

CBCI EDUCATION NEXUS



EDUCATE TO EMPOWER



MARCH 2026

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**STANDARDIZING
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN
INDIA**

ECOPEDAGOGY
Making Another World Possible

**SCHOOL EDUCATION IN
THE UNION BUDGET 2026**

**AI, AMBITION, AND
ACCOUNTABILITY: CAN
INDIA TRULY REIMAGINE
HIGHER EDUCATION?**




Table of CONTENTS

Editorial	01
Cover Story 1: School Education in the Union Budget 2026	02
Cover Story 2: AI, Ambition, and Accountability: Can India Truly Reimagine Higher Education?	04
Cover Story 3: India's Demographic Dividend Under Threat	07
Saint Educator Series part two: 27- Blessed Rani Maria	09
International Women's Day	13
Ecopedagogy: Making Another World Possible by Savio Silveria	14
Standardizing Catholic Schools in India	17
Transforming Mathematics Education Through Research-Based Finnish Pedagogy	19
Living by Constitutional Values Series 2: Good Governance for Progress of the Nation	21
Education in Brief	
Internships in Kerala become unscrupulous pay traps	24
Over 93000 Schools Shut Across India in Last Ten Years	25
CBSE's digital evaluation reform: Preparedness will define its promise	25
Kerala, India's education frontrunner, now faces enrolment dip and politicisation	26
AI summit: Why education needs to be rethought for AI rollout	27
Why historical literacy matters today	28
New Book Published by the CBCI OEC	29
Advertisement of the Policies	31
Order Form	32

International Women's Day 2026

WOMEN AT THE CENTRE

RIGHTS, JUSTICE, AND THE COURAGE TO RISE

International Women's Day is not merely a celebration; it is a call to conscience. On March 8, 2026, as the world echoes the theme of **Rights, Justice, and Action**, we are reminded that equality for women is not a favour—it is a fundamental human right.

Women today are leading nations, transforming classrooms, breaking scientific barriers, and reshaping economies. Yet discrimination, violence, wage gaps, and underrepresentation continue to challenge their dignity. The question is simple and urgent: **Will we settle for symbolic applause, or will we stand for structural change?**

Equal rights for women are non-negotiable. A society that sidelines women sidelines its own future. As Malala Yousafzai reminds us, *“I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard.”* Education remains the most powerful catalyst for that voice.

Consider the women who redefined possibility: Kalpana Chawla who reached for the stars; Mary Kom who fought beyond stereotypes; Indra Nooyi who led global enterprise with vision; and Mother Teresa who showed that compassion itself is strength. They did not wait for permission—they stepped forward with courage.

Protection is not privilege; it is responsibility. Women must be safe—in homes, schools, workplaces, and digital spaces. Equal pay, equal opportunity, and equal representation must move from policy papers to lived reality.

To every girl and woman: step forward. Claim your space in science, leadership, theology, governance, and innovation. Your dreams are not unrealistic. As Michelle Obama affirms, *“There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish.”*

For us in Catholic education, this is a moral mandate. Our institutions must form girls who are fearless and boys who are respectful. We cannot celebrate women publicly and fail them structurally.

Women do not seek charity—they seek opportunity.
They do not ask for applause—they ask for equity.

This International Women's Day, let recognition become responsibility and celebration become commitment.

**Stand up for rights.
Show up for justice.
Speak up for equality.**

When women rise, the nation rises.



FR. MARIA CHARLES SDB

*National Secretary,
CBCI Office for Education and Culture*

SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE UNION BUDGET 2026



The Union Budget 2026-27, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on 1 February 2026, made moderate yet noticeable increases in allocations for school education at a time when the sector is grappling with foundational learning challenges, enrolment fluctuations, and digital inequities. While the education sector overall saw its allocation rise to approximately ₹1.39 lakh crore, an 8.27 % increase over the previous year, the share of school education within this continues to face structural limitations.

According to data from Education for All in India, the Department of School Education and Literacy, the principal arm for implementing universal school education, has been allocated around ₹83,562 crore in the 2026-27 Budget, reflecting a continuing commitment to funding basic education. However, this figure, while nominally growing from approximately ₹78,572 crore in 2025-26, remains low as a proportion of total government outlays, accounting for roughly 2.6 % of the entire Union Budget despite a decade of policy emphasis on universal education under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

“School education allocations have shown steady nominal growth but as a proportion of the total budget outlay (₹53.5 lakh crore for 2026-27), education accounts for about 2.6%, down from around 3% in earlier budgets.”

Flagship Schemes and Investment Patterns:

The lion's share of the school education budget continues to be channelled through Samagra Shiksha, the flagship programme encompassing elementary to senior secondary stages. Samagra Shiksha has historically received the biggest portion of resources, aiming to support universal access, quality improvement, infrastructure enhancement, and equity-focused interventions. Prior allocations for the scheme suggest incremental increases year after year, underpinning the government's commitment to sustaining foundational education initiatives.

