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Debunking Rote Learning

The Case For Enquiry-Based Learning In India

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Author:

Samyuktha Rajesh

Author: Samyuktha Rajesh

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Abstract: The Indian education system has long been dependent on rote learning. This dependence has created a significant learning gap between what students learn and their ability to apply it. This pedagogical approach does not align with the economic demands of the 21st century. On the one hand, rote learning focuses on intense memorisation; on the other hand, enquiry-based learning focuses more on students' holistic development. An enquiry-based learning approach nurtures critical thinking skills and focuses more on transferable skills than just building knowledge. This paper analyses the need for India to adopt enquiry-based learning on a larger scale. The current education system in India is highly centralised, with minimal decision-making power given to the primary stakeholders in the learning process (students, parents, and teachers). This paper argues for decentralised governance in education. The paper highlights the challenges of adopting enquiry-based learning in India and offers recommendations to shift from a rote-learning system to an enquiry-based approach.

Keywords:
Enquiry Based Learning, Education Governance, NEP 2020, SSSA

Table of Contents

Introduction

India's education system, with its focus on syllabus coverage and content mastery, has encouraged rote-based learning. The 'rote learning' pedagogical approach focuses on memorising content without grasping a deeper understanding of the information. (Ahmed & Ahmad, 2017). The ASER report 2024 highlights a large learning gap. Students from higher classes find it extremely difficult to grapple with foundational numerical and literacy questions. (ASER 2024)

The institutionalisation of this approach dates back to the colonial period, when the education system was structured to meet human resource needs for low-level, low-paying jobs, such as clerks, to handle administrative work (RAJ, S. P., 2024), rather than fostering independent thinking or enquiry. Rote-based pedagogy was used in classrooms, and examinations were the primary assessment criterion. This pedagogical approach created a strong culture of memorisation in classrooms. Education was thus used as a tool to enforce obedience and create dependence to serve the British administration.

While rote learning has existed in Indian tradition since Vedic times, Bhattacharya notes how it became institutionalised under colonial rule as a "relic of an oppressive colonial system intended to produce subservient British subjectivity" (Bhattacharya, U., 2022). With the British leaving India more than 75 years ago, India still struggles to adopt a reformed educational system.

There is an urgent need to bridge this learning gap, as India today stands at a crossroads where current economic demands cannot be met with outdated rote-based pedagogy. India's economy has a very young population. Over the next 20 years, India will enter a critical window to capitalise on its demographic dividend, during which the dependency ratio will be the lowest among South Asian countries (Goldman Sachs, 2025). This ratio measures the proportion of non-working-age individuals to working-age individuals. According to Ernst & Young (EY), by 2030, India's working-age population will account for 68.9% of the total, opening the potential for India to become the largest contributor to the global workforce (EY, 2023). However, this demographic dividend can only be capitalised on if the workforce is productive and skilled rather than simply large. The findings of the India Skills Report 2024 highlight that only around 51.25% of Indian youth are considered employable under current assessment frameworks, pointing to a large gap between education and employability. This mismatch in today's economy means the potential capacity-building of the workforce remains unrealised.

While the Right to Education Act 2009 has increased enrolment of children in K-12 education, it has, however, not translated into better learning outcomes. Reports from various testing agencies, such as ASER, indicate that students in higher classes find it difficult to meet the foundational level of literacy and numeracy (ASER 2024). Rote learning has led to students' weak intellect and robs them of the ability to build transferable skills required in the job market. (Maiti et al., 2024). Therefore, there is an urgent need to shift focus to a learning environment that enhances the competencies of students for them to be able to participate in the active workforce.

This paper examines the need for a transition from rote-based to enquiry-based learning in India. It analyses the slow shift towards an enquiry-based approach, following NEP 2020's recommendation of a more competency-based learning model. It highlights shortcomings in India's education governance landscape and recommends tangible solutions to accelerate the adoption of an enquiry-based learning model.

Why Rote Learning Fails Today

One key drawback of a rote-based approach is that actively recalling and remembering concepts, a key feature of this approach, turns out to be ineffective in the long run, as students end up mugging up answers rather than understanding the concepts. What this method also does is create individuals who lack critical and creative thinking skills. They focus more on "what" than "how" and have little to no idea how to apply this knowledge in novel contexts. Students, therefore, become passive participants rather than engaged learners in the knowledge-transfer process.

