# BEYOND THE BLACKBOARD: PERSONALISATION & PROGRESS

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## ABSTRACT

*Despite significant progress in school enrolment across India, low learning outcomes remain a major issue, particularly in foundational literacy and numeracy. Many students advance through the education system without gaining essential reading and math skills. This highlights a crucial gap between access to education and authentic learning. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 seeks to close this gap by promoting a learner-centred approach based on skills. A key part of this reform is the focus on personalised education, which recognises that each student has different learning styles and needs that a standard, one-size-fits-all model cannot support. Personalised learning offers a flexible and inclusive approach that tailors teaching methods, pace, and content to meet the needs of individual learners. Including ongoing assessments, cross-disciplinary curricula, and student choice encourages children to engage with education in meaningful ways. This method is particularly beneficial for students who are in school but struggle with fundamental skills. This essay discusses how implementing personalised learning within the framework of NEP 2020 can improve literacy outcomes and promote educational fairness, shifting the emphasis from simply showing up to genuinely understanding and growing.*

**Keywords:** Personalised Learning, Adaptive Learning, National Education Policy 2020, Personalised Learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Education systems worldwide are undergoing a significant transformation, driven by technological advancements, recognition of diverse learner needs, and changes in the job market[1]. Countries like Finland, Singapore, and Estonia are redefining classrooms to

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[1] Vincent, Gamifying Education: The Impact of Legends of Learning on Student Performance (Latestly, 10 July 2025) https://latestly.com.au/legends-of-learning-education-gamified/ accessed 10 July 2025

prioritise student agency, creativity, and adaptability. In the 21st century, learners are expected to absorb information, question, apply, and innovate. This shift calls for education systems to embrace personalised learning tailored to individual pace, style, and path. Personalized education provides a way forward by recognizing individual strengths and social backgrounds. This approach makes learning more relevant and just. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 strives to bring India's education system in line with global trends while considering local circumstances. In India, this transition is urgent. With one of the largest student populations globally,[2] the conventional model, focused on rote learning and high-stakes testing, fails to address the diverse needs of learners, compounded by rural-urban divides and access disparities. Education is the foundation for progress, and personalised learning is essential for unlocking every child's potential. India can establish a distinctive transformative education model by integrating flexibility and learner-centric principles.

**NEP 2020**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant transformation in India's educational system, addressing longstanding criticisms of its rigidity and exam-centric approach. It envisions classrooms as dynamic environments that foster critical thinking and creativity by prioritising foundational literacy, holistic development, and learner-centred pedagogy. The NEP recognises that just being present isn't enough. The quality and method of learning are what count. This is important in a diverse country like India, where education should support personal growth and drive inclusive national development. While India has made commendable progress in improving access to education, critical concerns remain regarding the quality of learning outcomes. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 indicates that over 95% of children aged 6 to 14 are enrolled in school[3], reflecting robust policy initiatives and a deepening societal commitment to education. However, enrolment figures alone do not equate to effective learning. Alarmingly, only 23.4% of Class III students in government schools can read a Class II-level text, highlighting significant deficits in foundational literacy. Complementary data from the Ministry of Education's

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[2] Press Information Bureau, India's School Education System Serves 24.8 Crore Students Across 14.72 Lakh Schools With 98 Lakh Teachers: Economic Survey 2024-25 (Ministry of Finance, 31 January 2025) https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2097864 accessed 14 July 2025

[3]TNN, 'School enrolment ticks the box but kids need a deep dive now' (Times of India, 6 July 2025) https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/school-enrolment-ticks-the-box-but-kids-need-a-deep-dive-now/articleshow/122276090.cms accessed 10 July 2025

PARAKH Rashtriya Sarvekshan[4] reveal that 43% of Class VI students cannot comprehend the central ideas in basic written passages. At the secondary level, 63% of Class IX students were found to lack the ability to recognise numerical patterns or demonstrate proficiency in fundamental mathematical operations, including understanding fractions and integers. The PARAKH survey,[5] conducted in December 2023, assessed over 2.1 million students from Grades III, VI, and IX across more than 74,000 government and private schools situated in 781 districts throughout 36 states and union territories. The findings present a sobering picture of conceptual and applied learning deficits across core subjects. Students exhibited considerable difficulty executing basic mathematical functions, such as integers and fractions and applying mathematical reasoning to everyday scenarios.[6] Scientific literacy, too, was found to be inadequate, with over 60% of Class IX students failing to meet minimum competency standards. Many could not classify matter based on its physical and chemical properties, understand changes in matter through the particulate model, or articulate the properties of common physical phenomena such as magnetism.

