-profit universities.

School Leadership for School Excellence: Two large-scale school transformation programs, School Excellence Program of Mumbai Municipal Corporation and Quality Improvement Program of Haryana, have placed School Leadership as a central intervention. School Leadership builds skills of principals to guide the schools towards better performance. Alongside, systemic support is offered in the form of greater administrative autonomy in utilizing budgets and in developing and executing school development plans in coordination with school management committees.

CCS Policy Suggestions as per the MHRD NEP Themes: Minimum Government, Maximum Governance in Education

Theme
No.

Reform Suggestions

1



Ensuring learning outcomes in elementary education

Effective school recognition process:

- Same recognition standards across government and private schools.
- Require both types of schools to comply or face improvement plans, and phased closure proceedings.
- Apply 'ease of doing business' principles to private schools and remove barriers for investment in education.
- Recognition norms to adopt hybrid system stressing 30% on input compliance and 70% on learning achievement.
- Graded recognition to allow for different types of schools to incubate.
- End license-inspector raj by focussing on risk-based regulation for schools.

Autonomy for government schools:

- Treat school principals as leaders; local recruitment of teachers.
- Devolve spending decisions to school leaders and develop school governance structure to monitor spending.
- Allow school management committees (SMCs) to have review powers of administrative and financial decisions.
- Empower school leaders and SMCs to participate in creating annual school development plans.

Per student funding:

- Establish enrolment-based annual allocation.
- Use instruments such as vouchers / scholarships and education credit accounts to allow parents and children to choose.
- Focus on administrative efficiency of 25% reservation.

Flow across levels of learning:

- Integrate early childhood education into the formal school system and implement ECE curriculum.
- Move beyond a curriculum-centred approach to education, to include children's physical, emotional, and social well-being.

2



Extending outreach of secondary and senior secondary education

Targeting and incentives for better transition:

- Use excess capacity in private secondary schools instead of building new government schools.
- Give vouchers, cash transfers, scholarships to students graduating from class 8 in government schools.
- Replicate and scale secondary education voucher and models such as in Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Use of PPPs:

- Commissioning more schools to be managed under the PPP model.
- Allow bids from private individuals / groups to manage underperforming government-funded schools.

Nudge for behaviour change responses:

- Address the 'push out' factors: poor quality, in different teaching, and irrelevant curricula.
- Involve wider community in addressing societal 'pull out' factors, by educating and involving parents and building a support network for first generation learners.

Theme
No.

Reform Suggestions

3



Revamping teacher education for quality teachers

Performance standards and requirements for teachers and principals:

- Invite private certification standards for teaching.
- Link teacher performance standards to budgets and training.
- Activate an outcomes-based school leader and teacher competency framework.

Strengthen recruitment, and continuous professional development:

- Strengthen teacher preparation through curriculum reform, consolidation and accreditation of teacher education institutes.
- Encourage local recruitment of teachers by making changes to NCTE guidelines for recruitment.
- Allow for teacher autonomy to develop curriculum and pedagogy and innovative classroom practices.
- Expand training to include psychometrics and alternate learning methods within their schools.
- Institute in-service training and mentorship for school leaders, particularly on using budgets, making decisions on school practices, and encouraging innovation.
- Train leaders and teachers to use data generated by learning assessments, to improve the quality of pedagogy within their classrooms and schools.

4



School standards, school assessments and school management systems

Separating regulation, financing and delivery in the government domain:

- Institute third-party assessments for regular monitoring and school recognition.
- Allow schools to choose their structure and model, whether to be for-profit or not-for-profit.
- Re-align complex regulatory framework of rules, notifications, and judgments from multiple stakeholders with goals and objectives.

Accountability and transparency:

- Increase school accountability through a school evaluation framework.
- Encourage data-driven decision-making through robust data systems and capacity building
- Select school principals on merit and train them for leadership.
- Empower SMCs to play a meaningful role in school accountability.

5



Reforming school examination systems

Move from examination to testing:

- Implement standardised student learning assessments to track every child's progress by reforming NAS.
- Use assessments to generate a transition from 'learning for testing' to 'testing for learning'.
- Ensure testing happens across the education system--in both public and private schools.
- Allow any student to register and write the CBSE board examination.
- Scale and replicate Gujarat's third-party assessments models.

Theme No.

Reform Suggestions

6



Enabling inclusive education - Education of girls, SCs, STs, Minorities and children with special needs

Implementation of schemes:

- Offer disadvantaged students aspirational schools including boarding schools, cover the cost of boarding if they stay with a relative and not in a formal hostel.
- Focus on effective implementation of policies/schemes that encourage inclusive education e.g. RTE Sec 12(1)(c).
- Strengthen special education schools and assure their availability at reasonable distances.
- Emphasise supplementary and remedial instruction given inequalities in learning, and diverse backgrounds, subsidise private tuition if necessary.
- Provide financial assistance through publicly procured private services for helping first-generation learners, students from economically and socially disadvantaged backgrounds, children with special needs and girls.

