

# Transforming Primary Education through Artificial Intelligence: Policy Vision and Pedagogical Challenges in India

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## ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is simply transforming the world, in all aspects, including economies, society and how we learn, and this change is very relatable even in a college context. Even though universities still rely on higher education, they are seeing that as nations strive to more future-oriented schooling systems, exposure to artificial intelligence concepts, earlier in life, is becoming more important in shaping younger generations in our more digital, automated world. As a way of discussing why we need to introduce AI in the primary school curriculum of India, the paper relies on the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework of School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 as the frameworks to discuss the issue. It also examines the pedagogical advantages, structural barrier, ethical issues, and implementation plans of responsible, inclusive, and context-specific AI learning utilizing a policy-analysis approach. In a nutshell, it can be argued that AI, under the priorities of core learning and equity-oriented pedagogy, can transform classroom practice, enhance individualized learning, and equip students with early practical AI skills and critical ethical judgment.

This study focuses on the view of teacher educators regarding the incorporation of artificial intelligence in primary education with a spotlight on pedagogical readiness,

ethical accountability, and professional metamorphosis. It claims that successful AI integration mainly hinges on developmentally suitable teacher education that goes hand in hand with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023, thus making sure that the use of technology is to enable, and not replace, human, centered pedagogy. The research brings out that there is a need of critical AI literacy, AI implementation concentrating on fairness, and continuous professional development to enable teachers to be not only reflective but also ethically grounded practitioners of AI, supported classrooms.

**Key words:** Artificial Intelligence, economies, society, NEP 2020, inclusive, accountability, professional metamorphosis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of pervasive computing and artificial intelligence technologies imposes the need to re-evaluate the essence of the purposes of education. The traditional curricula based traditionally on literacy, numeracy and rote memorisation are becoming less satisfactory in an environment where knowledge creation and problem solving are enabled using intelligent systems. Children are engaged with AI in smart phones, virtual assistants, games, and interactive platforms long before

the first year of school begins, which is why it is crucial once again that learning should produce not only good users but good citizens, ethical actors and contributors to an AI-driven environment.

The recent changes in education include such key reforms as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India, which, in the context of the current climate, promotes the shift of the paradigm of curriculum and teaching methods towards the emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, and interdisciplinary learning. According to the NEP clearly, there should be development of education to learning to think critically, solve problems, be creative, multidisciplinary (NEP 2020). At the same time, the National Curriculum Framework of School Education (NCF-SE) 2023 can unambiguously identify that AI and other technologies have a transformational impact on the teaching and learning process and should be used in a responsible manner by both students and educators.

This paper places the integration of AI in primary schools within the context of these policy frameworks, assesses the pedagogical defensibility of its implementation, evaluates its possible benefits, and the limitations implicit in its implementation, and the frameworks of ethics necessary to deploy it equitably.

## **2. Policy Foundations Supporting AI Integration**

### **2.1 National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**

NEP 2020 sets a comprehensive reform agenda which, among other things, stresses 21st, century competencies, digital learning, and technology, enabled pedagogy. The policy advocates for computational thinking, digital fluency, and skills for the future to be developed at all levels of schooling, with curriculum frameworks being encouraged to integrate these competencies in a thorough manner.

A key statement which embodies the spirit goes: "Education must gradually shift towards learning how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and

multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new information readily in novel and changing fields."

It is this focus that essentially forms the basis of the case for AI education being in line with NEP's goal of producing analytical thinkers and learners with the capacity to adapt continuously from the very early stages.

### **2.2 National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF, SE) 2023**

NCF, SE 2023 is a very close reflection of the curriculum, level anticipations of the technologies which are yet to be universally implemented. It recognizes Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, big data analytics, and visualization as technologies that can be used to enhance teaching, learning processes, assessment, teacher preparation, and access to education. Another important point that the document raises concerns that there is a need to create environments under which learners and teachers are conversant not only with the use but also the safety, security and equity issues as pertains to technology. Importantly, NCF-SE requires the basic knowledge of the operation of technologies and urges both students and teachers to develop the skills to identify their use and their influence on the Indian educational process.

## **3. Rationale for AI in Primary Education**

### **3.1 Enhancing Foundational Learning:**

Primary education is fundamentally about giving children the skills to read, write and do basic math. Using AI, adaptive platforms can provide individualized guidance, step, by, step explanations, and study support in several languages, tailor, made to the requirements of each student. The greatest benefit of this will be felt in multilingual, culturally diverse classrooms where individual students learn at widely different speeds.

