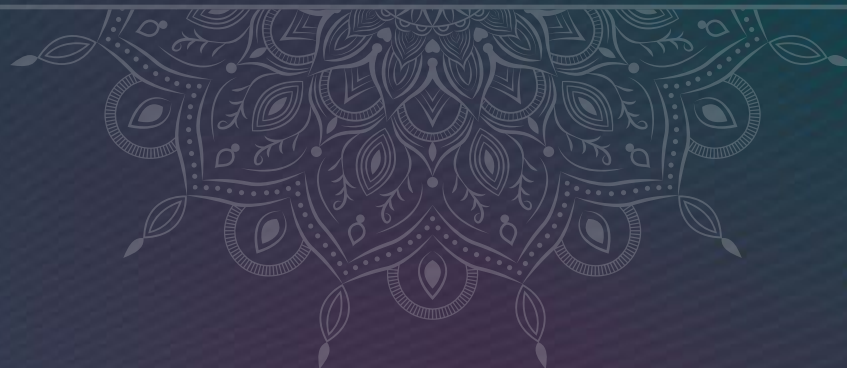




## 08 | Inclusive Growth: Advancing India's equity



**True progress for India means ensuring that every citizen shares the nation's growth, leaving no one behind on the path to Viksit Bharat.**

India's strength lies in its unmatched diversity, and any progress towards *Viksit Bharat 2047* will not be possible unless every citizen is able to benefit from this growth. At Ārohaṇa: Growth with Impact, the idea of inclusive growth forming the foundation of equitable progress was at the heart of the event's discussions. For India, a nation rich in cultural and social diversity, inclusivity is much more than just a catalyst for transformative change; it is a moral responsibility and a commitment to the future.

Accessible education as a mechanism of social inclusion proved to be a vital topic of discussion. Special sessions focused on how digital tools are reshaping the education landscape and ensuring that high-quality learning is reaching even the most remote regions and underserved communities. Technology, paired with inclusive policies, is playing a pivotal role in bridging the education gap for millions across the country. The focus remains clear that technology is key to democratising educational access and securing the nation's future. Inclusive policies combined with technology are playing a crucial role in closing the education gap for millions nationwide. The central focus is evident, with technology being essential for making education accessible to all and ensuring the country's future.

As India looks ahead and beyond its shores, inclusive growth strategies must remain central to its agenda. Equitable access to education and opportunities can help India harness the diversity of its citizens and empower every individual to contribute to the development of this great nation. Through inclusive development, India can be assured that its journey on the path to being a global leader is one that is also walked by every single one of its citizens.





## 8a. Unity in diversity: A transformative reality



**V Anantha Nageswaran**  
Chief Economic Advisor,  
Government of India

India's growth must go hand-in-hand with inclusivity, ensuring that no community is left behind in the nation's journey towards becoming a global economic superpower.

In today's evolving global landscape, achieving a leadership position requires a delicate balance that treads the line between rapid economic growth and ensuring inclusivity for its citizens. To realise its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2047, India must achieve high levels of economic growth that are also equitable and inclusive. Achieving this requires public policies, fiscal reforms and sustainable development to work in unison. And while ambition is essential, growth cannot come at the cost of social equity.

The Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India, V Anantha Nageswaran, spoke at length in a thought-provoking discussion about how India can achieve its growth targets while promoting inclusivity in key areas such as agriculture, export-driven industries and gender equality. These commitments underscore India's dual mission to strengthen its global economic footprint while enhancing the lives of its most vulnerable citizens.

### **Leaders Speak: Viksit Bharat – Balancing Inclusivity with Growth** **Speaker:**

V Anantha Nageswaran, Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India

### **Moderator:**

Debasish Mishra, Partner and Chief Growth Officer, Deloitte South Asia

*Agriculture and allied sectors are not relics of the past, they are engines of future growth, vital for both rural inclusivity and climate resilience.*

**V Anantha Nageswaran**  
Chief Economic Advisor, Government of India

V Anantha Nageswaran emphasized that agriculture and its allied industries will always remain integral to India's economy. Contrary to the assumption that industrialisation and services alone will drive future growth, he reiterated that India must continue to develop agriculture as a fundamental economic pillar while simultaneously developing adaptive strategies for climate change. This includes advancing heat-resistant crops, expanding agricultural R&D and implementing land consolidation measures. Initiatives such as "White

Revolution 2.0” highlight how the government is strengthening agriculture and its allied industries, including dairy and poultry.