These learning gaps point to systemic challenges beyond content delivery, underscoring the need for pedagogical reform grounded in conceptual understanding, diagnostic assessment, and learner-specific support, principles that form the cornerstone of NEP 2020. The primary goal is to reduce gaps in access and quality, ensuring educational opportunities is fair and inclusive across different socioeconomic backgrounds. A key part of this vision is to transform higher education institutions into active centres for learning, research, and innovation. The policy includes plans to raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), introduce multiple entry and exit points for degree programs, and encourage students to follow academic paths that match their interests and strengths. Additionally, it suggests establishing strategic groups like a National Research Foundation and a National Education Technology Forum, along with expanding and updating higher education institutions nationwide.[7] To

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[4] Manash Pratim Gohain, Over half of school kids struggle with basics, reveals Government Survey (Times of India, 9 July 2025) http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/122328472.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst accessed 10 July 2025

[5] National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), About Parakh (NCERT, undated) https://ncert.nic.in/parakh/about.php accessed 11 July 2025

[6] Uday Balakrishnan, School education needs to be scaled up, (The Hindu Business Line, 24 June 2019) https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/school-education-needs-to-be-scaled-up/article28128276.ece accessed 11 July 2025

[7] Dr. Bhanuben Balvantsinh Kharachiya, NEP 2020 (2022) 10(10) IJCRT https://ijcrt.org/papers/IJCRTU020039.pdf accessed 11 July 2025

achieve these striving reforms, the NEP advises[8] a complete revamp of the higher education system to improve institutional efficiency and effectiveness. However, this extensive change comes with challenges. Stakeholders have expressed concerns about implementing these systemic changes within current administrative structures.[9] The push toward digital platforms for accessibility and scale highlights the persistent digital divide. Many regions, particularly rural, lack reliable internet infrastructure, which may hinder equitable access to online learning. Addressing these infrastructural gaps is essential to ensure that digital initiatives under the NEP are truly inclusive. This transition might disrupt academic routines and operational processes, especially with insufficient preparation and capacity building. A gradual and collaborative implementation plan, supported by strong monitoring and evaluation, will ensure a smooth rollout. The policy also proposes several new initiatives that will require significant financial investment. Plans such as creating new multidisciplinary universities, promoting online education platforms, and reshaping existing structures need substantial public funding.

Finding sustainable financing for these reforms, while not overburdening taxpayers, presents a significant challenge. To effectively support these changes, the government should look for innovative funding models, involving public-private partnerships, institutional independence in financial planning, and outcome-based financing strategies.[10] Furthermore, the NEP acknowledges the need for faculty development to improve teaching standards in higher education. However, a continuing shortage of qualified faculty, particularly in specialised fields, could slow progress. Filling this gap requires focused recruitment, ongoing professional development, and strong academic leadership. Empowering students to choose their subjects marks a significant evolution in India's educational landscape. This forward-thinking approach encourages learners to pursue a well-rounded academic journey that integrates the arts, sciences, humanities, and vocational education, developing versatile and future-ready individuals.[11] By adopting a flexible curriculum framework, schools can offer