Another drawback of this system is that there is very little responsibility on the teachers' part for this learning gap. Teachers' responsibilities are reduced to mere information transmission rather than to building conceptual understanding broadly, nurturing curiosity, and developing the ability to think and learn independently. In a rote-based approach, learning outcomes depend heavily on the teacher. This means that students do not have the space, scope, or opportunity to think creatively and question beyond what is taught; rather, learning is restricted to what content the teacher delivers in class. This again leads to producing students void of analytical thinking, making them unprepared to take part in the workforce.

Enquiry-Based Learning

Given the current state of learning levels, the need of the hour for India is to disrupt the reliance on rote learning and adopt a new pedagogical approach. This paper recommends shifting to an enquiry-based learning model. An enquiry-based learning approach is centred on the holistic development of students, focusing on critical thinking and nudging students to question more. It also encourages teachers to use more activities and hands-on learning rather than memorising concepts. There is also due importance given to skill building and extracurricular activities, rather than solely focusing on academic ability. This ensures that students are equipped with transferable skills and can translate what they have learnt into practice.

The National Education Policy (2020)

The National Education Policy (NEP, 2020) laid the groundwork for a transition in the education system. The National Education Policy (2020) was launched on July 29, 2020, replacing the 1986 policy reforms. The main goal of NEP 1986 was overall student growth and women's empowerment. One key difference between the policies is that, under the 1986 reforms, education began at age six; however, the NEP 2020 reforms include children from the foundational age of three ("International Journal of Social Impact", 2017). The NEP 2020 recognises the need for an urgent shift away from rote-based learning and calls for a more competency-based, holistic approach that is not just focused on academic excellence.

The policy interventions suggested in the document aim to meet the requirements of the 21st century. NEP 2020 highlights the importance of enhancing students' cognitive skills and social-emotional awareness. Children's learning ability begins at a very young age. However, in India, their formal education starts much later. NEP 2020 recognises this and includes children from ages 3 to 18 in its pedagogical restructuring for their holistic development and well-being.

Section 4 of the NEP 2020 talks about reducing the current curriculum to just the "core essentials" and focusing more on experiential learning by incorporating hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, and storytelling-based pedagogy. (NEP, 2020). The NEP recommends changes to both pedagogy and assessments to make learning more holistic.

NEP 2020 recommends doing away with bifurcations within subjects such as "curricular" and "co-curricular". The demarcations between disciplines such as arts, science, and commerce are also slowly being addressed. Subjects such as sports and the arts will be integrated into the regular curriculum, and vocational training will also be provided to students. This interdisciplinary approach goes hand in hand with enquiry-based learning, resulting in better learning outcomes. Interdisciplinary learning naturally fosters enquiry-based learning by enabling students to connect concepts across subjects, engage in problem-solving, and develop critical thinking skills, which, in turn, lead to significantly higher student engagement and improved learning outcomes (Baraquia, 2018).

The National Education Policy also proposes the establishment of State School Standard Authorities (SSSA) in each state and union territory. The SSSA will ensure that all schools within a state (whether public, private, or philanthropic) will maintain certain quality standards. One of the primary purposes of establishing SSSA is to ensure transparency and accountability regarding regulatory information. With the power to regulate educational quality, the SSSA can be instrumental in enforcing the adoption of an enquiry-based learning model across schools, potentially improving students' learning outcomes.

While the NEP 2020 is a step in the right direction, the implementation phase has been rather slow. One of the key reasons for this is the institutional rigidity to policy changes, as well as the disinvolvement of key stakeholders in the learning process. Therefore, despite having crossed the 5-year mark since the introduction of the NEP (2020), there has been little to no change in shifting the pedagogical system.

Success of Enquiry-Based Learning: International Evidence

Case Study: Indonesia

Indonesia, like India, has had a long-standing dependency on rote learning. Around the same time as the introduction of NEP 2020 in India, Indonesia introduced Merdeka Belajar. Introduced in 2019 by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the Merdeka Belajar is a set of education reforms that focuses on enhancing the learning outcomes of students.

At the heart of the reforms is moving away from a rote-based learning approach towards a more competency-based approach. This focuses more on transferable skills by adopting new learning strategies such as project-based learning.

As a result of these reforms, content-heavy examinations are replaced by competency-based assessments that measure reasoning and application, aligning evaluation with learning processes rather than rote recall.

One of the biggest reforms under Merdeka Belajar is that schools and teachers have been granted greater autonomy to organise teaching and learning. Teachers and students are no longer passive participants in the learning process but actively engage in shaping their learning.