At the same time, targeted allocations intended to address learning outcomes, such as funds for PM-POSHAN (mid-day meal scheme) and PM-SHRI school transformations, continue to receive budgetary support, albeit without bold new expansions in per-student provisioning. Critics argue that while policy language emphasises learning recovery, inclusivity, and retention, the resource base for translating these goals into classroom improvements remains modest.

Innovation Meets Equity- New Initiatives with Caveats:

One of the most eye-catching components of the 2026-27 budget is the proposal to establish 15,000 AVGC (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, and Comics) Content Creator Labs in secondary schools nationwide. If implemented with equitable access, particularly for rural and underserved communities, this could enhance digital skills and support India's burgeoning creative economy.

Yet the emphasis on digital labs, creative technologies, and future-oriented skill sets also underlines a critical tension: while the government seeks to embed future skills into the school curriculum, foundational learning gaps, especially in foundational literacy and numeracy, remain unresolved in many parts of the country. Education policy experts have cautioned that unless strong attention is paid to basic competencies and teacher preparedness, such high-end investments risk deepening the digital divide rather than closing it.



Critical Gaps- Funding, Foundations, and Equity:

Despite the overall growth in allocations, the Budget still falls short of the long-standing recommendation to allocate 6 % of GDP to education, a target envisioned under NEP 2020 to ensure comprehensive and equitable transformation across school and higher education. Even with rising expenditures, the share of total public spending on education lags well below this benchmark, raising questions about whether current resource commitments can sustain long-term learning improvements at scale.

Critics have also pointed out that when inflation and demographic pressures are considered, the real increase in education funding is modest, potentially necessitating renewed commitments to teacher development, classroom reforms, and community-based learning interventions. One opinion in a national daily described the Budget as having “aspirational language about knowledge leadership ... but failing to meet the strategic priority test required by India's education ambitions.”

Implications for Universal Schooling Goals:

At a time when India is still striving to achieve universal school education by 2030, as envisaged under NEP 2020 and reinforced by constitutional commitments such as the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, the 2026 Budget offers both promise and caution. While continued investments and new innovative allocations signal policy intent, the depth and distribution of these investments matter equally.

The challenge ahead lies in ensuring that budgetary commitments translate into meaningful learning outcomes, teacher support systems, and inclusive access for children; particularly those from marginalised, rural, and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Without these critical linkages, the policy rhetoric of a future-ready education system may remain aspirational rather than transformational.

<https://educationforallinindia.com/school-education-in-the-union-budget-2026>



AI, AMBITION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY: CAN INDIA TRULY REIMAGINE HIGHER EDUCATION?



The Union Budget 2026–27 positions itself as a turning point in India's higher education journey.

It signals a move away from the politics of expansion, more institutions, more seats, more announcements, toward the more difficult terrain of intellectual coherence and systemic reform. In an era shaped by Artificial Intelligence (AI), geopolitical shifts, and technological acceleration, the Budget acknowledges that India's future competitiveness will not be secured by scale alone. It will depend on the architecture of its knowledge system.

Yet ambition alone does not guarantee transformation.

FROM ENROLMENT EXPANSION TO INTELLECTUAL DEPTH:

For decades, India's higher education discourse revolved around access and capacity. That phase was necessary. But in an AI-driven century, the deeper question is not how many universities we build, but what kind of minds they shape. Automation is steadily absorbing routine, pattern-based work. Human value now lies in critical thinking, ethical judgement, creativity, interdisciplinary fluency, and contextual intelligence.

The Budget rightly avoids reducing education to narrow market alignment. It speaks of interdisciplinary learning, innovation-led growth,

and ethical grounding. The invocation of Nalanda is symbolic

but instructive; a reminder that India once nurtured integrated scholarship where astronomy, philosophy, law, literature, and mathematics interacted freely.

However, the real challenge lies in whether today's institutions, burdened by rigid departmental silos, bureaucratic regulation, and examination-driven cultures, are structurally capable of such integration.

THE EDUCATION-EMPLOYMENT DISCONNECT:

The proposal to establish a High-Powered Standing Committee linking education, employment, and enterprise is an acknowledgment of a long-standing weakness. India produces millions of graduates annually, yet employability concerns persist across sectors. The problem is not merely job scarcity; it is skill mismatch, curricular stagnation, and weak industry-academia collaboration.

If institutionalised properly, such a committee could create dynamic feedback loops between industry evolution and curriculum reform. But India has historically struggled with implementation continuity. Committees are,

announced with optimism and dissolve into procedural inertia.

