Transforming Education in India

A Policy Framework for Rethinking Access, Equity, and Inclusion in Alignment with NEP 2020 and the Vision of Viksit Bharat@2047

Md Asraul Hoque* and Krishnan Chalil**

Abstract

India's educational transformation is central to achieving Vision Viksit Bharat@2047, with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 serving as a cornerstone for reforms in access, equity and inclusivity. Despite advancements in enrolment, disparities in infrastructure, digital access and financial allocations hinder progress, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. The fluctuating funding for key programmes, such as Samagra Shiksha and PM POSHAN raises concerns about sustainability, while the reduction of initiatives supporting female and minority education contradicts inclusivity goals. Strengthening digital infrastructure, public-private partnerships and competency-based learning is essential for bridging gaps and ensuring quality education nationwide. Drawing from global models, Finland's low-stakes assessments and Singapore's digital literacy programmes offer valuable insights but require contextual adaptation to India's socio-economic realities. A data-driven, policy-oriented approach with incremental benchmarks is necessary to track progress, refine strategies and allocate resources effectively. Sustained investment and targeted interventions will be critical in building a resilient education system that fosters innovation, social mobility and economic growth. By ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities, India can cultivate a skilled workforce and establish a globally competitive, self-reliant nation by 2047.

Keywords: *Vision Viksit Bharat@2047, National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, inclusive education, educational equity, Samagra Shiksha, PM POSHAN, global education models, competency-based learning, sustainable development, social mobility*

*(*ICSSR Doctoral Fellow*) Ph.D. Awarded, Department of Development Studies, School of Social Science and Policy, Central University of South Bihar, Gaya, Bihar – 824236

**Department of Development Studies, Ex-Dean, School of Social Science and Policy, Central University of South Bihar (Gaya), Bihar – 824236

Introduction

India's education system plays a pivotal role in realising Vision Viksit Bharat@2047, which envisions a self-reliant and globally competitive nation. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a major shift, addressing structural disparities, enhancing digital infrastructure, and promoting inclusive learning (Tilak and Choudhury, 2021). While enrolment rates have improved, challenges, such as rural-urban divides, gender disparities and financial inconsistencies persist, limiting equitable access to quality education (Varghese, 2018). A data-driven approach is crucial to bridge these gaps and align education with socio-economic needs (Aithal and Aithal, 2020).

The NEP 2020 emphasises competency-based learning, skill development and multilingual education, moving away from rote memorisation. However, its success depends on sustained financial support and effective implementation. Programmes like Samagra Shiksha and PM POSHAN improve access, yet budget fluctuations hinder infrastructure, teacher training and student support (Singh et al., 2022). While institutions like Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas enhance quality education, the reduction of initiatives supporting female and minority education contradicts inclusivity goals (Tilak, 2020). Targeted financial interventions, equitable resource distribution, and public-private partnerships are necessary to expand digital access and improve learning outcomes.

Global models offer insights into policy implementation, but require contextual adaptation. Finland's low-stakes assessments could reduce exam stress, while Singapore's digital literacy programmes align with India's tech-driven education vision (Williams et al., 2022). However, socio-economic diversity, linguistic barriers and digital accessibility must be addressed to integrate global best practices effectively. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed deep digital divides, underscoring the need for investments in digital infrastructure, teacher training and affordable online learning resources (Wright et al., 2018). Expanding technology-driven education through targeted policies is essential for equitable learning opportunities.

Achieving Vision Viksit Bharat@ 2047 requires systematic five-year benchmarks to track progress. Key indicators, such as enrolment, retention, digital adoption and learning outcomes must be monitored (Tilak, 2023). AI-driven analytics and real-time data systems can help identify gaps and optimise resource allocation (Rani, 2013). Public-private collaborations can strengthen the implementation of education, especially in rural areas. Sustained investments, inclusive policies, and adaptive learning strategies will be

critical in fostering innovation, social mobility and economic growth (Tilak, 2018). By prioritising education, India can develop a skilled workforce, driving national progress and global competitiveness.

Objectives

1. Assess the impact of NEP 2020 on access, equity and inclusion, and its alignment with Vision Viksit Bharat@2047.
2. Evaluate funding trends and policy implementation in key educational schemes, identifying gaps in financial sustainability, resource allocation and infrastructure development.
3. Examine the role of digital infrastructure and public-private partnerships in reducing educational disparities and expanding access to quality learning.
4. Analyse global education models and propose data-driven policy recommendations for a resilient, future-ready Indian education system.

Section A: Historical Context and Policy Evolution

India's education policies have evolved through distinct stages aimed at expanding access, inclusivity and quality. The National Policy on Education (NPE) of 1968 marked the first comprehensive framework, emphasising standardised and accessible primary education to lay the foundation for universal access. However, limited resources and implementation challenges hindered its reach. The NPE 1986, later revised in 1992, expanded on these goals by focusing on reducing dropout rates and addressing educational inequalities (Aithal and Aithal, 2020). While this period saw an increased focus on marginalised communities, socio-economic and regional disparities largely remained unaddressed. A major shift occurred with the Right to Education (RTE) Act of 2009, which enshrined education as a fundamental right for children aged 6 to 14 years. The RTE mandated free and compulsory education, introduced quality standards and established protection against discrimination, aiming to promote inclusivity across socio-economic backgrounds. Despite its intentions, the RTE faced limitations due to inadequate funding, infrastructure, and teacher training, particularly affecting rural and under-resourced areas (Varghese, 2018).

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks the latest evolution, designed to meet contemporary challenges through a holistic, flexible and technology-driven approach. NEP 2020 emphasises experiential learning, early childhood education, skill development and inclusivity for differently-abled students. It also seeks to bridge the digital divide with digital initiatives and supports multilingual education to embrace India's linguistic diversity.

However, for NEP 2020's vision to succeed, consistent funding and resources are crucial for lasting impact. Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain, especially in funding, infrastructure and inclusivity. Persistent regional and quality disparities, as well as challenges like limited rural resources, the digital divide and gender biases, continue to limit equitable access (Anderson, 2018). These issues underscore the need for policies that are adaptable, financially robust, and focused on equitable resource distribution and technology integration to make quality education universally accessible (Fairclough, 2013). Achieving Vision Viksit Bharat@2047 will require a renewed commitment to address these enduring gaps through an adaptive policy framework that builds on past lessons, creating an education system that supports a developed and equitable India by 2047.