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[8] National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP), Part II
https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
[9] Kulal, A., N., A., Dinesh, S., Bhat, D. C., & Girish, A. "Evaluating the Promise and Pitfalls of India's National Education Policy 2020: Insights from the Perspectives of Students, Teachers, and Experts, (2024) SAGE Open, 14(4). https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241279367
[10] Dr. Shamsher Singh, Dr. Gurmeet Kaur, A critical study of NEP 2020 - salient features and challenges in the higher educational system (2023) 2(3) IJMCR
https://www.multispecialityjournal.com/uploads/archives/20230526215520_B-23-15.1.pdf accessed 11 July 2025
[11] National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023, K. Kasturirangan
https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/guidelines/ncf_2023.pdf

students the opportunity to select courses aligned with their interests, passions, and career goals. For instance, a student might delve into the complexities of physics while also studying music, or combine the analytical depth of economics with hands-on skills in carpentry or computer programming. The NEP 2020 promotes collaboration between schools and higher education institutions to facilitate interdisciplinary projects and assignments.[12] These experiences challenge students to apply concepts from multiple domains, fostering a holistic understanding of real-world issues. Such an approach cultivates creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills and prepares students to adapt effectively in an increasingly dynamic and interconnected world. Integrating the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2023 offers a transformative opportunity[13] to reshape the Indian education system, particularly in fostering essential social and emotional skills among students. When implemented thoughtfully, these policies can equip learners with the interpersonal competencies necessary to succeed in personal and professional domains.

However, the success of this ambitious reform will hinge on the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, including policymakers, educators, and institutional leaders, to ensure that the progressive vision of NEP 2020 is effectively translated into practice.[14] To ensure the credibility of education, it is important to set clear learning standards after both the primary (five years) and elementary (eight years) stages of schooling. Completion certificates should be given based on meeting these learning goals, not just on the number of years a student has spent in class.[15] Certificates that lack proven learning become mere symbols, offering no assurance of basic skills. Therefore, schools must maintain the integrity of certification by linking it directly to confirmed student learning results. In this context, the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 offers a timely shift toward competency-based education and personalised learning. This can be further bolstered by tailoring instruction to individual needs and learning levels.

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[12] T. Ashokkumar, T. Russel Raj, A. Rajadurai, A.H. Abishini, A.H. Anchani, Analyzing the impact of the new educational policy 2020: A comprehensive review of India's educational reforms (2025) Volume 108 https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0149718924001174

[13] Soni, Dr. Varuna Tehlan Dahiya, Exploring the Influence of India's National Education Policy 2020 on Student Social Skill Development 2024, 12(2) The International Journal of Indian Psychology https://ijip.in/pdf-viewer/?id=44298

[14] Meghna Sharma, Psychological Pillars: Bridging NEP-2020 and NCF-2023 in Education Transformation (2023), 13(3), International Journal of Education and Management Studies https://journals.indexcopernicus.com/api/file/viewByFileId/1853999

[15] EPW Engage, 'National Education Policy: Why Education Reforms in India have Failed to Make the Grade, Economic and Political Weekly (Engage) https://www.epw.in/engage/article/national-education-policy-why-education-reforms

## PERSONALISED LEARNING

*"Every student can learn, just not on the same day or in the same way."*

*- George Evans.*

A significant change is necessary: adopting personalised learning that places students into different grades based on their requirements for each subject. Students will learn based on their needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. Each student will be assigned various grades for different subjects according to their skills, proficiency, and aptitude test results. In this system, students consider a 10-year-old student in 4th grade for Environmental Studies, 7th grade for Mathematics, 5th grade for English, and 2nd grade for Marathi and Hindi. This approach will reduce class sizes and enable personalised attention for each student. Each student should be placed into grades based on individual subjects, rather than a singular grade level. This system, when implemented early, will ensure focused attention on the students' learning capacity rather than what is appropriate. An aptitude test should be conducted to assess and appropriately sort students' understanding into various grades. What is personalised learning? In simple words, it is a flexible, adaptive approach to empower students by providing a customised educational experience[16] Recognising, identifying, and nurturing each student's unique abilities involves sensitising teachers and parents to foster holistic development in academic and non-academic areas.