Agricultural productivity is crucial for India’s economic performance, national food security and climate resilience. Therefore, focusing on this creates a dual benefit by increasing rural communities’ economic participation while ensuring that agriculture contributes to India’s growth story.



### Navigating global trade and economic headwinds

Setting ambitious export targets is important. However, India’s growth will largely rely on strengthening domestic demand and eliminating internal barriers to trade.

Global economic challenges, including climate-induced shifts in agricultural yields and volatility in international trade, must be closely monitored. While exports are essential to India’s growth, domestic consumption will play a more dominant role in India’s near-term growth. In this tumultuous landscape, India cannot solely rely on exports, especially amid rising global protectionism and economic slowdowns.

However, V Anantha Nageswaran also noted that while export targets, such as the goal of reaching US\$2 trillion in annual exports, serve as strong economic motivators, India must prioritise strengthening its domestic trade networks. Sectors such as electronics and textiles, with their high potential for labour-intensive, job-creating growth, will benefit significantly from export expansion. However, improving internal trade efficiency and reducing logistical bottlenecks should remain central priorities.



### Skilling and gender equality as catalysts for inclusivity

Gender equality and skilling aren’t just social imperatives; they are economic drivers that will fuel India’s progress towards its 2047 goals.

Increasing female labour force participation will directly impact India’s economic trajectory, particularly in high-employment sectors such as textiles and electronics. However, to fully integrate women into the workforce, India must introduce additional legal and regulatory reforms to remove structural barriers. Beyond regulations, addressing social challenges, such as workplace safety, childcare and entrenched cultural norms, will be pivotal in fostering greater gender inclusivity.

*Heartland Tripura, a collaboration between Deloitte and the National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT), is a remarkable initiative. We trained about 50 engineering and non-engineering graduates from Tripura in basic cyber skills and subsequently hired them into various Deloitte offices across India. It is a powerful story of empowering youth from the Northeast, especially those from non-technical backgrounds. These kinds of initiatives can and must scale.*

**Debasish Mishra**

Another key enabler of inclusivity is large-scale skilling initiatives. Bridging India’s skills gap will require sustained investments in vocational training and hands-on work experience, particularly in



tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Internship programmes, vocational training and labour force participation programmes will be essential in bridging the skills gap and ensuring that India's growth includes each segment of the population.



### **Balancing domestic and foreign investment**

According to V Anantha Nageswaran, while FDI remains a crucial component of India's growth strategy, balancing domestic demand and private sector investment is equally essential. India's gross fixed capital formation is growing in the private and public sectors. While this boosts confidence in the nation's economic prospects, much of this growth must also come from tier-2 and tier-3 cities as they further integrate into the formal economy.

This forecast also disproved the myth that private capital has been waiting on the sidelines to invest in India, as the private sector has already made headway with strategic investments. In the end, sustained private sector engagement, particularly in areas such as infrastructure and technology, is key to India's long-term economic resilience.

## Key takeaways

- **Agriculture and inclusivity:** Agriculture remains an important pillar for India's growth, especially with investments in R&D, climate resilience and land consolidation.
- **Climate resilience:** India's growth strategy must account for climate change, particularly in agriculture, by promoting heat-resistant crops, sustainable farming practices and agricultural R&D to build long-term resilience.
- **Export ambitions with domestic focus:** While export targets are critical for job creation and economic growth, India must focus on removing domestic barriers and using internal demand as global economic challenges continue.
- **Gender equality and skilling:** Increasing female labour force participation and enhancing skilling programmes are essential to achieve inclusive growth. Addressing regulatory and social barriers is the key.
- **Sustained investment:** Domestic and foreign investments are crucial to maintaining India's growth trajectory, and the private sector must remain actively involved in key sectors such as infrastructure and innovation.