Section B: The State of Education in India: Current Analysis of Public Expenditure

To meet the goals of access, equity and inclusivity in education by 2047, sustained and significant investment is required. A commitment to increase funding to the recommended global standards of 3–4 per cent of GDP is necessary to address regional gaps, improve digital infrastructure and ensure that marginalised communities are adequately supported.

Table 1: Sector-wise public expenditure on elementary education as percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for States/UTs and Centre in India (2005–2006 to 2020–2021)

Year	Expenditure (₹ in Crore) – States/UTs	Expenditure (₹ in Crore) – Centre	Total Expenditure (₹ in Crore)	Expenditure as % of GDP – States/ UTs	Expenditure as % of GDP – Centre	Total Expenditure as % of GDP
2005–2006 (Actual)	40,241.17	12,481.20	52,722.41	1.23	0.38	1.61
2006–2007 (Actual)	44,561.82	17,501.50	62,063.30	1.18	0.46	1.64
2007–2008 (Actual)	51,403.56	18,122.70	69,526.25	1.12	0.40	1.52
2008–2009 (Actual)	60,341.66	19,972.25	80,313.91	1.14	0.38	1.51

2010–2011 (Actual)	92,337.49	31,213.32	1,23,550.81	1.27	0.43	1.70
2011–2012 (Actual)	1,13,170.83	35,993.94	1,49,164.77	1.30	0.41	1.71
2012–2013 (Actual)	1,21,151.37	38,324.94	1,59,476.31	1.22	0.39	1.60
2013–2014 (Actual)	1,38,053.48	44,096.93	1,82,150.40	1.23	0.39	1.62
2014–2015 (Actual)	1,71,037.28	54,726.13	2,25,763.41	1.37	0.44	1.81
2015–2016 (Actual)	2,04,244.77	60,103.77	2,64,348.54	1.48	0.44	1.92
2016–2017 (Actual)	2,11,694.28	59,792.19	2,71,486.47	1.38	0.39	1.76
2017–2018 (Actual)	2,17,766.05	57,306.47	2,75,072.52	1.27	0.34	1.61
2018–2019 (Actual)	2,29,694.20	61,053.73	2,90,747.93	1.22	0.32	1.54
2019–2020 (BE)	2,99,344.29	86,048.08	3,85,392.37	1.47	0.42	1.89
2019–2020 (RE)	2,79,823.34	74,452.80	3,54,276.14	1.39	0.37	1.76
2020–2021 (BE)	3,07,736.64	84,178.50	3,91,915.14	1.55	0.43	1.98

Key Notes: BE = Budget Estimates, RE = Revised Estimates, the data represents total public expenditure on elementary education as a percentage of GDP. Expenditure includes spending by States/UTs and the Central Government. Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The data in Table 1 show sector-wise public expenditure on elementary education as a percentage of GDP from 2005–2006 to 2020–2021 reveals both progress and challenges in India's educational funding. State and UT contributions remain significantly higher than that of the

central government, underscoring a decentralised approach. Total expenditure on elementary education grew modestly from 1.61 per cent of GDP in 2005–2006 to 1.98 per cent in 2020–2021, with fluctuations—peaking at 1.92 per cent in 2015–2016, followed by declines. Though recent years show a slight rise, reaching 1.98 per cent in 2020–2021, this still falls short of global benchmarks recommending 3–4 per cent of GDP for education. Addressing this gap is crucial for India's Vision Viksit Bharat@2047. Sustained investment will be essential to bridge regional disparities, strengthen digital infrastructure and support marginalised communities. Only with consistent financial commitment, India can ensure access, equity and quality in education, paving the way for a developed nation by 2047.

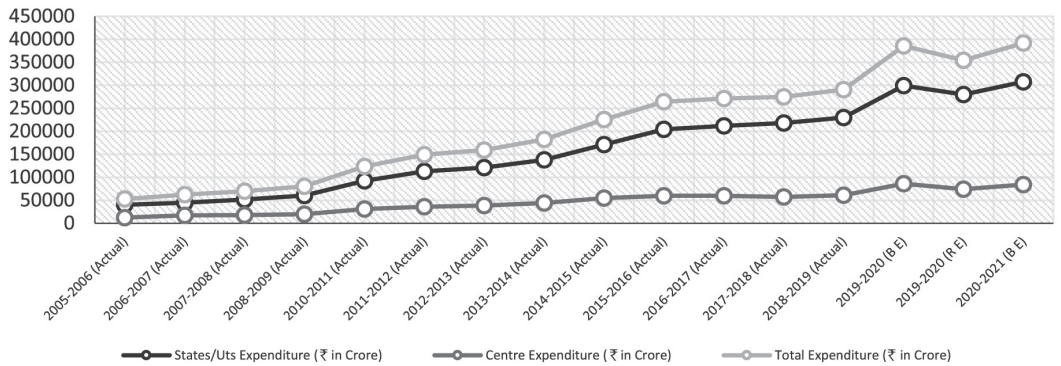


Fig. 1: Sector-wise Public Expenditure on Elementary Education as Percentage of GDP for States/UTs and Centre in India (2005–2006 to 2020–2021)

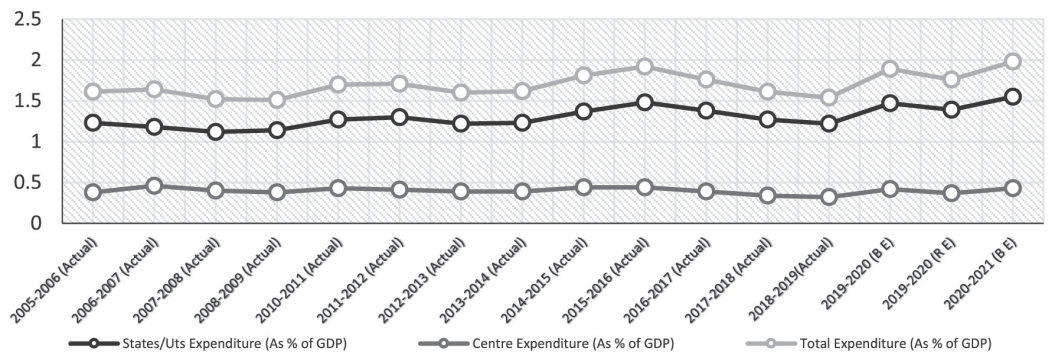


Fig. 2: Sector-wise Public Expenditure on Elementary Education as Percentage of GDP for States/UTs and Centre in India (2005–2006 to 2020–2021)

For Vision Viksit Bharat@2047 to be realised, there needs to be a steady increase in both state and central investments in secondary education. Adequate funding will be crucial to address regional disparities, ensure equitable access, and provide the necessary infrastructure and digital resources to enhance the quality of secondary education, particularly for marginalised communities.