They are no longer bound by strict national curriculum requirements; teachers can teach students where they are in their learning rather than following a fixed lesson plan.

Early outcome evidence suggests that these enquiry-supportive reforms are yielding positive signals. While Indonesia's overall PISA scores declined between 2018 and 2022, the OECD notes that the decline was less pronounced than the OECD average, despite longer school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Takeaways for India:

1. Like Indonesia, India should also focus more on the decentralisation of education. While the state can establish minimum educational standards, teachers and schools should have the power to determine the pace of learning and the pedagogical approach tailored to each student.
2. In India, the annual board examinations and other competitive examinations create a state of dependency on rote learning. Like Indonesia, India should explore other evaluation mechanisms that do not depend entirely on recall-based examinations but rather on competency-based assessments.
3. In India, SSSA can ensure accountability through transparency and self-evaluation rather than stringent regulations, fostering a growth-oriented culture without a one-size-fits-all approach.
4. Merdeka Belajar encourages teachers to generate and curate their own teaching content, providing tools and platforms like Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) to support self-improvement and innovation. While NEP 2020 does suggest that teachers use portals such as DIKSHA to increase their knowledge and upskilling, there needs to be more teacher participation in accessing and translating this into transferable knowledge. This can be done with proper incentivisation.

One of the biggest takeaways from the Indonesian case study is that for India to adopt an enquiry-based learning approach, there needs to be a decentralisation of education governance, focusing more on a bottom-up approach.

Governance Bottlenecks: A VCIAA Framework Analysis

For a shift to enquiry-based learning, the systemic change will have to be multilayered. To do this, it is important to understand each stakeholder's perspective and role in the education governance system. The Voice Choice Incentive Accountability Autonomy Framework

(VCIAA Framework) provides a closer look at the same. While voice, choice, and accountability are recognised in existing literature as guiding factors in empowering individual agency, this research also examines incentives and accountability as factors.

This framework analyses the freedom to express opinions, provide feedback, and influence decisions (voice); the ability to make decisions (choice); motivation to excel (incentives); transparency in the system (accountability); and the freedom to make decisions without many regulations (autonomy) for every stakeholder.

The current education system in India is very centralised, with little to no power given to the primary stakeholders in the learning process. The centralised annual exams, the standardised curriculum, and the extensive focus on competitive exams make it difficult for any tangible change to take place in the system.

The VCIAA mapping highlights that the stakeholders (consumers of education) most affected have the least power in decision-making, whereas stakeholders with decision-making power have the least effect.

1. **Students** – They are the direct consumers of education and, therefore, are the primary stakeholders. Any policy that comes to light will affect students the most.
2. **Parents** – While students are the consumers, parents are the customers, as they are usually the ones buying or procuring the educational services for their ward. Parents are thus also one of the most important stakeholders in this process.
3. **Teachers** – They play an integral role in the learning process, as they are responsible for transferring knowledge.

4. **School Leaders –** School leaders create positive school environments that foster inclusivity and ensure quality education. They have the power to make decisions on school-specific rules and regulations, but are bound by broader policies in most decision-making.
5. **Testing Agencies** - Testing agencies are important for maintaining a high standard of education and assessments. The NEP 2020 proposes setting up PARAKH, a national assessment centre that will be responsible for setting standards across all recognised boards in India for measuring student learning outcomes using the National Achievement Survey. PARAKH will also be responsible for advising school boards on new assessment patterns.
6. **School Boards** – India has a total of 69 educational boards that exist to facilitate student learning and assessments. These boards are responsible for setting the curricula and syllabi for students. Therefore, they play an important role in education governance.
7. **Ministry of Education** – The Ministry of Education is responsible for drafting national-level education policies that aim to provide quality education to all. One of the key features of NEP 2020 is that it proposes to designate the Ministry of Human Resource Development to the Ministry of Education to bring back attention to education and learning.

Stakeholders' Power Asymmetries in Indian Education

These stakeholder asymmetries help explain why, despite policy intent and international evidence, Enquiry-based learning faces persistent implementation barriers in India.