## 8b. Enabling quality education



**Sanjay Kumar**

Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India

India, one of the world's youngest nations, holds immense human potential. Ensuring that quality education is accessible and affordable is crucial to harnessing this resource. The Government of India's *Viksit Bharat* vision for 2047 underscores the importance of education as a catalyst for long-term economic growth. However, realising this vision presents significant challenges, such as ensuring equitable access to education, enhancing teacher skills and modernising infrastructure. By focusing on inclusivity and quality, the NEP 2020 aims to eliminate barriers to education based on socioeconomic background. At *Ārohaṇa: Growth with Impact*, we explored the key issues and potential solutions for making quality education accessible and affordable across India.

The vision of *Viksit Bharat 2047* aims to transform India into a developed nation by the watershed year of 2047, which marks the centenary of India's independence, with education playing a pivotal role in achieving equitable development.<sup>29</sup> Education is essential to realising human potential, strengthening national development and fostering social cohesion. India's education system is among the most diverse in the world, with multiple state and central education boards alongside a vast network of private schools. The government is addressing various issues, such as inadequate access to schools, infrastructure gaps, a fragmented digital platform for recordkeeping and high dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels.

The NEP 2020 envisions a new education system that aligns with global standards, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, while honouring India's rich traditions. It aims to make education more holistic, flexible, inclusive and accessible. Key objectives include improving the gross enrolment ratio, reducing dropout rates, enhancing teacher training and integrating technology into the education system.

### **Leaders Speak: Affordable and Accessible Education – Critical Pathways for Advancing Social Inclusion and Equity**

#### **Speaker:**

Sanjay Kumar, Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, Government of India

#### **Moderator:**

Shubranshu Patnaik, Partner and GPS Industry Leader, Deloitte India

The distinguished speaker, Sanjay Kumar, opened the session with a reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks on the third anniversary of NEP 2020, which emphasized the importance of

<sup>29</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=153439&ModuleId=3&reg=3&lang=1>



providing equitable access to quality education for all children and tailoring education to each child's needs and abilities.



### Accessible and affordable education for all

Both state and central authorities govern India's education system. On average, Indian students spend 12.8 years in school, compared with 18 years in developed countries. The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Class 10 is 79.2 percent, while for Class 12, it is 56.8 percent.<sup>30</sup> The NEP aims to improve these figures by making education accessible and affordable, and improving the quality of our children's education.

Disparities in school enrolment across India are striking, with the average school accommodating about 170 students, while this number falls to approximately 130 students in government schools. In contrast, schools in China and the US average 500 and 461 students per school, respectively. Many Indian schools are very small, especially among the 10 lakh government schools, where 3.86 lakh are classified as such. This highlights challenges in access, which the Right to Education Act seeks to address by recommending a primary school within one kilometre of every neighbourhood.<sup>31</sup>

India aims to achieve 100 percent enrolment for senior secondary-level education by 2030, ensuring that every student completes 15 years of education.



### Uniform assessment across boards

India's educational landscape is fragmented, with 62 different boards of education. This fragmentation results in discrepancies

in curriculum and assessment methods, making it challenging to ensure continuity when students transfer between states. A uniform assessment system is critical to ensure that students are assessed uniformly regardless of their location.



### One Nation, One Student ID initiative

The lack of a centralised system for tracking student achievements complicates the transfer process between schools and states. The One Nation, One Student ID initiative, also known as the Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR), proposes a centralised academic repository that would streamline the academic journey for students and facilitate smoother transitions between educational institutions. APAAR brings in the much-needed accountability, and Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) brings visibility that will allow educational decision-makers and service providers to track the end user in the learning ecosystem.<sup>32</sup>



### Empowerment of teachers

India has 14.6 lakh schools with 25 crore students and 95 lakh teachers.<sup>33</sup>

Although the government controls 69 percent of the schools, only 54 percent of the teachers are in the public sector, with private schools accounting for 46 percent of teachers.<sup>34</sup> Teacher upskilling is vital to ensure the highest standards of education delivery. Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the number

<sup>30</sup> Data obtained from discussions during the "Ārohaṇa: Growth with Impact," in September 2024

<sup>31</sup> Data obtained from discussions during the "Ārohaṇa: Growth with Impact," in September 2024

<sup>32</sup> <https://apaar.education.gov.in/#~:text=This%20initiative%20is%20part%20of%20the%20One,the%20new%20National%20Education%20Policy%20of%202020.&text=APAAR%20ID%20%2D%20a%20unique%2012%2Ddigit%20code,gradesheet%2C%20degrees%2C%20diplomas%2C%20certificates%20>