Table 2: Sector-wise public expenditure on secondary education as percentage of GDP for States/UTs and Centre in India (2005–2006 to 2020–2021)

Year	Expenditure (₹ in Crore) – States/UTs	Expenditure (₹ in Crore) – Centre	Total Expenditure (₹ in Crore)	Expenditure as % of GDP – States/ UTs	Expenditure as % of GDP– Centre	Total Expenditure % of GDP
2005–2006 (Actual)	27,076.77	2,143.35	29,220.12	0.83	0.07	0.89
2006–2007 (Actual)	29,967.66	2,009.06	31,976.72	0.79	0.05	0.85
2007–2008 (Actual)	33,228.43	2,577.51	35,805.94	0.73	0.06	0.78
2008–2009 (Actual)	42,147.59	3,684.14	45,831.73	0.79	0.07	0.86
2010–2011 (Actual)	64,220.73	7,137.63	71,358.36	0.89	0.10	0.98
2011–2012 (Actual)	75,510.30	10,062.61	85,572.91	0.86	0.12	0.98
2012–2013 (Actual)	80,075.82	9,862.27	89,938.10	0.81	0.10	0.90
2013–2014 (Actual)	94,939.21	12,135.54	1,07,074.74	0.85	0.11	0.95
2014–2015 (Actual)	1,07,128.86	15,634.07	1,22,762.94	0.86	0.13	0.98

2015–2016 (Actual)	1,24,080.05	18,560.07	1,42,640.12	0.90	0.13	1.04
2016–2017 (Actual)	1,38,557.52	20,561.33	1,59,118.85	0.90	0.13	1.03
2017–2018 (Actual)	1,51,052.24	22,692.32	1,73,744.56	0.88	0.13	1.02
2018–2019 (Actual)	1,72,053.11	21,399.45	1,93,452.56	0.91	0.11	1.02
2019–2020 (BE)	2,99,344.29	86,048.08	3,85,392.37	1.47	0.42	1.89
2019–2020 (RE)	1,85,765.47	17,043.22	2,02,808.69	0.93	0.08	1.01
2020–2021 (BE)	1,98,848.79	16,516.06	2,15,364.85	1.00	0.08	1.09

Key Notes: BE = Budget Estimates, RE = Revised Estimates, the data represents total public expenditure on secondary education as a percentage of GDP. Expenditure includes spending by States/UTs and the Central Government. Source: Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

Table 2 on secondary education expenditure as a percentage of GDP (2005–2006 to 2020–2021) shows a gradual increase, emphasising the need for greater investment to achieve Vision Viksit Bharat@2047. The data highlights that states and UTs consistently account for the majority of spending, with the contributions of the central government remaining limited at around 0.1 per cent of GDP. Expenditure rose significantly up to 2015–2016, reaching 1.04 per cent of GDP, indicating an increased focus on secondary education. However, post–2015, a decline in central funding introduced fluctuations, undermining the consistency needed for initiatives promoting access and inclusivity. Despite a projected increase to 1.09 per cent in 2020–2021, low central contributions limit improvements in quality, infrastructure and digital access—essential for underserved communities. Achieving Vision Viksit Bharat@2047 requires both state and central investments to grow consistently. Adequate funding will be crucial to equalise opportunities, bridge regional disparities and empower marginalised groups, building a robust secondary education system as a foundation for inclusive growth by 2047.

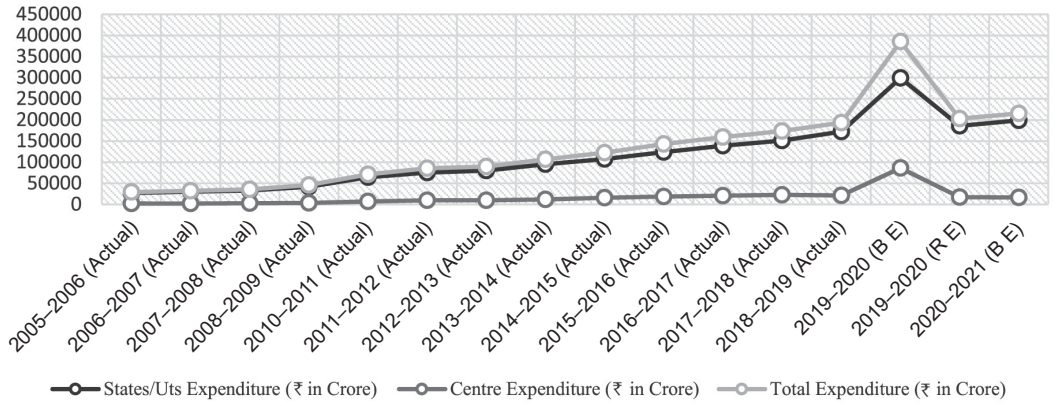


Fig. 3: Sector-wise Public Expenditure on Secondary Education as Percentage of GDP for States/UTs and Centre in India (2005–2006 to 2020–2021)