For the demographic dividend to remain an asset rather than a liability, measurable outcomes, public transparency, and accountability frameworks must accompany this initiative. Without operational depth, structural gaps will persist.

STEM INCLUSION-BEYOND SYMBOLISM:

The Budget's emphasis on increasing women's participation in STEM fields is both timely and necessary. India has demonstrated women's excellence in national missions; from infrastructure megaprojects to space exploration. Yet participation remains uneven, particularly outside metropolitan centres.

Diversity in science and technology is not merely a social justice aspiration. It improves innovation quality, design robustness, and decision-making depth. In the AI era, where algorithmic systems shape hiring, finance, and governance, diversity in knowledge creation becomes a strategic necessity.

However, scholarships alone will not dismantle structural barriers. Mentorship ecosystems, regional institutional strengthening, and safe academic environments are equally critical.

DESIGN AS STRATEGIC CAPITAL:

Perhaps one of the most forward-looking elements of the Budget is its recognition of design education as a pillar of innovation. The Indian design ecosystem is expanding rapidly, yet formal training capacity remains insufficient.

Design is not ornamental. It is the bridge between technology and lived experience. It integrates empathy, systems thinking, and human-centred problem-solving. In global innovation economies, design shapes competitiveness as much as engineering.

The challenge, however, is to prevent design education from becoming another elite urban enclave. Capacity expansion in underrepresented regions must translate into

genuine creative ecosystems, not just infrastructure announcements.

SCIENTIFIC INFRASTRUCTURE- BIG INVESTMENTS, BIGGER QUESTIONS:

Upgrading the Himalayan Chandra Telescope and advancing plans for a National Large Optical Telescope represent significant commitments to frontier science. These investments anchor high-tech ecosystems, retain scientific talent, and strengthen intellectual sovereignty.

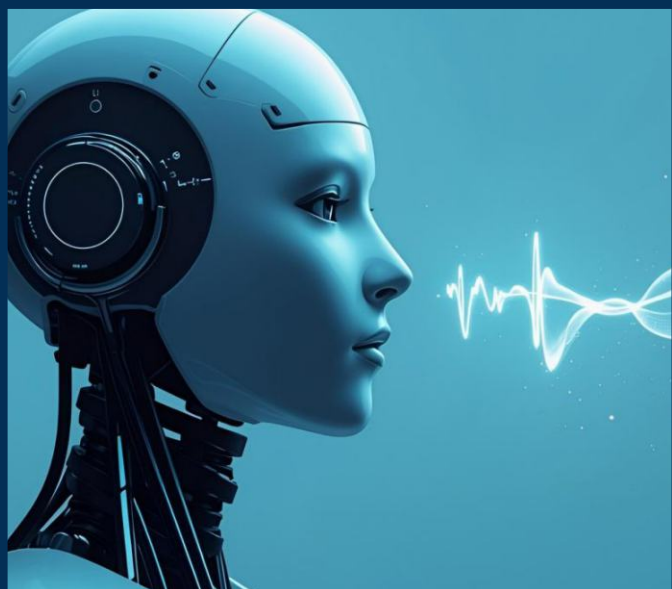
But high-end scientific infrastructure requires sustained operational funding, research grants, and human capital pipelines. India has previously witnessed ambitious projects slowed by maintenance gaps and administrative bottlenecks.

The question is not whether we can build world-class facilities. It is whether we can sustain them over decades.

INSPIRATION AND ITS LIMITS:

National missions like Chandrayaan-3 and the upcoming Gaganyaan human spaceflight programme have demonstrably inspired young Indians. Science becomes visible. Possibility becomes tangible.

Yet inspiration must connect to institutional opportunity. Without strong school foundations, accessible higher education pathways, and research mentorship, inspiration risks fading into aspiration without access.



BREAKING SILOS- THE HARDEST REFORM:

The philosophical centre of the Budget is integration. Engineers must understand ethics. Scientists must engage with history and society. Designers must grapple with social realities. AI systems influence credit scoring, judicial decisions, recruitment, and welfare delivery. Ethical literacy is no longer optional.

The National Education Policy 2020 laid the groundwork for multidisciplinary institutions, academic credit mobility, and research integration. The Budget reinforces this vision. But cultural change inside universities is slow. Faculty retraining, incentive restructuring, and governance reform will determine whether multidisciplinary rhetoric becomes academic reality.

THE MISSING CONVERSATIONS:

Several deeper concerns require sustained attention.

First, AI governance and ethical frameworks must evolve alongside technological growth. Without curricular embedding of digital ethics, regulatory reasoning, and accountability frameworks, India risks technological acceleration without moral calibration.

Second, regional disparities remain stark. Metropolitan clusters attract disproportionate investment, while Tier-2 and Tier-3 institutions struggle with infrastructure and faculty shortages. Regional innovation clusters must be actively cultivated.