**3.2 Developing Early Digital and AI literacy:** The widespread introduction of the concept of artificial intelligence (AI) into the contemporary society cannot be left without the effect on primary education as it should, at least, present the basics of AI. These, among others, involve the identification of patterns in the data and the implementation of logical reasoning and the awareness of ethical concerns related to automation and the use of data. The early introduction of the AI is predisposing kids to think creatively and analytically, turning them into passive users of technology rather than critically thinking in the digital age.

**3.3 Supporting Teachers:** Through AI-inspired tools, educators receive a lot of help in formative assessment, tracking of progress, and set-up of feedback loops,

which allows time on relational and socio-emotional pedagogy. Furthermore, the technologies change the role of the teacher, making educators facilitators and mentors in the environment of technology-mediated learning.

**3.4 Conformity to Reforms in National Curriculum:** According to the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework 2023, the Ministry of Education now offers a gradual introduction of AI and computational thinking since Grade 3 with the understanding of AI literacy as a key foundational skill. This policy initiative will in turn guide curriculum planning, professional development of teachers and the realization of educational materials.

**Table 1: Pedagogical Approach for AI in Primary Grades.**

Grade Level	AI Exposure Type	Example Activity	Learning Outcome
Classes 1–2	Pattern & logic games (unplugged)	Sorting shapes, rule games	Logical thinking
Class 3	Introduction to 'how machines learn'	Story of a smart robot	AI awareness
Class 4	Voice tools & adaptive quizzes	Reading assistant apps	Personalized literacy
Class 5	Simple block coding & AI ethics	Scratch + bias discussion	Computational thinking & ethics

**Table 2: Role Transformation: Teacher in an AI-Supported Classroom**

Traditional Role	AI-Supported Role
Content deliverer	Learning facilitator
Manual assessment	Data-informed mentor
One-pace teaching	Differentiated instruction
Administrative burden	Focus on socio-emotional learning
Limited feedback time	Real-time personalized guidance

#### 4. Educational and Ethical Benefits

**Personalized Learning Paths:** AI adaptive systems have the potential to customize the teaching to each learner's profile.

**Inclusivity and Accessibility:** AI tools provide content in different languages, offer features for the help of the disabled, and accessibility supports for a wide range of learners.

**Ethical AI Awareness:** A basic curriculum can help give students an understanding of the ethical issues related to AI such as bias, data privacy, and societal impact.

**Engagement and Inquiry:** AI resources that are gamified and interactive can help keep students engaged and promote higher, order thinking skills.

These advantages agree with NEPs mission of a holistic and learner, centric education system and also reflect the NCF, SEs focus on the use of technology in a contextualized manner.

#### 5. Challenges and Risks

##### 5.1 Infrastructure and the Digital Divide

Many schools in India, especially those located in rural and economically backward

areas, are without proper electricity, have poor internet facilities, and have limited access to devices. If there is no focused investment, the advent of AI in education may deepen educational disparities, rather than solve them.

### 5.2 Teacher Preparedness

Teachers' initial education and continuous training are very important for the implementation of AI in the local teaching, learning process. In addition, professional development should equip teachers with skills not only to scaffold AI learning and interpret analytics but also to use AI ethically in classrooms.

### 5.3 Curriculum Overload

Primary school syllabi are stuffed already. Rather than being a separate technical

subject, AI should be introduced as a series of overarching conceptual threads.

### 5.4 Ethical and Data Safety Concerns

AI devices need data to function. In the absence of proper data protection laws, such frameworks may lead to infringement of privacy, bias in algorithm decisions, and monitoring by the digital medium. Ethics should be at the center of AI in education policies.

### 5.5 Commercialization Risks

Educational technology products may first and foremost serve their own commercial goals rather than focus on substrate issues of pedagogy and equity. Therefore, it is necessary to have public control and also open source options.