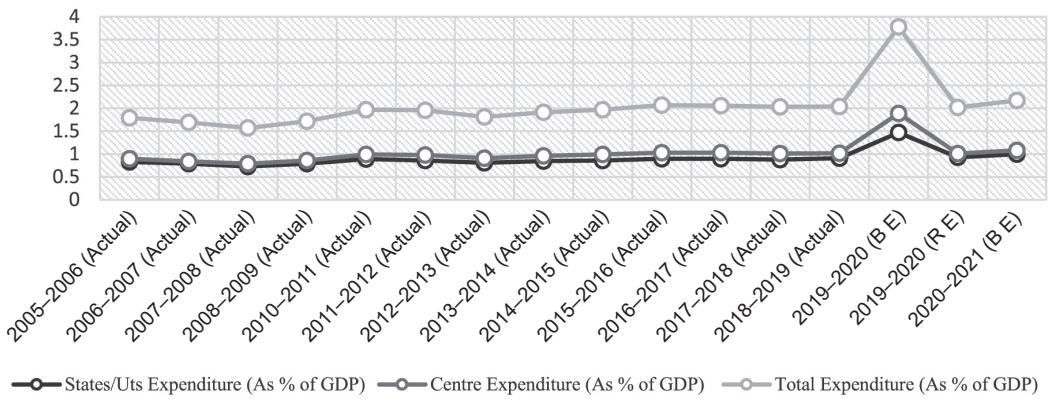


Fig. 4: Sector-wise Public Expenditure on Secondary Education as Percentage of GDP for States/UTs and Centre in India (2005–2006 to 2020–2021)

Section C: Budget Allocation for the Ministry of Education (Department of School Education and Literacy)

The budget allocations for the Ministry of Education's Department of School Education and Literacy from 2019–2020 to 2021–2022 show varied financial priorities, revealing both efforts and challenges in achieving equitable and inclusive education as per Vision Viksit Bharat@2047. Key highlights include:

Table 3: Budget allocations, net of recoveries and plan outlay for the Ministry of Education (Department of School Education and Literacy) in India (2019–2020 to 2021–2022)

(₹ in Crore)								
Particulars	**2019–2020 (Actual)**		**2020–2021 (Budget)**		**2020–2021 (Revised)**		**2021–2022 (Budget)**	
	Revenue	**Total**	**Revenue**	**Total**	**Revenue**	**Total**	**Revenue**	**Total**
National Award to Teachers	1.14	1.14	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Support for National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme	-	-	-	-	-	-	350	350
Support from Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	308.8	308.8	200	200	200	200	-	-
Cumulative National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme	331.26	331.26	373	373	350	350	350	350
Support from Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	4.14	4.14	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cumulative National Scheme for Incentive to Girl Child for Secondary Education	8.57	8.57	110	110	1	1	1	1

Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme (DHRUV)	-	-	10	10	0.5	0.5	10	10
Cumulative Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)	6331.4	6331.4	5516.5	5516.5	6437.68	6437.68	6800	6800
Cumulative Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)	3387.6	3387.6	3300	3300	3480	3480	3800	3800
National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)	276.05	276.05	300	300	389.92	389.92	500	500
Central Tibetan School Admnistration (CTSA)	61.25	61.25	66	66	69.19	69.19	70	70
Transfer to Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	-	-	5567.12	5567.12	5567.12	5567.12	7000	7000
Amount met from Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	-	-	–5567.12	–5567.12	–5567.12	–5567.12	–7000	-7000
Support from Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	3491.41	3491.41	5367.12	5367.12	3267.12	3267.12	-	-

Cumulative Samagra Shiksha	32376.52	32376.52	38750.5	38750.5	27957.32	27957.2	3105016	3105016
Cumulative National Education Mission	32376.52	32376.52	38860.5	38860.5	28077.57	28077.57	3130016	31300.16
Cumulative National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools	9699	9699	11000	11000	12900	12900	11500	11500
Appointment of Language Teachers	-	-	100	100	25	25	-	-
Education Scheme for Madrasas and Minorities	70.94	70.94	220	220	310.22	310.22	-	-

Abbreviation: IEBR: Internal and Extra Budgetary Resource Source: Budget Documents, the Ministry of Finance, Government of India

**Cumulative National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme: Includes National Award to Teachers, National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme, Support for National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme, Support from Gross Budgetary Support (GBS) and Support from Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh (MUSK).*

Cumulative National Scheme for Incentive to Girl Child for Secondary Education, Support for the Scheme, Support for GBS and Support from MUSK.

Cumulative Kendriya Vidyalaya Samiti (KVS) Includes KVS, Support for KVS, Support from National Investment Fund (NIF), Support from MUSK, Support from GBS and Support from Central Roads and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF).

Cumulative Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) Includes NVS, Support for NVS, Support from GBS, Support from CRIF and Support from NIF.

Cumulative Samagra Shiksha Includes Samagra Shiksha, Support for Samagra Shiksha, EAP Component, Support from GBS, Support from Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh and Support from MUSK.

Budget trends for the Ministry of Education's Department of School Education and Literacy (2019–2024) highlight shifting priorities, reflecting both progress and challenges in achieving Vision Viksit Bharat@2047. Funding for Samagra Shiksha peaked at ₹38,750.5 crore in 2020–21 but declined to ₹31,050.16 crore in 2021–22, potentially disrupting rural infrastructure and access. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme rose from ₹9,699 crore (2019–20) to ₹12,900 crore (2020–21) but fell to ₹11,500 crore (2021–22), raising concerns over student nutrition. Allocations for KVS and NVS increased modestly, reinforcing the quality of rural education. However, the National Scheme of Incentive to Girls for Secondary Education was slashed from ₹110 crore to ₹1 crore, and funding for Madrasas and Minorities Education dropped to zero (2021–22), weakening inclusivity efforts. The reliance on Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh for supplementary resources underscores the need for stable funding. Addressing these financial inconsistencies through equitable budget allocations is crucial for bridging socio-economic and regional disparities in education.