7



New knowledge, pedagogies and approaches for teaching of STEM in school education

- Encourage high quality contextualised digital content.
- Develop innovative tech-enabled learning models for delivering high-quality learning at scale.
- Train teachers and school principals in using technology effectively.
- Support mobile science labs and teacher training programs for STEM.

8



Accelerating rural literacy with special emphasis on SCs, STs, and Minorities through adult education and national open schooling systems

Encourage supplementary and remedial instruction given the large inequalities in learning, and diversity in student backgrounds:

- Revitalize National Open School to improve its quality and brand, particularly to ensure wider outreach of post-elementary and vocational education, and open CBSE board exam to all students.
- Involve at least one parent in remedial education of the student where the parent also gains literacy and numeracy.
- Expand scholarships for secondary and vocational education to a point where no student is denied access for not having money to pay for it.

9



Strengthening vocational education

Markets for skills:

- Replicating pilots of skills vouchers from Maharashtra.
- Create 'matching' portals based on the Gujarat model to encourage information sharing and performance of institutes.
- Expand vocational education to the secondary schooling level.
- Option to pursue vocational education after primary education.

Theme Reform Suggestions

No.

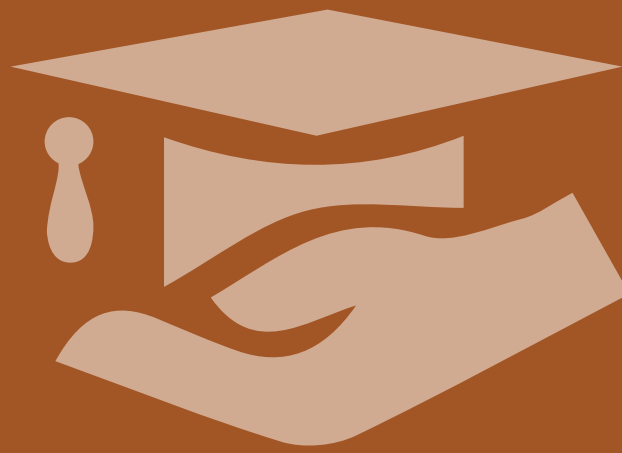
10



Promotion of information and communication systems in school and adult education

Technology to aid monitoring and evaluation:

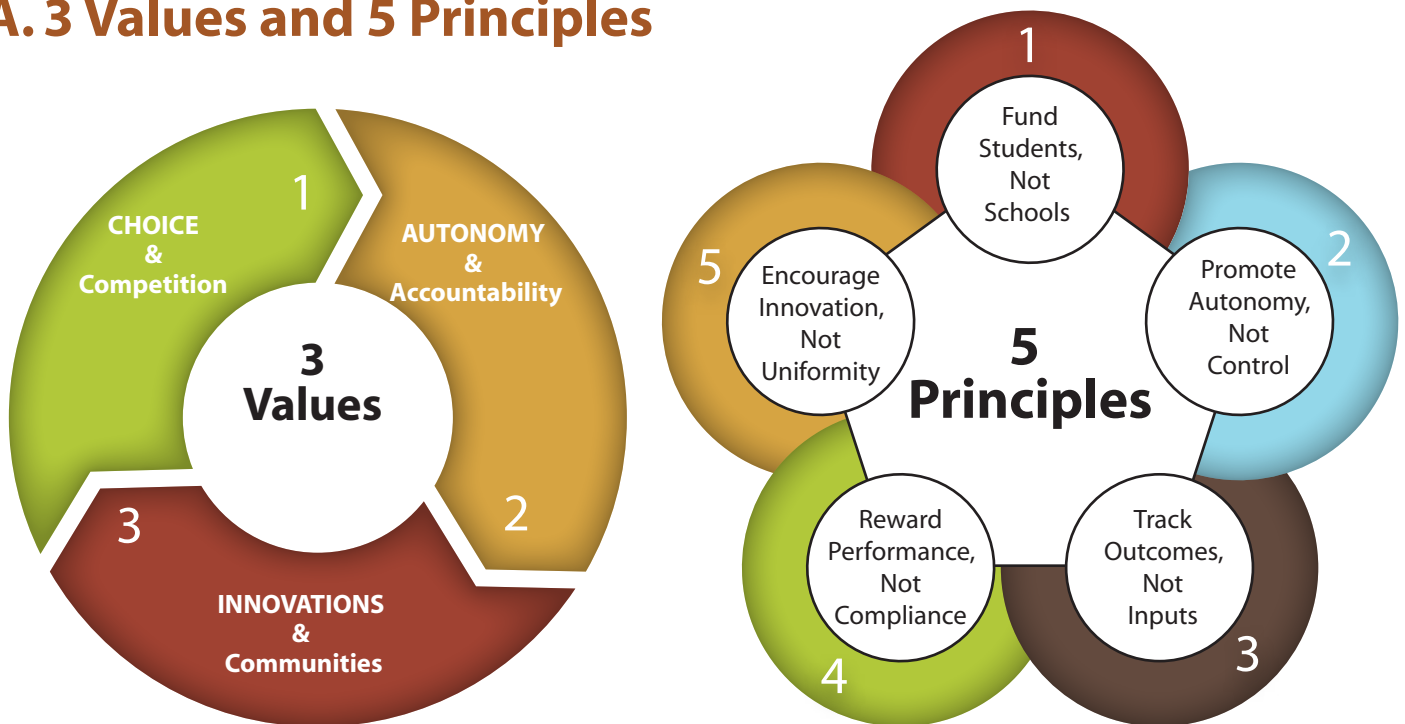
- ☺ Make all education data available in the public domain, and link education data to broader socio-economic data collected across the country.
- ☺ Develop dashboards and management information systems using this data.
- ☺ Allow schools to have access to technology budget from which to purchase reliable hardware and internet connectivity.