It is essential to provide flexibility, allowing learners to select their educational trajectories and programs, thus enabling them to pursue their paths in life according to their talents and interests. Additionally, there should be no rigid divisions between the arts and sciences, curricular and extra-curricular activities, or vocational and academic streams, to dismantle harmful hierarchies and silos among different fields of learning. A commitment to multidisciplinary and comprehensive education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports is vital for preparing students for a multidisciplinary world, ensuring the unity and integrity of all knowledge.[17] The shift toward personalised learning marks a move from traditional one-size-fits-all teaching methods. It aims to create learning

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[16] TOI Education, Personalised Learning: Introducing Success in the Modern Classroom, 6 March 2025 https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/education/india-schools-online/edtech-star-speaks/personalised-learning-introducing-success-in-the-modern-classroom/articleshow/118758988.cms#:~:text=Personalized%20learning%20tailors%20education%20to,them%20a%20customised%20educational%20experience

[17] National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023, K. Kasturirangan https://dsel.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/guidelines/ncf_2023.pdf

environments that recognise each student's unique strengths, abilities, and needs.[18] Every student learns differently; some grasp concepts better through visuals, others through hands-on activities or verbal explanations. These learning styles influence how effectively students absorb, retain, and apply knowledge. Educators can make learning more engaging and improve student outcomes by adapting teaching methods to align with individual learning preferences. Personalised learning became even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted regular classroom teaching and accelerated the shift to online education.[19] The sudden transition revealed the limitations of uniform teaching approaches and underscored the need for flexible systems to support diverse learners in various contexts. Factors such as students' backgrounds, the learning environment, and how lessons are designed all play a role in determining how effective personalised learning can be.[20] As schools continue to adapt, personalised education offers a pathway to ensure that all students receive meaningful and accessible learning experiences.[21]

The age-old Gurukul system in India focused intensively on curating a curriculum specific to each individual's future career pathway. The Guru had a holistic view of the Shishya's learning goals and future career needs, and was able to modify learning outcomes for each learner. Most of our innovative educational practices were lost when the British overhauled our education system.[22] As Ken Robinson describes, the British needed clerks to run the Indian bureaucracy. In an era devoid of computers, they needed Indians to obey commands as human machines, not think as intelligent beings. One of the highlights of the New Education Policy, and the National Curriculum Framework of 2023 that followed suit, was the focus on flexible curricula without rigid boundaries between streams and domains. Education is a transformative and empowering journey that propels individuals toward personal growth and cultivates happiness, security, and a wealth of opportunities through varied experiences[23]. At the heart of this process lies the profound understanding that education deepens self-awareness and insight. It is crucial to acknowledge that education demands the strategic facilitation that nurtures students' intrinsic motivation to learn. This proactive engagement

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[18] Cittra Juniarni, M. Ali Sodikin, Akhyar, Almujahid, Nova Asvio, The Importance of Personalized Learning: How to Tailor Education to the Individual Needs of Students [2024] Education Studies and Teaching Journal (EDUTECH) Vol 1 (1) 2024 : 188-196

[19] Ibid

[20] Ibid

[21] Ibid

[22] Akshal Agarwal, Personalised learning: A way out to fix the problem of unemployable graduates, ET CONTRIBUTORS, 01 July 2024, https://ecoti.in/tDYB5Z

[23] UNESCO, Reimagining Our Futures Together: A new social contract for education, 2021, https://unevoc.unesco.org/pub/futures_of_education_report_eng.pdf

allows learners to construct meaningful knowledge, embrace their educational journeys, and ultimately claim ownership of their learning. The teacher walks alongside the child as the child discovers the world of education. This is what the Greek root of the word "pedagogy" means: "to walk with the child".[24] Independent learning plays a vital role in education by highlighting the importance of creating an environment that encourages personal growth and exploration. This approach fosters self-discovery and enhances overall development within educational settings. One of the most pressing challenges facing the education sector today is making learning relevant for Generation Alpha. This cohort has constant access to the Internet and the ability to learn on the go, making creating engaging learning modules more crucial than ever.[25] Personalised learning offers a practical solution by providing these students with technology that adapts to their learning styles, preferences, and pace. AI-powered EdTech platforms can develop customised learning modules tailored to each student's needs, ensuring a more effective educational experience. In India, the widespread accessibility of smartphones in tier-1 and tier-2 cities has introduced children to technology at an early age.