Table 4 on budget allocations for the Ministry of Education's Department of School Education and Literacy (2021–2022 to 2023–2024) highlights both

Table 4: Budget allocations, net of recoveries and plan outlay for Ministry of Finance Department of School Education and Literacy) in India (2021–2022 to 2023–2024)

(₹ in Crore)

Particulars	2021–2022 (Actual)		2022–2023 (Budget)		2022–2023 (Revised)		2023–2024 (Budget)	
	Revenue	Total	Revenue	Total	Revenue	Total	Revenue	Total
Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme (DHRUV)	-	-	3.26	3.26	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme	251.98	251.98	350	350	300	300	364	364
Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)	6800	6800	7650	7650	7512	7512	8363.98	8363.98
Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)	3740	3740	4115	4115	4920.3	4920.3	5486.5	5486.5

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)	319.74	319.74	510	510	405	405	518.5	518.5
Central Tibetan School Administration (CTSA)	52.94	52.94	62	62	-	-	-	-
Transfer to Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	-	-	10100	10100	10100	10100	6000	6000
Amount met from Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	-	-	–10100	–10100	–10100	–10100	–6000	–6000
Support for Samagra Shiksha	25060.89	25060.89	37383.35	37383.35	32151.65	32151.65	37453.46	37453.46
EAP Component	-	-	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Cumulative Samagra Shiksha	25060.89	25060.89	37383.36	37383.36	32151.66	32151.66	37453.47	37453.47
National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools	10230.98	10230.98	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Budget Documents, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

targeted investments and inconsistencies that may impact Vision Viksit Bharat@2047's goals for equitable education. Samagra Shiksha funding fluctuated from ₹25,060.89 crore in 2021–2022, rising to ₹37,383.36 crore in 2022–2023, then dropping to ₹ 32,151.66 crore in revised estimates before increasing to ₹37,453.47 crore in 2023–2024. This volatility raises concerns about implementation stability, particularly in rural areas. In contrast, KVS and NVS saw consistent growth, reinforcing efforts for quality education. The National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme maintained steady funding at ₹364 crore in 2023–2024, supporting economically disadvantaged students. However, the absence of funding for the Mid-Day Meal Scheme beyond 2021–2022 raises concerns about student nutrition and retention. A reduction in the Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh in 2023–2024 suggests decreased reliance on supplementary funding. While investments in some areas signal progress, stable and sustained funding is crucial for inclusive educational development.

Table 5 on budget allocations for the Department of School Education and Literacy under the

Table 5: Budget allocations, net of recoveries and plan outlay for the Ministry of Finance (Department of School Education and Literacy) in India (2022–2023 to 2024–2025)

(₹ in Crore)								
Particulars	**2022–2023 (Actual)**		**2023–2024 (Budget)**		**2023–2024 (Revised)**		**2024–2025 (Budget)**	
	Revenue	**Total**	**Revenue**	**Total**	**Revenue**	**Total**	**Revenue**	**Total**
National Award to Teachers	3.97	3.97	-	-	-	-	-	-
National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme	306.5	306.5	364	364	358	358	377	377
Cumulative Central Sector Schemes/ Projects	310.47	310.47	364.01	364.01	358	358	377.01	377.01
Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS)	7461.25	7461.25	8363.98	8363.98	8500	8500	9302.67	9302.67
Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS)	4920.3	4920.3	5486.5	5486.5	5470	5470	5800	5800
National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)	398.27	398.27	518.5	518.5	480	480	510	510
Transfer to Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	-	-	6000	6000	17000	17000	-	-
Amount met from Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh	-	-	–6000	–6000	–6000	–6000	-	-
Support to Samagra Shiksha (SS)	32514.68	32514.68	37453.46	37453.46	32999.99	32999.99	37499.99	37499.99
Support to PM POSHAN	12680.97	12680.97	11600	11600	10000	10000	12467.39	12467.39
PM Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI)	-	-	4000	4000	2800	2800	6050	6050
General Education	13666.98	13666.98	15012.58	15012.58	26771.6	26771.6	17431.83	17431.83

Source: Budget Documents, Ministry of Finance, Government of India.

Ministry of Home Affairs (2022–2023 to 2024–2025) highlights shifting priorities in educational funding. The National Award to Teachers, allocated ₹3.97 crore in 2022–2023, was discontinued in subsequent years. The National Means cum Merit Scholarship Scheme saw steady growth from ₹306.5 crore to ₹377 crore. KVS and NVS saw consistent increases, with KVS rising to ₹9,302.67 crore and NVS to ₹ 5,800 crore in 2024–2025. NCERT funding peaked at ₹518.5 crore in 2023–2024 before declining. The Madhyamik and Uchhatar Shiksha Kosh surged to ₹17,000 crore in 2023–2024 before being discontinued. Samagra Shiksha peaked at ₹37,499.99 crore, while PM POSHAN, after a decline, recovered to ₹12,467.39 crore. PM SHRI fluctuated but rose to ₹6,050 crore. These trends reflect increased investments in key programmes but inconsistencies in funding distribution.

Section D: Funding Trends and Challenges in Educational Support Schemes: PM POSHAN and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti

PM POSHAN, formerly the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, is a cornerstone in promoting nutritional support and encouraging school attendance, especially in disadvantaged areas. The funding trends observed from 2019–2020 to 2023–2024 show notable fluctuations:

Table 6: State-wise funds released by the Department of School Education and Literacy under the Scheme of Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) in India (2019–2020 to 2023–2024)

(₹ in Lakh)					
States/UTs	**2019–2020**	**2020–2021**	**2021–2022**	**2022–2023**	**2023–2024**
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	754.85	648.71	540.19	365.23	-
Andhra Pradesh	28563.77	37510.17	35731.48	36531.92	-
Arunachal Pradesh	2367.9	2917.87	2968.58	1707.01	-
Assam	55325.82	75703.77	61570.1	88721.4	-
Bihar	109313.34	139248.01	103016.32	76399.12	-
Chandigarh	884.26	1338.56	1721.62	1773.77	-
Chhattisgarh	25489.23	38080.87	21315.32	51008.15	-
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	572.89	1307.94[1]	1221.23[1]	1227.10[1]	-
Daman & Diu	258.3[1]	-	-	-	-