4

CCS EDUCATION POLICY REFORM IDEAS

A. 3 Values and 5 Principles



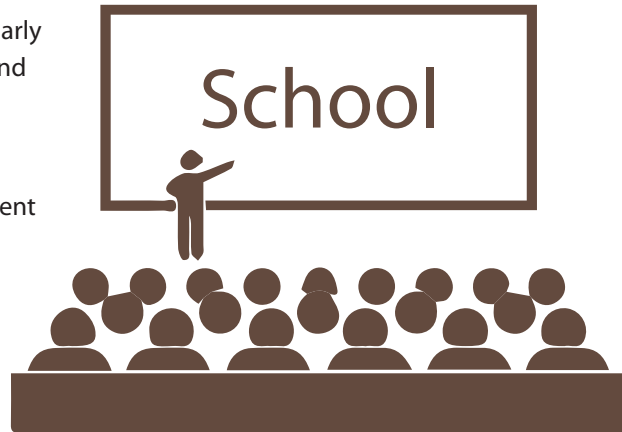
B. 10 Reforms in the Education System

- Separate government's role as regulator, financier and provider of education.
- Use tools of per-student funding such as Vouchers, Direct Cash Transfers, Scholarships to improve efficiency and accountability of public spending and provide more choice to the parents.
- Institute learning outcomes-based school recognition and regulation of both government and private schools.
- Conduct National Achievement Survey (NAS) every year for both government and private schools and have SCERTs (State Council of Educational Research and Training) do diagnostic learning assessment at regular intervals.
- Make district the basic unit of education governance and revise the roles of Beat, Zone and District Education Officers to reorient School Inspection and Support System towards learning outcomes.
- Create centralised district- and state-level MIS for data-based administration and put information on finances, teachers, performance of all schools in public domain in a form that parents can understand and use.
- Establish independent education dispute resolution tribunal with a robust online grievance redressal system with a call centre.
- Give unique ID to all students, teachers and principals and maintain online portfolio of their work, trainings and performance.
- Allow innovations in education delivery mechanisms through models such as blended learning, MOOCs, Magnet Schools for gifted as well as challenged students, support for Budget Private Schools linked to quality of education, Charter or PPP Schools and for-profit schools.
- Participate in all future rounds of PISA and TIMSS.



C. 6 Reforms for Schools and Students

1. Integrate pre-schooling in the formal schooling system, particularly for government schools.
2. Ensure every student is able to read and write by Class 3.
3. Revitalize National Open School to improve its quality and brand, particularly to ensure wider outreach of post-elementary and vocational education, and open CBSE board exam to all students.
4. Introduce career counseling and skill development courses.
5. Formalise the use of feedback from post-primary students in the assessment of teachers, principals and schools.
6. For the 25% seats in private schools, use Centralized Online Admission Process, make the calculation of per student expenditure transparent and give re-imbursment to parents, and not to schools.



D. 6 Reforms for Teachers and Principals

1. Strengthen the role and powers of school principals to make them genuine leaders of their schools.
2. In the annual budget, allocate full grant amount to schools, including for vacant positions and empower principals and SMCs to utilise the grant to achieve the school targets.
3. Make selection / hiring of teachers and principals based on demonstrated competencies and not just degrees and seniority.
4. Announce job vacancies and offer positions for teachers and principals at the school level, even though the interview and selection process is conducted at the district or state level.
5. Introduce a robust system of Teacher and Principal Performance Assessment and Incentives focused on measurable targets.
6. Provide personalized and need-based coaching (not mass training) to teachers and principals, offer online, on-demand modules for training and certification and develop platforms for regular sharing and learning from each other.