Table 3: SWOT Analysis of AI Inclusion in Primary Education

Strengths	Weaknesses
Personalized learning for diverse learners	Lack of infrastructure in rural/remote schools
Enhances foundational literacy and numeracy	Limited teacher preparedness in AI tools
Supports inclusive education (assistive tech, multilingual tools)	Risk of over-reliance on screens
Provides real-time feedback and assessment	Curriculum already overloaded
Reduces teacher workload in routine tasks	Dependence on external EdTech vendors
Opportunities	Threats
Alignment with NEP 2020 & NCF-SE 2023 reforms	Widening digital and AI divide
Development of AI literacy from early years	Data privacy and child surveillance risks
Public-private partnerships for resources	Algorithmic bias reinforcing inequalities
Creation of open-source Indian AI learning tools	Commercialization of primary education
Professional growth for teachers	Resistance from parents and educators

Table 4: Challenges and Strategic Responses

Challenge	Strategic Response	Policy Alignment
Digital divide	Government funding, device grants, offline AI tools	NEP 2020 – Equity & Access
Teacher unpreparedness	Continuous AI pedagogy training	NCF-SE 2023 – Teacher capacity
Ethical risks & privacy	Strict child data protection protocols	NEP Tech use guidelines
Curriculum overload	Integrate AI within subjects, not as extra subject	NCF experiential learning
Commercial influence	Promote open-source and regulated tools	Public education mandate

## 6. Implementation Pathways

Implementing AI in primary school education with a high degree of responsibility implies the following measures:

**Policy, Driven Infrastructure Investment:** Equipping schools with the necessary

gadgets, internet connection, and electricity should be made a priority by means of policy, oriented support to a certain extent.

**Teacher Education:** It is very crucial to set up well, structured teacher training and professional development programs for a sustainable AI application in education.

**Curriculum Integration:** One of the ways to integrate AI in education at an early stage is to introduce kids to AI through studies of different disciplines like science, math, arts, etc. in an interesting and fun manner

**Ethical Frameworks:** The use of AI should be accompanied by an ethical framework that safeguards the privacy of the pupils' data, the security of the users, and the transparency of the systems and the presence of a human behind the surveillance.

**Collaborative Design:** Everyone who has an interest in the area of AI education must be consulted when designing AI learning resources, from teachers and curriculum experts, through community stakeholders, to EdTech developers.

### **Teacher Educators' Perspective on the Inclusion of Artificial Intelligence in Primary Education:**

In the view of teachers and teachers' educators, implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the primary school is not a technological change, but a radical change at the pedagogical, ethical, and professional levels. The teacher education institutions play a medium connecting the intentions behind the policy and the situations in classrooms, as such, making the useful application of AI in elementary schooling depend on the level at which instructors are prepared to understand, analyze, and apply AI to developmentally significant degrees.

### **Re-defining Teacher Education in the Age of AI:**

In the National Education Policy 2020, it is indicated clearly that teacher education will have to be reformed to meet the 21st-century competencies, online proficiency, and multidisciplinary learning. It notes that in order to support meaningful learning experiences, instructors should have the most up-to-date pedagogical practices and technological tools. In a teacher-educator perspective, it suggests that AI literacy cannot stay an extra or peripheral aspect of

teacher training, but it should be part of the key strand of pre-service and in-service training.

Equally, the National Curriculum Framework 2023 of School Education acknowledges the disruptive power of new technologies, such as AI, in the classroom processes. It recommends capacity building in teachers to ensure teachers are responsible and decisive in using AI-powered tools. Teacher educators take this to be a directive to shift beyond the basic digital skills training to critical digital pedagogy -in which teachers are informed not just of the mechanisms of AI, but also of what it entails in thinking, equity, culture, and ethics.

### **Critical AI Literacy and Pedagogical Preparedness:**

Teacher educators claim that AI implementation in primary education has to be developmental sensitive. Primary classrooms form areas where primary literacy, numeracy, socialization and value orientation is acquired. Therefore, AI is not to replace human interaction but to complement it. Researchers including Punya Mishra and Matthew J. Koehler, through the TPACK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge) model have highlighted that meaningful integration of technology requires the intersection of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge. Teacher educators expand this model to include AI such that there is a requirement that instructors should learn pedagogical arguments AI-specific, i.e., it should be clear when, why, and how AI tools may be used to support differentiated instruction without diminishing learning to algorithmic products.

In this regard, teacher AI literacy encompasses:

- Basic concepts of AI (data, machine learning, algorithms).
- Skeptical perception of AI-created analytics.

- Understanding the bias and limitations of the AI systems.
- The use of AI tools in interactive and inquiry learning.

### **Ethical accountability and Human-based learning:**

One of the central issues of teacher educators is the ethical aspect of AI application in primary education. The UNESCO 2021 Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence emphasizes transparency, accountability, data protection, and human rather than an artificial intelligence application. Teacher educators perceive it as an ethical responsibility to educate teachers to protect the data of children, identify an algorithmic bias, and supervise automated systems professionally.