Delhi	10319.99	11297.29	4403.79	21527.1	-
Goa	1276.05	1709.34	668.18	1531.12	-
Gujarat	39287.11	52871.83	50706.46	52293.03	-
Haryana	10889.91	15572.73	10163.12	15290.09	-
Himachal Pradesh	7557.54	10500.11	6290.49	13801.77	-
Jammu & Kashmir	2666.45	15960.26	12221.88	8684.9	-
Jharkhand	32310.9	35203.74	25189.45	38424.29	-
Karnataka	52056.79	51553.53	48834.32	69076.57	-
Kerala	19962.41	27688.82	18482.19	42543.83	-
Ladakh	122.35	555.79	376.96	200.61	-
Lakshadweep	98.93	32.62	0	83.74	-
Madhya Pradesh	50407.62	82754.74	47220.22	36285	15658.42
Maharashtra	99468.82	100250.03	49075.07	159240.67	-
Manipur	2192.3	3900.45	1678.74	2763.32	-
Meghalaya	7835.83	8733.94	8564.77	10124.13	-
Mizoram	2047.93	2313.45	892.98	2974.36	-
Nagaland	2279.38	2744.38	1472.51	3196.49	-
Odisha	40358.68	58301.22	48208.87	56373.86	-
Puducherry	290.01	503.45	373.33	363.04	-
Punjab	13855.77	21769.15	19146.03	18712.92	-
Rajasthan	47252.76	71100.05	53106.11	89960.12	-
Sikkim	817.45	840.58	500.65	1145.02	-
Tamil Nadu	43121.49	49221.67	23264.94	47700.1	-
Telangana	18821.14	4524.22	4334.63	16682.36	-
Tripura	5598.51	6220.56	7718.82	6857.03	-
Uttar Pradesh	118201.96	207166.14	199805.66	133407.6	-
Uttarakhand	10273.31	13024.3	12477.64	11575.54	-
West Bengal	107102.66	134330.72	139412.35	148947.05	-
India	**970004.42**	**1287401.01**	**1022675**	**1267499.36**	**15658.42**

Note: [1]: Including Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu
Source: Lok Sabha Unstarred Question No. 594, dated on 24 July 2023

Table 6 on the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN) scheme, formerly the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, highlights its critical role in improving school attendance and nutrition, particularly for economically

disadvantaged students. Funding data from 2019–2020 to 2023–2024 reveals variability across states, affecting programme stability and its alignment with Vision Viksit Bharat@2047's goals of access, equity and inclusion. While larger states like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal received substantial allocations, others, including Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Kerala, faced funding declines, potentially disrupting attendance and learning outcomes. In 2023–2024, only Madhya Pradesh reported an allocation of ₹15,658.42 lakh, raising concerns about administrative delays. Smaller states and Union Territories, such as Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and Lakshadweep, received minimal or no funding, exacerbating educational inequities in remote areas. Ensuring stable, scaled funding is essential to maintaining programme effectiveness and supporting long-term educational progress, particularly for vulnerable communities.

The NVS plays a critical role in providing quality education to students in rural and underserved areas, especially through its residential school model. Infrastructure development in NVS is essential for maintaining and expanding its educational facilities. The funding trends for NVS under the Creation of Capital Assets for Infrastructural Facilities show a mixed picture.

Table 7 on grants for Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti infrastructure shows consistent funding of around ₹515 crore annually from 2020–2021 to 2022–2023. However, in 2023–2024, it dropped sharply to ₹74.6 crore, raising concerns about facility maintenance and development, especially in rural areas. This decline underscores the urgent need for stable funding to sustain infrastructure and ensure equitable education. Consistent financial support is crucial for

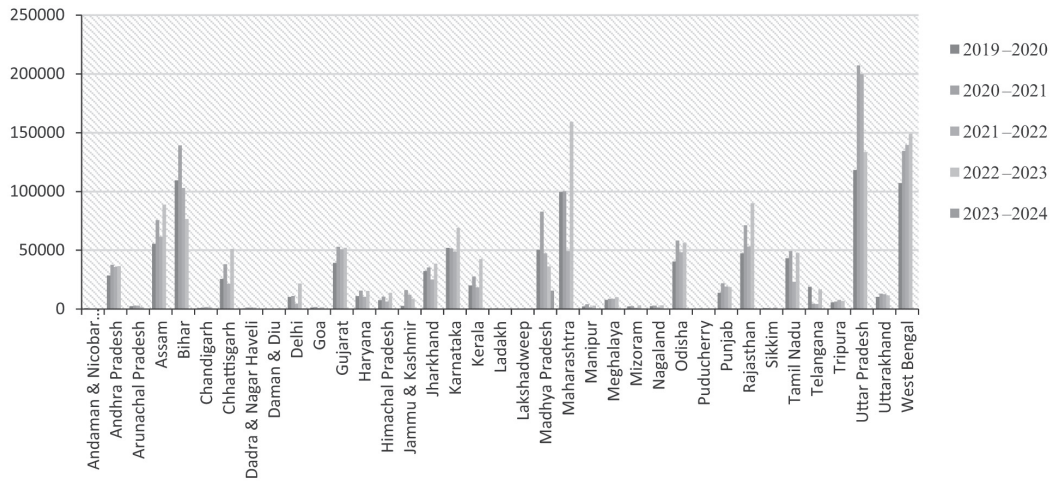


Fig. 5: Trends in Expenditure on Education by Sector (2015–2020)

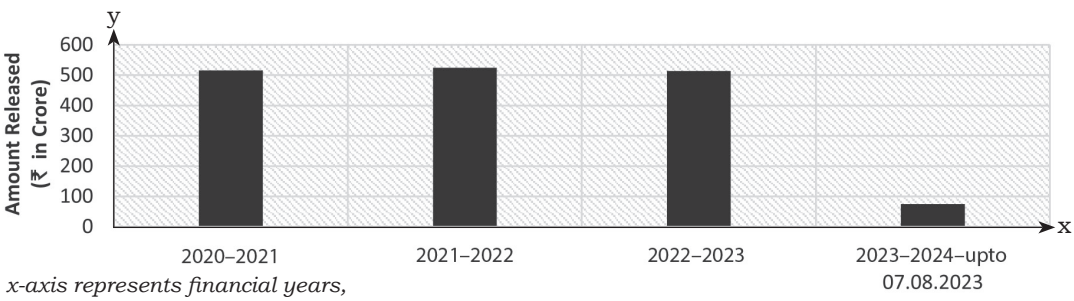
meeting the educational needs of marginalised communities and advancing the inclusivity goals of Vision Viksit Bharat@2047.

infrastructure gaps, digital access limitations and inconsistent funding continue to hinder equitable learning, particularly in rural and marginalised