<sup>33</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2097864>

<sup>34</sup> [https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2097864#~:text=Government%20schools%20comprises%2069%20%25%20of,Ratio%20\(GER\)%20by%202030.](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2097864#~:text=Government%20schools%20comprises%2069%20%25%20of,Ratio%20(GER)%20by%202030.)



of female teachers, a positive trend reflecting broader social change. Groundbreaking initiatives such as ITEP, NISHTHA, NPST and NMM will play a pivotal role in creating the “Teachers of Tomorrow.”



### Digitisation of education

Technology plays a crucial role in teaching and learning, governance and monitoring. With the advent of AI, ML and big data, the demand for skills in mathematics, science, computer science and data science is growing. Digitisation of education is critical to meeting these demands and ensuring that our students remain competitive on the global stage. However, uniformity in digital access and course delivery is essential for effective implementation.



### Rich pre-primary education

The NEP 2020 emphasizes foundational literacy and numeracy, especially in the early years, when 80 percent of brain development occurs. The policy encourages instruction in the mother tongue until Class 5 and promotes multilingualism to enhance cognitive skills.

*From the age of 3 to 6, when almost 80 percent of your brain develops, you are expected to be in a pre-primary class and have basic foundational literacy and numeracy skills.*

**Sanjay Kumar**

Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education,  
Government of India



### PM SHRI Schools

The PM SHRI School is a centrally sponsored initiative by the Government of India aimed at developing over 14,500 schools<sup>35</sup> managed by the Central Government, State/UT Governments and local bodies, including KVS and NVS. This initiative seeks to create an environment where every student feels welcomed and supported, offering a safe and stimulating learning atmosphere, a diverse range of learning opportunities and a well-equipped infrastructure with the necessary resources to foster effective learning for students.

It will nurture students to become engaged, productive and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive and plural society as envisaged by the NEP 2020.

*We hope that the PM Shri schools will become a benchmark for modern schools in India.*

**Sanjay Kumar**

Secretary, Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education,  
Government of India



### Digital initiatives

The following digital initiatives are already making an impact:

- **Vidyanjali:** This platform connects volunteers with schools, allowing them to contribute time, services or resources. This is complemented by the Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing (DIKSHA) portal of the Ministry of Education, which enables easy and flexible access to textbooks. The DIKSHA app is available for teachers, students and parents.

<sup>34</sup> [https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2097864#:~:text=Government%20schools%20comprises%2069%20%25%20of,Ratio%20\(GER\)%20by%202030.](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2097864#:~:text=Government%20schools%20comprises%2069%20%25%20of,Ratio%20(GER)%20by%202030.)

<sup>35</sup> <https://dsel.education.gov.in/pm-shri-schools>



- **Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR):** Linked to AADHAAR, this system assigns each student a unique ID, simplifying access to academic records and credit transfers.

The government plans to fully digitise and computerise schools across India in the next five years.



### Upskilling of teachers

Continuous professional development is essential for maintaining high teaching standards. The NEP 2020 mandates that teachers and headteachers undergo at least 50 hours of professional development annually on the NISHTHA online platform. The National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) initiative, designed to foster knowledge sharing, will engage 20 lakh mentors from a pool of 1 crore teachers across India.<sup>36</sup>

### Manthan: Quality Education

#### Participants:

Ankur Goel, Manager, EdCIL; Manoj Pandey, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan; Sapna Yadav, Delhi SCERT; Noopur Jhunjunwala, Founder, Changeink; Avinash Kumar, Dy. Manager, EdCIL; Shivam Gupta, Dy. Manager, EdCIL; Vishal Singh, Dy. Manager, EdCIL; Gaurav Chaudhary, Asst Manager, EdCIL; Naidu, Assitant Manager, EdCIL; Megha Gupta, Executive, EdCIL; Ninad Patil, Executive, EdCIL; Meghna, Delhi University; Rajesh Chelle, Assistant Commissioner, Navodaya Vidyalaya Sangathan; Madan Yadav, Deputy Secretary, NCTE; Manoj Kumar, CMD, EdCIL

#### Guru:

Sahil Gupta, Partner, Deloitte India

This *Manthan* delved into the challenges and opportunities in delivering quality education across India. The discussions underscored the

importance of holistic approaches, from infrastructural improvements to teacher training, as critical to achieving the nation's educational goals.