Students: Students are the most affected by any policy or action taken in education, as they are the direct beneficiaries. However, despite this, they have very little to no say in the decision-making process that currently exists. This is true for students in both private and public schools. They have a very weak voice and little choice in terms of advocating for what they want to learn and how they would like to be taught, as the curriculum is fixed. They have the choice to select the subject they want to pursue from Grade 11, but this also forces them to choose from rigid categories such as science, commerce, or humanities, without offering the option to pursue a multidisciplinary education. The mainstream option laid out for students is the high-stakes exams that they have to ace to pursue higher education, leaving no room for any other skill development. With the examination patterns and questions repeating, students find it easy to memorise answers and questions for their examinations, getting stuck in a cycle of rote learning. Students are put in a highly standardised system where the syllabus and examination schedule determine the pace and method of teaching, thereby limiting opportunities for classroom innovation, critical thinking, or flexible learning pathways.

Parents: Parents with students in private schools have a stronger voice than parents with students in government schools, as they can voice their concerns using mediums like parent-teacher associations. Parents can also exercise meaningful choice while selecting schools, and this choice, in turn, incentivises schools to remain competitive and be more receptive to what parents have to say. It is important to note that parental choice is limited if their income is low; considering the high fee charged by private schools, it's not so much a choice then. This choice is weak when it comes to it. Parents have the power to hold the schools accountable, as they are paying for services and therefore do have the power to nudge the schools to explore new kinds of learning models. Parents have the autonomy to choose which school they wish to send their ward to, but do not have the autonomy to choose the pedagogy.

Teachers: Teachers play an active role in the learning process. However, despite being at the forefront of

knowledge dissemination, they have very little influence on curriculum design, assessment criteria, etc. They stick to frameworks set by school boards and overall education policies. Teachers have limited choice in selecting materials and teaching methods, which makes it challenging to create classroom environments that encourage exploration nd hands-on learning. This, therefore, discourages them from going beyond taking initiative in pedagogical experimentation and sticking to the curriculum in place. Accountability mechanisms for teachers tend to focus on measurable outputs such as student scores, attendance, and documentation rather than the quality of learning experiences, and therefore, the learning environment is also moulded, keeping these parameters in mind. Teachers have very little autonomy to go beyond what is written in the textbooks, and any kind of new intervention is out of personal initiative.

School Leaders: School leaders have the power to influence school policies, but have to follow the broader education policies set by the state. In cases where they do not adhere, their schools lose accreditation.

Testing Agencies: Testing agencies have the power to shift the education landscape quite drastically. As this paper focuses more on K-12 education, the testing agency highlighted in this section is PARAKH. PARAKH has considerable choice in determining the tools, frameworks, and assessment designs it develops, which can either reinforce rote learning or push the system toward enquiry-based learning. The incentives for them to have education reforms are more macro than those of the aforementioned stakeholders. What this means is that, as compared to students who are directly affected by policies at an individual level, the testing agencies do not have any direct effects, and any effect is more on a national level. Here, the incentives are for an increase in the overall learning level of the state, rather than attention to individual students. PARAKH has the autonomy to decide the evaluation criteria for assessing learning outcomes, which thus gives them the chance to assess more holistic development rather than just basing it on academic assessments. By being transparent about the assessment criteria, testing agencies are able to hold institutions accountable.

Educational Boards: Educational boards are one of the most important players in determining the direction of a student's learning journey. Educational boards influence the learning process with the curriculum and examinations that they set. They have the choice to lead the educational pedagogy to either the existing rote-based system or an enquiry-based one. Their incentives to change the system are on a macro level, having to do with the national learning outcome rather than the outcome of each student. They have the power to hold schools accountable through exams, evaluation criteria, and affiliation norms. While educational boards do have the autonomy to decide the curriculum and examination patterns, they are restricted to some extent by the broader policies in place by the Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education: The Ministry of Education has the strongest voice in education governance in India. The Ministry of Education (MoE) understands the need to shift to competency-based education, encouraging a shift from memorisation to conceptual understanding. The introduction of NEP 2020 is a testament to this realisation. As the central authority, the MoE enforces accountability through boards, state governments, and institutional frameworks; however, existing monitoring indicators still prioritise enrolment and exam results over classroom enquiry quality. The Ministry has significant autonomy to design large-scale reforms, pilot innovations, and influence state practices, yet implementation challenges across different states and governance structures slow the speed of transformation. The MoE is uniquely positioned to institutionalise IBL by embedding it in curricula, assessments, and teacher development agendas nationwide..

Challenges in Adopting Enquiry-Based Learning

This section identifies key challenges in adopting enquiry-based learning in India.

