

Sansad TV Perspective: Education Reforms

In the series Sansad TV Perspective, we bring you an analysis of the discussion featured on the insightful programme 'Perspective' on Sansad TV, on various important topics affecting India and also the world. This analysis will help you immensely for the [IAS exam](#), especially the mains exam, where a well-rounded understanding of topics is a prerequisite for writing answers that fetch good marks.

In this article, we feature the discussion on the topic: Education Reforms

Video link: <https://youtu.be/5YDw8BzvCVE>

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Participants:

1. Dr. Sridhar Srivastava, Director, NCERT
2. Vinay Sahasrabudde, Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha & Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee of HRD

Context:

In this changing world, education acts as the cornerstone of the development and progress of a country in order to generate skilled and employable youth. Therefore, education needs reforms to nurture the children from a very early stage and facilitate learning.

The Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports submitted its report on the Reforms in Content and Design of School Textbooks during the winter session of the Parliament (December 2021). The committee invited a consultative ambience with various stakeholders, important state and central institutions responsible for drafting textbooks and curricula, educational experts and representatives from the civil society.

The need to reform the content and design of school textbooks:

- School textbooks are the primary tools to educate children through diverse disciplines that define our country.
- The enhancement of the quality of the textbooks that includes both printed and e-textbooks is of enormous importance to improve the learning of the children.
- The Standing Committee Report does pay attention to a shift in the purpose of education from absolutely content driven to being the vehicle for increasing the critical thinking and problem-solving ability of the students boosting creativity.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF):

- The NCF forms the basis of writing and developing textbooks in India to establish an evolved national system of education within the purview of the National Policy on Education, 1986.
- The NCF emphasized relevance, flexibility and quality as means to modernize the system of education.
- The new NCF (2020-21) that is framed is an outcome of the [National Education Policy, 2020](#) which would be undertaken by the NCERT based principles after a thorough discussion with state governments, ministries, relevant departments of the central government and other experts.
- The National Curriculum Framework for School Education will be available in all the regional languages and it will be subjected to revision and update once every 5-10 years with much emphasis on frontline needs.

Highlights of the Report:

- The report recognised the need to integrate audio-visual means and prioritize foundational skills. To do so the committee recommends the increased use of pictures, graphics, QR (Quick Response) codes and other audio-visual materials which are child friendly and make the process of learning more interesting. This idea has been supported by the India Report: Digital Education 2020 and the reports of the Quality Council of India.
- The standing committee took the example of an initiative by the Maharashtra State Bureau of Textbook Production and Curriculum Research (Ektamik Pathya Pustak) to lighten the school bag by integrating materials for Language, English and Mathematics into one single book. This is reiterated by the New Education Policy, 2020 (Chapter 4.33).
- Textbooks will highlight the ill effects of drug addiction and any other addiction which is harmful. This will enhance awareness among students with different socio-economic backgrounds.
- An impetus is provided by the standing committee report to promote the tales of local heroes, their historic empires, regional diversity and unity. For example - The history textbooks are suggested to include Vikramaditya, Cholas, Chalukyas, [Vijayanagara](#), Gondwana and Ahoms of the North-Eastern region.
- It is suggested that the representation of women in textbooks must be enhanced as the committee observed their inadequate representation in the textbooks. The issues of gender bias and stereotypes are to be addressed by NCERT. Efforts have been put in place to make the portrayals and visual depiction more gender-inclusive.
- Women who embodied courage and wisdom must be commemorated through their historic narratives. Therefore, the committee recommends adding the stories of [Rani Laxmi Bai](#), Zalkari Bai, Chand Bibi, etc.
- The addition of contributions of ancient India in the disciplines such as Philosophy, Science, Mathematics, Medicine, Politics, Ethics, Arts, etc. has been emphasized.
- The committee also touched upon the importance of inculcating the constitutional values among students with the noble intention to promote national integration and unity.

Reforming Education and Enriching the Future:

- The comprehensive study and recommendations of the standing committee will be fruitful by the holistic participation of all the states and stakeholders of education along with effective policy intervention to address the challenges.
- Many experts believe that the pandemic has posed a major threat to learning accompanied by the existing [digital divide](#) that obstructs access to online education especially for the children of vulnerable sections of the society.

- A certain level of preparedness can be a preventive measure towards pandemic-like situations by creating a more resilient system of education.
 - Policies are expected to address the issue of the digital divide with more effectiveness and make education accessible, available and affordable for all which would offer welcoming steps towards the sustainable development goals for education ([SDG 4](#)).
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