The ongoing expansion of affordable internet access is poised to further accelerate this trend. According to the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), the number of internet users in India is expected to reach 1.5 billion by 2025.[26] Additionally, a study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) reveals that gamified learning experiences enhance both knowledge retention and motivation. To capture Gen A's attention, an AI-powered gamification[27] that includes challenges, simulations, and interactive elements is key[28]. In India, incorporating local culture, stories, and real-world scenarios into these interactive formats can enhance engagement and make learning more relatable.[29] A recent report by

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[24] UNESCO International Bureau of Education, Training tools for curriculum development, 2017, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000250057

[25] Shruti Bansal, Generation Alpha: Transforming education through personalised learning, 31 December 2024, https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/featurephilia/story/generation-alpha-transforming-education-through-personalised-learning-2657758-2024-12-31

[26] IAMAL, Internet in India 2024, https://www.iamai.in/sites/default/files/research/Kantar_%20IAMAI%20report_2024_.pdf

[27] Smiderle, R., Rigo, S.J., Marques, L.B. *et al,* The impact of gamification on students' learning, engagement and behavior based on their personality traits. *Smart Learn. Environ.* **7**, 3 (2020) https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-019-0098-x

[28] ET TECH X, Meeting the Expectations of Generation Alpha: The Future of EdTech 01 January 2025, https://ettechx.com/blog_details?sno=531

[29] Sascha H Funk, Empowering voices, shaping futures: digital storytelling for sustainable transformation (2024) IJSRA, 13(01), https://ijsra.net/sites/default/files/IJSRA-2024-1827.pdf

Nasscom[30] indicated that only 3% of the current workforce is adequately prepared for jobs requiring proficiency in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. Addressing this gap necessitates a focused shift toward designing learning outcomes tailored to individual needs. By leveraging personalised, technology-enabled instruction delivered through multimodal teaching methods, classrooms can better equip students with the skills needed for a rapidly evolving job market. Blended learning is a student-centred approach to education that blends synchronous learning activities from traditional (face-to-face) classrooms with asynchronous learning activities from e-learning.[31] In India, 81% of the people think mixing in-person and online learning can result in a positive educational experience, giving rise to blended learning. Furthermore, 88% of learners worldwide say that online learning will be a permanent part of primary, secondary, and higher education. 87% of students in India believe that in the future, online learning will be a part of the educational process. In the new normal that educators have chosen, the blended learning approach will be standard.[32]

**CONCLUSION**

Personalised learning puts the individual student first. It creates an environment that adjusts to their unique pace, style, and goals. Adaptive technologies and customised teaching methods can unlock every learner's full potential. It shifts education from a one-size-fits-all model to a dynamic, student-focused experience. Looking ahead, adopting personalised learning is not just a choice; it is essential for developing a generation of engaged, effective, and lifelong learners. NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century. It replaces the thirty-four-year-old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986. This policy is based on principles of access, equity, quality, affordability, and accountability. It supports the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.[33] The goal is to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and a global knowledge leader. It aims to make school and college education more holistic, flexible, and multidisciplinary. The focus is on meeting the needs of the 21st century and fostering the unique abilities of each student. As technology progresses

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[30] https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/topic/nasscom , Akshal Agarwal, Personalised learning: A way out to fix the problem of unemployable graduates, ET CONTRIBUTORS, 01 July 2024, https://ecoti.in/tDYB5Z
[31] Tatjana Vasileva-Stojanovska, Toni Malinovski, Marina Vasileva, Dobri Jovevski, Vladimir Trajkovik, Impact of satisfaction, personality and learning style on educational outcomes in a blended learning environment (2015) Volume 38, https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1041608015000357
[32] Sofiya, Tufail, Khan, Blended Pedagogy in the Light of National Education Policy of India (2020): A Detailed Analysis of UGC's Concept Note on Blended Mode of Teaching and Learning, (2025) IJELS 10(1) https://ijels.com/upload_document/issue_files/32IJELS-102202544-Blended.pdf  Accessed 13 July 2025
[33] Salient Features of NEP 2020, Minstery of External Affairs, https://eoi.gov.in/eoisearch/MyPrint.php?11106?001/0002

and educators strive for more inclusive classrooms, quickly adopting personalised learning strategies will be important. Ultimately, by fully embracing a focused, personalised, intuitive and model, we can inspire a new generation of learners who are knowledgeable and encouraged to become creative thinkers and confident problem solvers, ready to face tomorrow's challenges.