### The school of 2047: A transformational hub

In 2047, schools will likely transcend the traditional brick-and-mortar infrastructure we see today. The emphasis will shift from physical buildings to creating versatile learning environments that integrate physical and digital spaces. While access to basic infrastructure, such as classrooms and drinking water, will still be essential, the definition of "infrastructure" will expand to include robust digital platforms, seamless connectivity and AI-driven learning tools. The school of the future will not be constrained by four walls. Still, it will function as a dynamic hub where students learn inside and outside traditional classroom settings, using technology for deeper, more personalised learning experiences.

Foundational skills, conceptual knowledge, perspective development and experiential learning need to be provided in stages across preparatory and middle levels.

- **Teacher training and curriculum development:** The quality of education will start with teachers. Teacher recruitment, training and continuous professional development will be critical. Teacher education systems will be rigorous, ensuring that only those equipped with the necessary pedagogical skills and subject mastery enter the profession. Online training and induction, supported by digital platforms, will allow teachers to stay updated on the latest developments in education technology, psychology and subject matter.
- **Social responsibility and life skills:** Schools will place a greater emphasis on life skills, including leadership, teamwork, critical thinking and environmental consciousness. Beyond academic knowledge, there will be a strong focus on social responsibility, cultivating future

<sup>36</sup> Data obtained from discussions during the "Ārohaṇa: Growth with Impact," in September 2024



citizens who are aware of their impact on society and the environment. This approach ensures students excel academically and are prepared to contribute meaningfully to their communities and the world at large.

- **Equity and inclusion:** The future school will be designed as an inclusive

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*I don't think we need to be in a classroom with a traditional teacher to learn. Schools will become a place to pick up and manage things such as social skills and responsibilities.*

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**Noopur Jhunjunwala**  
Co-founder, Changeinkk

space where diversity is celebrated. Accessibility for students from different social, economic and physical backgrounds will be a priority. The school will become a place for learning, fostering dialogue and understanding across different cultures, languages and abilities.

### **Vocational training**

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After the introduction of Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, the accessibility of educational materials has significantly improved from 62 percent to 98.9 percent.<sup>37</sup> The Right to Education Act also ensures the availability of qualified teachers.

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The uptake of vocational education is lower in India than in other countries. The general perception of vocational training in India is that there is not much vertical mobility associated with vocational training. In the Indian social context, education is viewed as a tool to build social justice and equality. When analysed from this angle, we can understand why there are not many takers for vocational education.

Online learning resources for certain skills, such as coding, designing and animation, are becoming immensely popular among learners. This hints that future schools will play a role as a hub of knowledge, and teachers will specialise in helping students acquire knowledge on their own. They will play the role of facilitators more than tutors.

Active discussions are needed to increase the demand for vocational training. Corporations, think tanks and NGOs operating in the education sector have a significant opportunity to collaborate with the government and work towards providing affordable and accessible education for Indian citizens.

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<sup>37</sup> Data obtained from discussions during the "Ārohaṇa: Growth with Impact," in September 2024



## Key takeaways

- **Inclusive and equitable education policy:** The NEP 2020 aims to ensure inclusive and equitable dissemination of education for its citizens to build a better society.
- **Infrastructural developments:** The *Viksit Bharat 2047* vision focuses on inclusivity and accessibility of education as its key objectives. In line with this vision, remarkable progress has been made in infrastructure development and digitisation. Schools are provided with access to computers with a reliable Internet connection and infrastructural changes to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities.
- **Improved gross enrolment ratio:** Gross enrolment ratio is increasing across the country. The retention rates are also strong. However, more focus and efforts are underway to ensure better accessibility to schools. Model school initiatives such as PM SHRI schools are expected to bridge the gaps in accessibility to quality schools.
- **Upskilling of teachers:** Mentoring programmes are introduced to ensure experienced teachers share their expertise with their mentees. Also, the digital platform NISHTHA coordinates continuous professional development opportunities for teachers.
- **Digitisation:** In the next five years, schools in India will be completely computerised and connected via the Internet. Digital platforms such as Diksha and APAAR aim to facilitate easy knowledge dissemination and simplified management of academic records, respectively.