Pushback from Teacher Unions

Teachers are very comfortable with the existing teaching patterns. There is no motivation or incentive for teachers to adopt an enquiry-based teaching approach. Therefore, any deviation from the existing teaching methods is met with pushback from teacher unions. There is also the issue of accountability that comes into this picture.

Teachers in private schools are easier to dismiss than teachers in government schools. This raises a lot of questions about the existing accountability mechanisms. Unions have often opposed government-initiated reforms aimed at improving accountability and efficiency, such as mandatory Teacher Eligibility Tests (TET) for experienced teachers, digital attendance systems, and public-private partnerships. Teacher unions are important lobbyists in the education sector; however, more often than not, these unions refuse to attend meetings as a form of protest.

As one of the primary stakeholders in the learning process, teachers need to take the initiative in implementing an enquiry-based pedagogy. The need of the hour is for teachers to be equipped with the necessary skills. Only when teachers are highly trained can they impart transferable skills to their students.

Lack of Enabling Regulatory and Pedagogical Frameworks

The second challenge that arises in implementing enquiry-based learning is the lack of enabling regulatory and pedagogical frameworks. This means that without proper policies and teaching guidelines, adopting enquiry-based learning becomes difficult.

While enquiry-based pedagogy has been widely discussed in policy circles, there is limited intervention on how schools and education systems can meaningfully integrate enquiry-driven practices within the existing frameworks. The existing regulations and school governance frameworks still largely focus on input-based norms rather than on learning processes. As a result, there are no comprehensive policy frameworks that guide curriculum redesign, multimodal assessment, timetable flexibility, or resource provisioning for enquiry-based learning.

Stigma around Enquiry-based Learning as an Expensive Model of Education

There is also a stigma that only highly expensive schools can implement an enquiry-based curriculum, and therefore, the perception that only the elite can afford to shift to a new pedagogical approach needs to be broken. There is also strong opposition to market-driven education, as education is considered to be a public good. Therefore, there is strong lobbying by non-profit schools and organisations that resist and restrict any market players.

Recommendations

India Should Take Part in PISA Again.

India should re-enter international competency-based benchmarking exercises, such as PISA, to gain an unbiased understanding of students' current learning levels.

The Programme for International Student Assessment, or PISA, is an assessment conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that evaluates 15-year-old students' mathematical, scientific and reading skills. This is an international comparative assessment that records the learning level of students in around 80 countries. PISA provides a clear picture of where a country stands in terms of a student's learning outcomes. The questions are designed to test whether students are able to apply learning concepts to real-life problems, rather than focusing on their ability to recall concepts. It provides a global benchmark to compare students.

Globally, countries have used PISA as a tool to identify where reforms are necessary, rather than as a ranking tool. For example, the PISA shock of Germany in 2000 led to systemic changes in curriculum, teacher training, and early childhood education, resulting in steady improvements in later cycles. Vietnam has been the poorest and second-poorest country participating in PISA and has still outperformed the majority of the developing and some wealthy countries. This highlights how PISA performance is not a function of national income or elite schooling alone, but of how effectively systems translate curriculum intent into classroom practice.

Since PISA's inception in 2000, India has participated in PISA only once, in 2009. Students from Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh took part in the assessments, and the results of the assessment painted a very grim picture of India's learning outcomes. India ranked 73rd out of the 74 participating countries, ranking above only Kazakhstan. In response to this, the government decided to withdraw from PISA and also suggested that, as the medium of the test was English, it was rather difficult for Indian students to perform well. India signed the contract to take part in PISA 2021; however, due to the pandemic, India decided to step back from participating, as the pandemic led to learning gaps. India was supposed to take part in the 2025 round of PISA testing as well; however, India's name is still omitted from the list.

While concerns regarding language and contextual familiarity are valid, several PISA-participating countries with multilingual and diverse student populations, such as Indonesia, Brazil, and Thailand, have successfully used translated and contextualised versions of the assessment without withdrawing from the process. Re-engaging with PISA would allow India to participate with better preparation, clearer communication to states, and alignment with competency-based goals outlined in NEP 2020, rather than treating poor performance as a deterrent.

PISA helps countries identify strengths and weaknesses in their education systems. India, therefore, should participate in the next round of PISA. It is a necessary step to understand where India stands globally in the 21st century on skills such as critical thinking and real-life problem-solving. This will also help benchmark our reforms under NEP 2020 against international standards. Benchmark our reforms under NEP 2020 against international standards. PISA results will also lead to competition that will incentivise the education policies to inculcate more enquiry-based learning. It will also enable targeted interventions that can strengthen learning outcomes across the country.