In particular, primary school children are particularly exposed to the threats of surveillance and misuse of data, which is why teacher educators pursue the idea of the so-called human-in-the-loop approach, where the AI assists in instructional decision-making, but it does not replace the option of teacher autonomy. This seems to concur with the rest of the philosophical school of thought on education as expressed by John Dewey who highlighted the fact that education is essentially a social and experiential process. In this perspective, AI should be submissive to the discursive and communal areas of teaching.

### **Professional Identity and Role Transformation:**

The implementation of AI changes the conventional tasks of educators. The teacher educators do not view this change as a threat but as a redefining of professional identity. Teachers will no longer be a plain flow of information, but facilitators, mentors, ethical consultants, and decoders of data-driven wisdom.

However, educators of teachers warn of excessive technologization. Digital pedagogy studies show that teacher agency and creativity can be undermined through

the overuse of automated systems. On that note, teacher education should develop reflection practitioners, who will be able to strike a balance between technological effectiveness and socio-emotional sensitivity.

In this respect, AI is considered as:

- Formative assessment: a tool.
- A help system of differentiation learning.
- A learning gap identification mechanism.
- An environment of potential problem-solving activities.

But the aesthetic should never be out of context and excessively focused on professional judgment.

### **Equity, Inclusion and Contextual Realities:**

Digital divide is a problem that is highlighted by teacher educators in India, specifically. The infrastructure, access to devices, and reliable connectivity, which are not equally available in rural and economically disadvantaged areas, are the conditions of successful AI implementation in primary education. Equity and inclusion are the two main concepts emphasized in the National Education Policy 2020, which are applied by teacher educators as the warning that the implementation of AI should not contribute to disparities in education.

Therefore, the preparation of the teachers should incorporate the strategies of:

- Applying low-tech or non-computerized AI simulations.
- Including offline with computers thinking tasks.
- Application of AI concepts in the multilingual and culturally diverse classrooms.
- Inclusion design among disabled children.

Educators of teachers argue that it is necessary to be contextualized; AI education in India should be based on the local realities and not on copying models of

the technologically developed world without any customization.

### **On-going Professional Development and Institutional Support:**

Teacher educators make it clear that AI competence cannot be obtained in the course of one-time workshops but rather than that, long-term, models of professional development should be employed. The competency-based teacher preparation is starting to be emphasized more by the National Council of Teacher Education and in the age of AI, this should be applied as well to digital ethics, data literacy, and interdisciplinary innovation.

Action research, collaborative curriculum design, and Professional learning communities have been suggested as effective. Teacher educators promote collaboration between universities, schools, policymakers, and EdTech creators to make AI tools pedagogically sound and culture responsive.

### **Philosophical and Democratic thought:**

In addition to technical and pedagogical issues, teacher educators also have philosophical questions: What kind of citizen must AI-powered education create? Is it essential that AI should increase effectiveness, or are critical consciousness touch points?

Based on the arguments of critical pedagogies, including Paulo Freire, teacher educators insist that AI education should enable learners to question the technology, rather than use it. Students are expected to learn the impact of algorithms in forming information, affecting opinions, and in democratic procedures. Consequently, educators should receive training to host the conversations on prejudice, justice, and social influence at an early stage.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Incorporating AI into primary education is not simply a matter of technology but also teaching and learning issues. India through its educational policy instruments, the

National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023, has laid down a strategy for a contextual and principled approach to AI education with a view to opening it up for all students in an inclusive manner. If the integration is done with equity, in line with the developmental stage of the learners, and firmly rooted in the basic goal of education, it can completely change the early years of schooling, making it a point of departure for critical thinking as well as getting ready for the future.

This (AI) is a difficult road, but it is very consistent with India's educational reform commitments. Accompanied by policy insights and classroom realities, thoughtful implementation can ensure that AI will empower learners rather than alienate them. From the standpoint of teachers' educators, the integration of AI into primary education is both unstoppable and revolutionary. Nonetheless, its implementation effectively hinges on teacher training that is, first of all, pedagogically sound, ethically decent, locally appropriate, and philosophically reflective. Rather than allowing AI to redefine education as merely a technically optimized system, it should be used to improve the human, relational, and value-oriented aspects of learning.

Therefore, teacher educators are at the node of this change. They are not only the ones providing technology usage training but also the ones who are designing an ethically oriented, yet future, ready teaching profession. Braced with the National Education Policy 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education 2023, if AI is implemented wisely via comprehensive teacher education programs, it may serve as a strong promoter of an inclusive, critical, and human-centered primary education.

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