Third, funding sustainability is critical. High-end research ecosystems cannot operate on fluctuating annual commitments.

Fourth, industry-academia disconnects continue to slow research commercialisation. Without strong public-private collaboration models, India's research output may remain under-leveraged.

COMPETING THROUGH KNOWLEDGE ARCHITECTURE:

The Union Budget 2026–27 correctly identifies a

core truth: in the AI century, nations compete through intellectual ecosystems, not just infrastructure statistics. Education must move from transactional credentialing to transformational thinking.

The Budget gestures toward a coherent vision linking design, science, inclusion, innovation, and interdisciplinary learning. It reflects ambition and awareness. But ambition without institutional accountability risks becoming rhetoric.

India's higher education system stands at a civilisational moment. If integration, inclusion, and innovation are woven into sustained structural reform, India can redefine educational excellence in the AI era. If not, we risk building impressive announcements atop fragile foundations.

The AI century will reward not those who merely adopt technology, but those who shape it with wisdom, depth, and ethical responsibility. The question is no longer whether India aspires to be a knowledge power. The question is whether it is prepared to undertake the difficult reforms required to become one.



INDIA'S DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND UNDER THREAT

A CRITICAL EDUCATION PERSPECTIVE

BY ET ONLINE: FEBRUARY 17, 2026

At the AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) V. Anantha Nageswaran delivered one of the most urgent warnings of the year: India's celebrated demographic dividend could turn into a demographic liability unless the country dramatically realigns its education and skilling strategies.

India's current advantage, a young, rapidly growing workforce, is often cited as a key driver of future growth. Yet Nageswaran highlighted a stark reality: the country needs to create at least 8 million jobs annually through 2030 to absorb its expanding labour force. Failure to do so would not only squander this opportunity but risk deepening inequality, unemployment, and social instability.

At the heart of this crisis lies the persistent gap between education and employability. Despite India producing millions of graduates each year, a substantial proportion lack the skills demanded by employers, particularly in high-growth and technology-intensive sectors. According to wider evidence on the Indian education-workforce landscape, more than 75 % of technical graduates and an even greater share of general grads are not fully prepared for the demands of global industries.

Nageswaran stressed that artificial intelligence (AI) and automation are not merely technological phenomena but socio-economic stress tests. In advanced economies with aging populations, AI can supplement labour; in India, it amplifies the urgency of skilling. If AI adoption continues without concurrent workforce upskilling, machine intelligence risks outpacing human capabilities, leaving vast swathes of young workers unprepared for new labour market realities.

This warning is not isolated. Numerous reports and analyses have similarly flagged systemic weaknesses in India's education-to-workforce pathways. For example, studies show that a significant share of higher education institutions remain ill-equipped for industry engagement, with low placement rates



and curricula disconnected from emerging job profiles.

The CEA called for urgent, structural reforms; not only more training programmes but foundational shifts in how India educates its youth. This includes:

- Strengthening foundational learning in schools to build literacy, numeracy, and cognitive skills.
- Scaling high-quality vocational education and apprenticeships linked directly to industry needs.
- Embedding lifelong learning and continuous reskilling as core elements of the education ecosystem.
- Aligning public and private efforts in a “Team India” approach that brings together policymakers, educators, industry leaders, and civil society.

Critically, the CEA's message challenges an overly optimistic narrative that India's demographic profile automatically translates into economic success. Instead, it underscores a performance gap; one grounded in the mismatch between the skills young people actually possess and the ones the future economy will demand. Without radical reorientation of educational priorities and investments, even emerging technologies like AI may exacerbate disparities rather than alleviate them.

While India's demographic structure remains a potential asset, its realisation depends on urgent transformation in education and skill development systems. The coming decade will not be shaped solely by demographic numbers but by the nation's capacity to equip its youth with the skills, adaptability, and resilience required in a rapidly evolving economic landscape.

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/ai/ai-insights/india-risks-losing-demographic-edge-without-skills-cea-v-anantha-nageswaran-at-ai-india-summit/articleshow/128453295.cms?utm_source=chatgpt.com&from=mdr



BLESSED RANI MARIA

29 JANUARY 1954 – 25 FEBRUARY 1995



Educating for Justice, Awakening Dignity, and Forming Courage among the Poor:

Blessed Rani Maria stands as one of the most compelling educator-witnesses of modern India. She did not teach within the structured walls of a formal classroom, nor did she publish scholarly works or design curricula. Yet her life itself became a transformative curriculum; written not on paper but on the hearts of the poor, the exploited, and the forgotten. Her mission reveals a profound and urgent truth for our times: education that does not liberate the human person is incomplete, and formation that does not awaken dignity remains superficial. Through her courage, compassion, prophetic boldness, and ultimate sacrifice, Blessed Rani Maria demonstrates that education, when rooted in the Gospel, becomes a force capable of transforming unjust structures and wounded lives.