Government Collaborations with Educational Entrepreneurs

To counter the perception that enquiry-based learning is elite and costly, the state should actively collaborate with educational entrepreneurs to pilot frugal IBL models at scale. Educational entrepreneurs and social enterprises can bring low-cost, context-specific tools such as bilingual project templates and simple formative assessment cards that align with the operational realities of BPS classrooms.

Poor-income countries such as Peru and Kenya show how structured enquiry-based learning does not require fancy educational labs or digital infrastructure.

By creating a small innovation sandbox for BPS within the district, the state can enable voluntary school participation, allowing pilots to emerge from genuine need rather than top-down mandates. Evidence and results generated from these pilots can demonstrate that meaningful enquiry can occur without expensive labs or devices.

Such sandboxes also allow the state to mitigate risk innovation by testing multiple models simultaneously and developing only those that highlight clear learning gains, teacher adoption, and cost efficiency. By grounding decisions in classroom-level evidence rather than assumptions, the state can move away from one-size-fits-all reforms and instead support solutions that are proven to work within BPS constraints.

To deepen adoption, the government should establish a BPS Innovation Partnership Window and award grants to entrepreneurs developing ultra-low-cost IBL tools in collaboration with teachers. This ensures that designs meet constraints such as high enrolment, tight timetables, and exam pressure, while demonstrating that IBL can strengthen foundational learning at minimal cost.

Over time, these partnerships can also help create a model of locally rooted education solutions, reducing long-term dependence on high-cost external vendors. By positioning teachers as co-designers rather than end-users, the state also strengthens professional agency while ensuring that enquiry-based tools are aligned with the examination syllabi and curricular expectations.

Credit Score System

To overcome teacher resistance, weak incentives, and the absence of professional rewards for pedagogical innovation, the state should establish an Education Innovation Credit Score System.

The state should establish an Education Innovation Credit Score System to recognise and reward teachers, school complexes, and districts for their efforts to implement enquiry-based learning and other innovative pedagogies. The credit system serves as a bottom-up incentive mechanism, in which teachers and school clusters earn credits for innovative teaching practices, such as designing enquiry tasks, facilitating peer-learning sessions, supporting community projects, or documenting student portfolios. The score should be evidence-based (through photos, videos, and other documentation), ensuring recognition reflects real pedagogical change rather than administrative reporting.

The SSSA, as the state's independent quality standard-setting and verification body, is well-positioned to host and regulate this system. The credit platform can be integrated into a quality-monitoring dashboard managed by the SSSA, allowing teachers to upload evidence, such as photos, videos, or student project summaries. School Complex academic leaders could digitally endorse submissions, while SSSA conducts periodic sample audits to maintain integrity. Because SSSA already focuses on learning quality, the credit score naturally aligns with promoting competency-based learning, pedagogical innovation, and decentralised quality assurance. Over time, the SSSA can use aggregated credit data to map innovation hotspots, identify support needs, and guide targeted capacity-building across districts.

Conclusion

This paper highlights the dependency on rote-based learning in India. This pedagogical approach does not align with the economic demands of the 21st century, and different tests show the large learning gap that exists in the current youth. This paper, therefore, argues the need to shift to an enquiry-based approach.

While NEP 2020 is a step in the right direction, there is still a long path ahead before it is completely adopted and implemented on a wide scale in India. The paper highlights the institutional stickiness in implementing reforms that make enquiry-based learning the model to be followed.

Using the VCIAA framework analysis, it was clear that currently, the direct and primary stakeholders in India's learning process have the least voice and choice in the decision-making process. This top-down governance framework fails to take into account the choices and demands of the stakeholders at the bottom of the governance framework.

The paper recommends that, first, to understand the real level of learning of students, it is essential for an independent assessment system, such as PISA, to step in. The results of this assessment shall lay out a clear picture of where students need improvement the most.

Secondly, it is important to break down the notion that enquiry-based learning is expensive by partnering with budget private schools and educational entrepreneurs to show real-time examples of success.

Last but not least, it is important to focus on incentivising teachers to adopt an enquiry-based approach in classrooms. The SSSA could play an integral role in assuring quality education by promoting enquiry-based learning pedagogy.

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A-69, Hauz Khas, Delhi -110016
Email: ccs@ccs.in | website: www.ccs.in