Table 7: Grants-in-aid released under head creation of capital assets for infrastructural facilities in NVS of India (2020–2021 to 2023–2024 upto 07 August 2023)

Year	Amount Released (₹ in Crore)
2020–2021	515.31
2021–2022	524.37
2022–2023	513.62
2023–2024 upto 07.08.2023	74.6

Source: Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 247, dated on 07 August 2023.



x-axis represents financial years,
y-axis represents amount of money released in crores for infra facilities in NVS

Fig. 6: Grants-in-Aid Released under Head Creation of Capital Assets for Infrastructural Facilities in Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti of India (2020–2021 to 2023–2024 upto 07.08.2023)

Section E: NEP 2020 and the Policy Framework for Reimagining Education in India: A Roadmap to Vision Viksit Bharat@2047

The NEP 2020 represents a transformative shift, prioritising access, equity and inclusion as key drivers of educational development. Aligned with Vision Viksit Bharat@2047, it aims to eliminate structural inequalities, foster holistic development, and ensure quality education for all. Despite rising enrolment rates, challenges, such as

communities. Addressing these issues requires financial commitments, digital reforms and inclusive teaching methodologies to build a resilient education system.

NEP 2020 envisions a student-centric approach, promoting experiential learning, competency-based assessments and multilingual education to reflect India's linguistic diversity. Moving from rote memorisation to skill-based learning fosters critical thinking and adaptability, aligning with

global best practices. However, consistent funding and targeted interventions are essential for success. Programmes like Samagra Shiksha, PM POSHAN and National Scholarship Programmes play a crucial role in expanding access, yet budget fluctuations pose challenges. Cuts in Samagra Shiksha funding have impacted infrastructure and teacher training, while PM POSHAN variations raise concerns about student retention and nutrition. Ensuring stable financial support is crucial for reducing disparities.

Achieving equity requires addressing urban-rural divides, gender disparities and socio-economic barriers that limit access to quality education. While NEP 2020 promotes regional language instruction and inclusive classrooms, implementation remains inconsistent. The drastic budget cut for the National Scheme for Incentive to Girl Child for Secondary Education contradicts efforts to boost female participation. Similarly, reduced funding for minority education programmes weakens diversity and representation. Public-private partnerships could help by leveraging technology to expand educational access, particularly in remote areas. Strengthening digital infrastructure is vital to bridging the digital divide, which became evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

India must enhance accessibility for differently-abled students for true inclusivity. NEP 2020 advocates for disability-friendly infrastructure, adaptive learning materials and teacher training in special education. However, financial and logistical barriers limit these initiatives. A comprehensive framework mandating accessibility in all institutions, backed by targeted funding, is essential for ensuring inclusive education. By reinforcing financial stability, digital advancements and inclusive policies, India can build an equitable education system that empowers all learners, driving national progress and global competitiveness.

Section F: Reimagining Education in India: A Policy Framework for 2047

Transforming India's education system by 2047 requires a forward-thinking policy framework aligned with Vision Viksit Bharat@2047. Expanding educational access demands targeted enrolment strategies in underserved rural areas, along with investments in digital infrastructure to promote online and blended learning. Affordable digital devices and internet access are crucial to bridging the digital divide, a challenge exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Outreach programmes must raise awareness in economically disadvantaged communities, while scholarships and subsidised programmes should mitigate financial barriers. Mobile schooling units and improved transportation facilities for girls and differently-abled children are essential for boosting inclusivity.

Achieving equity requires addressing disparities in resources, infrastructure, and teacher quality between urban and rural regions. Equitable funding based on socio-economic and regional needs is vital for enhancing infrastructure, teacher training and learning materials in economically weaker areas. Standardised teacher training programmes can improve quality, while the development of regional language resources will support linguistic diversity. The adoption of competency-based learning models and a common assessment framework will ensure consistent quality of education, preparing students for both national and global opportunities.

True inclusivity hinges on addressing the needs of marginalised communities, differently-abled students and non-traditional learners. Schools must adopt disability-friendly infrastructure, including ramps, handrails and adaptive furniture. Providing learning materials in Braille and sign language, along with trained special educators, will significantly enhance education for differently-abled students. Outreach programmes and culturally relevant content will improve access for tribal and socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Flexible learning options, such as evening schools and community centres, can support adult learners and students needing alternative formats. A blended learning model, combining in-person and digital education, will further increase accessibility.

The NEP 2020 lays the groundwork for this transformation, promoting holistic, skill-based and inclusive learning. Its flexible curriculum emphasises early childhood education, experiential learning and vocational training, preparing students for the evolving workforce. Public-private partnerships will play a critical role in bridging the digital divide, leveraging the technological expertise of private companies and community networks of NGOs to expand access in remote regions. Equipping schools with affordable digital infrastructure and teacher training in tech-enabled instruction will be crucial for scaling inclusive education.

Future policy updates must prioritise marginalised groups, including differently-abled students and remote communities. Proposed reforms include targeted scholarships, inclusive teacher training and accessibility infrastructure. By fostering an environment where every child can succeed, India can build a more inclusive education system, laying the foundation for social mobility, innovation and national prosperity by 2047.

Section G: The Impact of Global Educational Models and Measuring Progress and Evaluating Outcomes

Global educational models provide valuable insights into shaping an inclusive and equitable education system that aligns with Vision Viksit Bharat@2047. Countries like Finland, Singapore and Japan have

successfully implemented student-centered learning, comprehensive teacher training and rigorous quality control, offering approaches that India can selectively adapt. Finland's model emphasises teacher autonomy and low-stakes assessments, creating an environment, where educators are empowered and students experience reduced academic pressure. Singapore focuses on continuous skill development and digital literacy, ensuring students acquire competencies necessary for both local and global job markets. These models demonstrate the importance of empowering educators and engaging students to achieve high learning outcomes. However, for India to integrate these practices effectively, policies must be tailored to its socio-cultural and economic diversity. Finland's low-stakes assessment approach, for instance, could help reduce the intense competition prevalent in Indian urban schools, where students face immense pressure due to high-stake examinations. Similarly, Singapore's digital literacy model aligns with India's goal of expanding technology-based education, but additional policy interventions are needed to address disparities in regional language diversity and digital accessibility. By selectively incorporating these global models, India can move towards a future-ready education system that fosters inclusivity, innovation and skill development.