Born on 29 January 1954 in Pulluvazhy, Kerala, into a devout Syro-Malabar Catholic family, Rani Maria was baptized Mariam Vattalil. She grew up in a home where faith was not merely professed but practiced daily. Her parents were simple yet deeply committed believers who cultivated in their children a strong moral foundation. The family atmosphere was one of prayer, discipline, and sensitivity to the needs of others. It was within this environment that young Mariam absorbed the values of justice, compassion, and responsibility.

Even as a student, she displayed not only academic competence but moral courage. She was known for defending classmates who were ridiculed, assisting weaker students, and showing unusual maturity for her age. Teachers later remembered her as reflective, firm in conviction, and quietly determined. Her early experiences reveal an important insight: authentic educators are first formed in the school of life, where conscience is shaped long before credentials are earned.

The Call to Consecrated Life:

Responding to a deep inner call, Mariam joined the Franciscan Clarist Congregation, where she received the name Sister Rani Maria. The Franciscan charism of simplicity, closeness to the poor, and joyful surrender to God profoundly shaped her worldview. For her, religious life was not an escape from the world but a radical immersion into its wounds. She embraced poverty not as deprivation but as solidarity.

Her formation years deepened her conviction that the Gospel must be lived concretely. She was convinced that spirituality divorced from social reality becomes sterile. In the Franciscan tradition, she discovered that love for Christ must translate into love for the least. This conviction would later define her missionary method: she would not simply preach about justice; she would accompany people until justice became a lived experience.

Learning to Teach by Walking with the Poor:

When Sister Rani Maria was sent on mission to the rural and tribal regions of Madhya Pradesh, she entered a context marked by extreme poverty, illiteracy, bonded labour, and systemic exploitation. The landscape was unfamiliar; the language was different; the culture required sensitivity and humility. Yet she embraced this new terrain with openness.

Rather than arriving as a reformer armed with ready-made solutions, she chose first to listen. She visited villages regularly, sitting with families under trees, in mud huts, or along dusty roads. She listened to their stories of indebtedness, land disputes, domestic suffering, and silent despair. This patient listening was her first pedagogical act. She understood instinctively that education begins with respect. People who are unheard cannot be transformed.

Gradually, she began to teach; not through formal lectures but through dialogue. She explained basic rights regarding fair wages, land ownership, and legal protections. She clarified how exploitative lending practices trapped families in cycles of generational poverty. For many villagers, her words were revolutionary. No one had ever told them that their suffering was not divinely ordained or socially inevitable.

She taught them to ask questions. She taught them to think critically. She taught them to believe that dignity was not a privilege but a birthright.

Education as Empowerment, Not Dependency:

One of Blessed Rani Maria's most remarkable contributions was her insistence that education must empower rather than create dependency. She was cautious of charity that humiliated. While immediate assistance was sometimes necessary, she believed lasting change required internal awakening.

She encouraged villagers to form self-help groups and cooperative savings initiatives. Through collective discussion, they learned financial literacy, accountability, and solidarity. Women in particular were encouraged to step forward; many for the first time in their lives. Initially hesitant and silenced by cultural norms, they slowly found their voice.

In gatherings facilitated by Sister Rani Maria, women began to speak about debt burdens, domestic violence, and concerns for their children's future. She would gently moderate conversations, helping them articulate thoughts and arrive at collective decisions. Education here meant far more than literacy; it meant discovering one's agency.

A village woman once testified, "She taught us how to think. No one had ever done that before." This statement captures the essence of her educational philosophy. She did not merely provide information; she ignited awareness. She did not impose ideas; she awakened conscience.

Formation of Conscience:

At the heart of her mission was the formation of conscience. She believed that ignorance perpetuates injustice, but informed conscience disrupts it. She encouraged villagers to question unfair contracts, challenge abusive practices, and seek legal recourse where necessary. Importantly, she insisted that such actions remain nonviolent and rooted in dialogue.

Her educational method reflected a deep Gospel conviction: liberation must never be driven by hatred. Even when confronting exploitative structures, she refused to dehumanize those responsible. This moral clarity gave her work extraordinary credibility. She was firm but never aggressive; courageous yet profoundly peaceful.

In a time when activism can easily become polarized, her approach offers a compelling model for Catholic educators. She demonstrated that social transformation must be guided by ethical discernment. Justice without charity becomes harsh; charity without justice becomes sentimental. In her life, both were harmoniously united.





A Special Love for Children:

While much of her work centred on adult empowerment, Sister Rani Maria held a tender concern for children. She knew that poverty's harshest consequences often fell upon the youngest. Child labour, malnutrition, and early school dropouts were common realities.