# QUALITY EDUCATION

## DIGITISATION

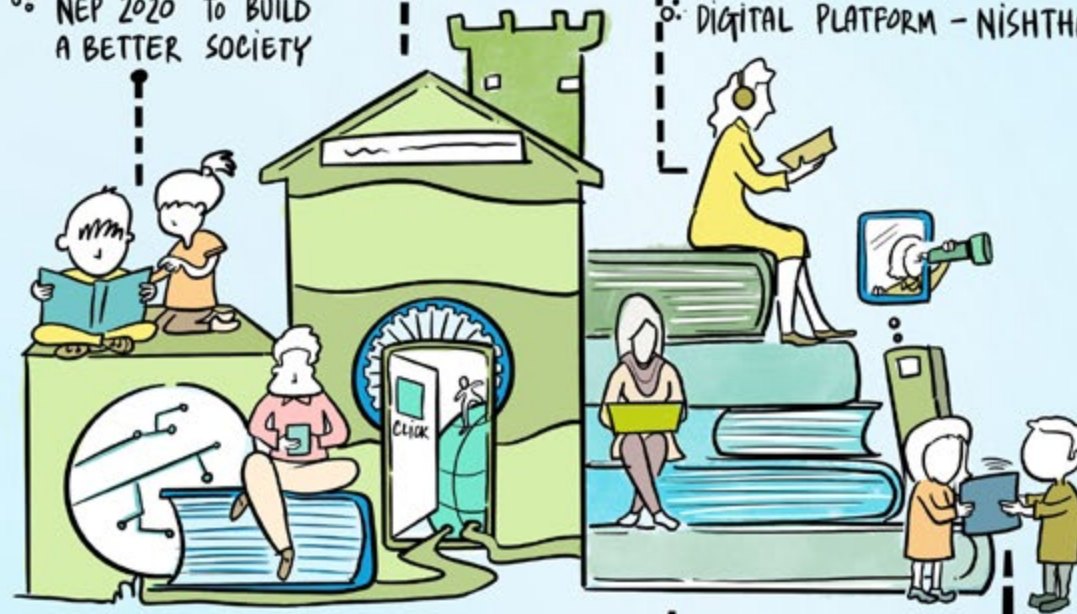
- DIKSHA AND APAAR
- EASY KNOWLEDGE DISSEMINATION
- SIMPLIFIED MANAGEMENT OF ECONOMIC RECORDS

## INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE EDUCATION POLICY

- NEP 2020 TO BUILD A BETTER SOCIETY

## UPSKILLING OF TEACHERS

- MENTORING PROGRAMMES
- DIGITAL PLATFORM - NISHTHA



## INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

- ACCESS TO COMPUTERS
- RELIABLE INTERNET
- ACCESSIBILITY TO DIFFERENTLY ABLED STUDENTS

## IMPROVED GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO

- BETTER ACCESSIBILITY TO SCHOOLS
- MODEL SCHOOL INITIATIVES SUCH AS PM SHRI SCHOOLS



BOARDS

CREATE a  
LEVEL PLAYING  
FIELD!  
HERE...

N.E.P.

WE OUTPERFORM  
BOYS!

FEMINISATION  
OF TEACHERS

SERVICE DELIVERY

SMALL SIZE

MULTIPLE CATEGORIES

NOT ENOUGH INFRASTRUCTURE

TRACKING LIMITATIONS

CHALLENGES

AFFORDABLE  
AND  
ACCESSIBLE

EDUCATION - CRITICAL PATHWAYS FOR ADVANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION  
AND EQUITY

DEMOGRAPHY ... DEMOCRACY ... DIVERSITY

ANALYTICS

AI  
DRIVEN

DATA

... TRACKING the  
STUDENT'S JOURNEY

TEACHER  
MENTORSHIP

TRAINING  
PORTAL

MOTHER TONGUE  
AND  
MULTI-LINGUAL

MORE MENTORS

GAINFUL  
EMPLOYMENT

VOCATIONAL  
EDUCATION

SUPPLY

CREATE  
DEMAND  
HERE!