A critical area where India can learn from global models is assessment reform. Finland minimises standardised testing and instead relies on formative assessments that prioritise conceptual understanding and skill-based learning over rote memorisation. This approach allows teachers to evaluate students through personalised feedback, collaborative projects and continuous observation, ensuring a deeper understanding of subjects. In contrast, India's examination-driven system places excessive emphasis on board exams and entrance tests, creating an atmosphere of extreme academic pressure, particularly in urban schools. The need to secure high scores often comes at the expense of creativity, critical thinking and emotional well-being. A transition to a low-stakes assessment model in India could shift the focus from memorisation to skill development, making learning more engaging and reducing stress among students. However, directly replicating Finland's model in India presents challenges due to differences in population size, infrastructure and socio-economic diversity. A more practical approach would involve integrating key elements, such as project-based learning, periodic competency-based evaluations and reducing dependence on one-time, high-stakes exams. Implementing such changes would require a fundamental restructuring of curriculum design, teacher training programmes and university admission criteria to ensure that the education system continues to

uphold merit and competence while alleviating academic pressure.

The integration of digital learning is another area where India can draw lessons from global models, particularly Singapore's emphasis on digital literacy and skill-based education. Singapore incorporates technology into classrooms from early education stages, ensuring students are proficient in digital tools and adaptable to evolving job market demands. India's push for digital education aligns with this vision but challenges, such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to affordable devices and disparities in internet connectivity hinder progress, especially in rural areas. To successfully implement digital learning nationwide, policies must focus on bridging the digital divide by investing in school infrastructure, providing affordable digital devices and training teachers in technology-driven pedagogy. Without these foundational supports, the benefits of digital education will remain concentrated in urban areas, further widening the existing educational disparities. Ensuring that students in underserved communities receive equitable access to digital learning is essential to prepare them for a technology-driven future.

To track progress towards Vision Viksit Bharat@2047, India must establish clear performance metrics and benchmarks. Setting five-year incremental targets will help maintain momentum and ensure alignment with broader national developmental goals. Large-scale educational reforms often struggle with continuity due to shifting political priorities, administrative inefficiencies and resource constraints. Without well-defined short-term objectives, measuring the effectiveness of policy interventions becomes difficult, delaying course corrections that could improve outcomes. By setting five-year benchmarks, policymakers can systematically evaluate the impact of education reforms, identify gaps and make necessary adjustments in real time. These periodic evaluations will enable more efficient resource allocation, ensuring that funding is directed towards areas that need immediate attention, such as rural education, digital infrastructure and teacher training. Incremental targets also enhance accountability among various stakeholders, including state governments, educational institutions and policymakers, ensuring that all efforts contribute to a long-term vision. For instance, if data from a five-year review indicate a decline in school retention rates in rural areas despite increased funding for infrastructure, the government can redirect resources toward targeted interventions, such as financial aid, transportation support and teacher recruitment.

Regular assessments based on indicators like enrolment rates, digital accessibility, teacher-student ratios and skill-based learning adoption provide real-time insights that help

refine strategies rather than waiting decades to assess the success of an education reform. By integrating data-driven decision-making into the policy framework, India can ensure that reforms remain responsive to emerging challenges, making the education system more resilient and adaptable. A robust evaluation mechanism, supported by digital tools and data analytics, will play a critical role in tracking progress and ensuring the effectiveness of education policies. Establishing a national data infrastructure that monitors student performance, school infrastructure and funding utilisation in real time will provide policymakers with actionable insights. Learning management systems, AI-driven analytics and digital dashboards can help identify regional disparities and inform targeted interventions. In addition to quantitative assessments, qualitative feedback from teachers, students, and community stakeholders should be integrated to capture on ground realities and ensure that policies address real challenges faced by learners and educators. This feedback-driven approach will enable continuous refinement of education policies, ensuring that they remain aligned with India's long-term developmental objectives.

India's journey towards a more inclusive, equitable and future-ready education system requires a combination of global best practices, targeted domestic reforms, and a commitment to sustained evaluation. While NEP 2020 provides a strong foundation for educational transformation, its success depends on consistent implementation, adequate funding and adaptive policymaking. By leveraging insights from successful education models worldwide and aligning them with India's socio-economic realities, the country can build a system that nurtures talent, fosters innovation and equips students with the skills necessary for global competitiveness. A framework that integrates assessment reform, digital learning expansion and incremental progress evaluations will ensure that India's education system remains dynamic and resilient, ultimately contributing to the broader goal of Vision Viksit Bharat@2047.

Conclusion

India's journey towards an inclusive, equitable and high-quality education system requires a sustained commitment to policy implementation, financial investment and adaptive reforms. NEP 2020 provides a strong foundation for transforming education by prioritising experiential learning, digital integration and competency-based assessments. However, inconsistent funding and disparities in resource allocation continue to hinder progress, particularly in rural and marginalised communities. The fluctuating budgets of key schemes like Samagra Shiksha and PM POSHAN raise concerns about

their long-term sustainability, while reductions in scholarships and incentives for female and minority students contradict the policy's inclusivity goals. Addressing these challenges requires stable financial commitments, targeted interventions, and a data-driven approach to ensure policies remain effective and responsive to emerging needs. Drawing from successful global models, India must tailor best practices to its socio-economic realities. Finland's assessment approach and Singapore's digital literacy initiatives offer valuable insights but their effectiveness depends on strong digital infrastructure and equitable access. Expanding public-private partnerships will be essential in bridging the digital divide, particularly for students in remote areas. Measuring progress through incremental benchmarks and real-time data analysis will enable policymakers to refine strategies, allocate resources efficiently and address disparities as they arise. By ensuring that every child receives quality education regardless of their socio-economic background, India can cultivate a skilled, innovative and globally competitive workforce. A resilient education system will not only drive social mobility and economic growth but also serve as the foundation for achieving Vision Viksit Bharat@2047, positioning India as a self-reliant and progressive nation in the decades to come.

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