She visited families repeatedly, persuading parents to send children to school despite economic pressures. She would patiently explain that education was the only sustainable pathway out of exploitation. In some villages, she organized informal literacy sessions, gathering children under trees or in small huts. There she taught basic reading, hygiene practices, storytelling, and moral values.

Her teaching style was simple yet profound. She used songs, stories from daily life, and Gospel parables adapted to local culture. She sat on the ground with the children, laughing with them, encouraging them, affirming them. Many children later recalled that she was the first adult who believed in their potential.

In nurturing their self-worth, she planted seeds of long-term transformation. Education for her was not preparation merely for employment; it was preparation for responsible and dignified living.

Resistance and the Cost of Truth:

Education that liberates inevitably disturbs entrenched systems of exploitation. As villagers began asserting their rights and reducing dependency on moneylenders, opposition intensified. Those who profited from unjust arrangements perceived her efforts as a threat.

Warnings reached her from multiple sources. She was advised to moderate her activities, to avoid provoking powerful interests, to prioritize personal safety. Yet she understood that silence in the face of injustice is itself complicity. For her, education required moral courage.

Despite threats, she refused to retreat. She continued traveling from village to village, accompanying families in legal processes, and strengthening community groups. Her confidence was not rooted in defiance but in faith. She believed that truth, even when costly, ultimately liberates. Her steadfastness illustrates a crucial lesson for educators: formation of conscience demands personal integrity. One cannot teach courage while practicing compromise.

A Final Lesson Written in Blood:

On 25 February 1995, while traveling by bus near Indore, Sister Rani Maria was brutally attacked and murdered. The violence shocked the nation and deeply wounded the Church. A life dedicated to peace and empowerment ended in public tragedy.

Yet even in death, she continued to teach.

Her family's decision to forgive her assassin became a luminous testimony to the power of Gospel

education. Rather than succumbing to bitterness, they extended mercy. Over time, the man responsible expressed repentance and was transformed by the forgiveness he received. This extraordinary reconciliation stands as one of the most compelling lessons of Christian witness in modern India.

Her martyrdom reveals that the highest form of education is forgiveness. Justice seeks restoration; mercy accomplishes it. In her death, Blessed Rani Maria exposed the moral bankruptcy of violence and revealed the redemptive strength of love.

Relevance for Catholic Education in India:

In an era when education risks becoming purely transactional, focused narrowly on competition, examination scores, and employability, Blessed Rani Maria calls us back to a deeper vision. She reminds Catholic educators that authentic formation must integrate knowledge, values, social responsibility, and compassion.

Her life speaks powerfully to the contemporary Indian context, where inequalities persist and marginalized communities still struggle for dignity. Catholic institutions, especially those inspired by Education 5.0 frameworks emphasizing holistic formation, can draw rich inspiration from her witness.

She challenges schools and universities to ask: Are we forming students who merely achieve success, or individuals who stand for justice? Are we transmitting information, or awakening conscience? Are we educating for personal advancement alone, or for social transformation?

Her example invites Catholic educators to integrate classroom learning with community engagement. Service-learning initiatives, rural immersion programs, legal literacy campaigns, and empowerment projects can embody her spirit. She shows that faith-based education must remain connected to the realities of the poor.

An Educator Beyond Boundaries:

Blessed Rani Maria transcends categories. She was not only a social worker, not only a religious sister, not only a martyr. She was an educator in the deepest sense: one who leads others from ignorance to awareness, from fear to courage, from dependency to responsibility. Her pedagogy was incarnational. She lived among the people she served. She shared their hardships. She respected their culture. She believed in their capacity. In doing so, she restored dignity.

Her legacy continues through countless self-help groups, empowered women, educated children, and inspired religious and lay leaders across India. Her beatification recognized not only her martyrdom but the transformative power of her life's mission.

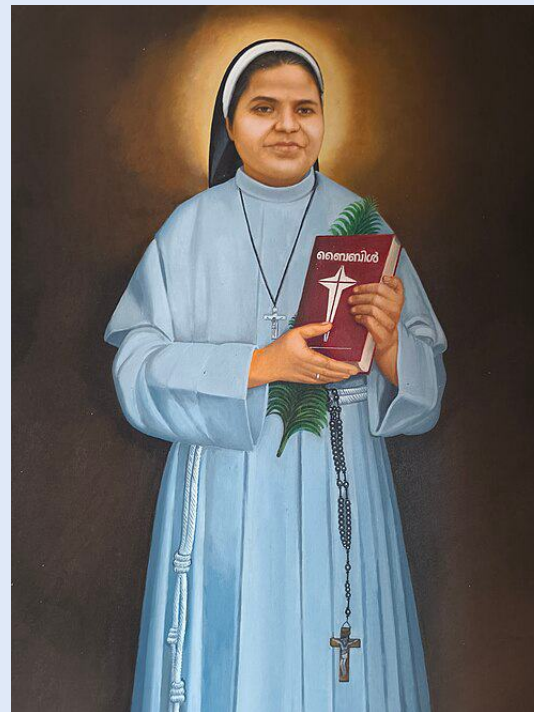
Conclusion- Love Stronger than Fear:

Blessed Rani Maria educates us still; not from a classroom podium but from the margins of society; not through institutional authority but through moral authority; not with theoretical frameworks alone but with a life poured out in love.

Her message is both challenging and consoling. It challenges educators to examine whether their work truly liberates. It consoles those who struggle against injustice, reminding them that courage rooted in faith is never wasted.

In her, we see that education is ultimately about awakening the image of God within every human person. It is about forming individuals who can read reality critically, act justly, forgive generously, and hope persistently. Her life stands as a luminous testimony that love is stronger than fear, truth stronger than violence, and forgiveness stronger than hatred.

Blessed Rani Maria remains a teacher for India, and for the world.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Every year on International Women's Day (8 March), the world pauses to celebrate the strength, resilience, and transformative contribution of women in every sphere of life. It is not merely a day of flowers and formal greetings; it is a day of recognition, gratitude, reflection, and renewed commitment. Women are not only participants in history; they are its architects, shaping families, communities, institutions, and nations with courage and compassion.

In the Indian context, the story of women is one of remarkable paradox. We witness women who lead multinational corporations, shape public policy, excel in science and technology, and serve with distinction in education and healthcare. At the same time, we cannot ignore the continuing challenges; gender discrimination, unequal opportunities, violence, and limited access to resources in certain sectors. Women's Day therefore becomes both a celebration and a call to conscience: a reminder that empowerment must translate into justice, dignity, and equal participation.

Education remains the most powerful pathway for women's empowerment. An educated woman transforms not only her own life but also the destiny of generations. When girls are given quality education, they become confident leaders, responsible citizens, and compassionate agents of change. In countless schools across India, women educators serve not just as teachers but as mentors, guides, and role models. Their silent dedication builds the moral and intellectual foundation of society. The classroom becomes a sacred space where dreams are nurtured and futures are shaped.

Within the life of the Church and faith-based institutions, women have played an extraordinary role. Religious sisters, lay leaders, and committed mothers have sustained communities through service in villages, slums, and remote regions. Their leadership is often quiet but profoundly impactful. Through education, healthcare, social outreach, and pastoral ministry, they bring hope where despair threatens to prevail. Their lives remind us that leadership is not domination but service.

Women's Day also invites us to examine our attitudes and systems. True respect for women goes beyond symbolic gestures. It demands fair wages, safe workplaces, shared responsibilities in family life, and genuine inclusion in decision-making processes. It calls for listening to women's voices, valuing their perspectives, and creating environments where their gifts can flourish without fear or limitation.

At its heart, Women's Day is about dignity; the inherent worth of every woman. Whether she is a mother nurturing her family, a teacher shaping young minds, a farmer sustaining rural economies, a scientist exploring new frontiers, or a social worker standing with the marginalized, each woman carries within her an irreplaceable strength. Society progresses when women progress. A nation grows stronger when its women are empowered.

As we celebrate this day, let us move from admiration to action. Let us encourage the girl child to dream boldly. Let us mentor young women with confidence and trust. Let us build institutions that recognize talent over stereotypes. Let us create a culture where respect for women is not seasonal but permanent.

On this Women's Day, may we honour not only achievements but also sacrifices. May we commit ourselves to a future where every woman can live, lead, and love in freedom and dignity. For when women rise, humanity rises with them.

-Brandon Arnold John



ECOPEDAGOGY

MAKING ANOTHER WORLD POSSIBLE

SAVIO SILVEIRA



“Another world is possible,” is the slogan made popular by the World Social Forum, a global annual gathering of civil society organizations and local community associations. While “another world” is certainly possible, it will not happen by itself! Similarly, a more peaceful world, a more just society, a better quality of life for all, and many other such hopes that we cherish, are possible – but how will they translate into reality? Well, as Nelson Mandela emphatically declared, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” But is education actually changing the world? For the better? As Martin Luther King Jr reminded us: “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.” What we need to examine is whether our present system of education is “teaching one to think intensively and to think critically,” and whether both, “intelligence plus character” is the actual outcome of present-day education.

A fundamental aspect that we should focus on in our educational work is pedagogy. Education, obviously, is not about transferring information from teacher to learner in the classroom, which is then relayed back from learner to teacher in the examination room. Education is about enabling persons to think intensively and to think critically. And education is about forming character; which implies persons whose values, attitudes, and actions, all contribute to building “another world” – the just, caring, and peaceful society that we referred to earlier. This is exactly where pedagogy steps in. Pedagogy can be broadly described as the formative process, consciously and consistently employed in a learning environment, to develop knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviour that shape a person's character, mindset, lifestyle, relationships, and actions.



Considering the crucial role of pedagogy in the educational field, employing the right pedagogy is clearly critical. There are a range of pedagogies available to us today; discussing their merits and demerits is not the scope of this article. Rather, in the light of what we hope to achieve—forming persons who strive towards building “another world”—ecopedagogy definitely merits our attention.

Ecopedagogy can be described as an educational approach that develops teaching-learning processes inspired by natural ecosystems and oriented toward the flourishing of all within the various interrelated ecosystems in which we live. Importantly, ecopedagogy aims at forming persons who recognize themselves as integral and influential members of various ecosystems, and it cultivates ecological consciousness, ethical responsibility, and capacities for effective praxis, so that learners act in ways that regenerate rather than degrade ecosystems. In this sense, ecopedagogy is not learning *about* nature, but learning *from* nature, to become persons whose ways of thinking, acting, and relating contribute to the regeneration and flourishing of all the ecosystems. In this article, we shall briefly consider the main principles of ecopedagogy.

Integral Ecology

Interconnectedness is a basic characteristic of natural ecosystems. Even our casual observation of the nature around us makes us immediately aware of how closely the living organisms (plants,

animals, microbes) interact with each other, and with their non-living environment (air, water, soil, sunlight) as a single, interconnected system. Further, not only are they closely interconnected, they are also very deeply interdependent. These features—interconnection and interdependence—characterise all ecosystems within themselves, and among themselves.

We, human persons, live simultaneously in several ecosystems – natural, social, cultural, religious, economic, political, etc. Our daily experience shows that all these ecosystems are closely interconnected and interdependent; and this also causes them to mutually influence one another. Integral Ecology, which affirms that the various ecosystems we inhabit are all interconnected, interdependent, and inter-influencing, is the foundation of ecopedagogy. Importantly, integral ecology is not simply a theoretical concept; ecopedagogy constructs it into a pedagogical process that enables the learners to overcome a fragmented view of reality, recognise consequential connections among ecosystems, and develop a holistic vision of the world.

Collective Flourishing

Another defining characteristic of natural ecosystems is that long-term flourishing or degradation of the ecosystem tends to be experienced collectively, due to the deep interconnections of living beings and the non-living environment within the ecosystem. This relational dynamic offers us the critical insight that wellbeing is never purely individual, but fundamentally shared – the entire ecosystem, with all its components, flourishes together, or the ecosystem as a whole suffers a decline.

Unfortunately, a detrimental, and even dangerous feature of our present society, is the excessive focus on individual/personal wellbeing and success, which is most often achieved at the cost of the wellbeing of others. Similarly, individual groups (social, economic, political, etc.) within the larger ecosystem seek to thrive by dominating and even destroying other groups. While in the short term they enjoy prominence, profit, and power, in the long run—as the wisdom of natural ecosystems suggests and as history has shown—not only do they collapse, but the entire ecosystem suffers. Hence, grounded in the principle of “collective flourishing,” ecopedagogy enables learners to cultivate the values of ethical judgement, justice, respect, empathy, and solidarity, so that they may develop into contributors of shared growth and wellbeing.



Immersive Learning

Learning from real-life situations and lived experiences lies at the heart of the teaching–learning process of ecopedagogy. For learners, the world itself becomes the classroom, and experience serves as a primary text to be read, interpreted, and critically reflected upon. This does not suggest a narrow reliance on one's personal experiences alone; rather, ecopedagogy emphasizes dialogue and critical engagement with the experiences of others, enabling the co-construction of collective knowledge. Through relationships, participation in diverse communities, and encounters with multiple cultures and perspectives, learners expand their understanding of the world and develop a deeper awareness of its complexity and interdependence.

Educative engagement with one's “local world”—the immediate natural, cultural, social, economic, and political ecosystems—provides both the starting point and the essential context for meaningful learning. Detachment from local realities, ideas formed without credible experience, and opinions developed without grounding, lead to impoverished education, or even to the absence of real education altogether. Likewise, approaching the world with a closed mind or rigid preconceptions inhibits learning. Curiosity, sincerity, empathy, humility, and discernment are therefore essential qualities with which learners must approach the world. As learners grow in age and maturity, they should be assisted in connecting their local experiences to the “global world,” in order to understand their roles and responsibilities within wider, interconnected ecosystems.

Critical Inquiry

In ecopedagogy, critical inquiry is closely connected to immersive learning. In the face of real-life issues that learners encounter through immersive learning—social conflicts, unemployment, air pollution, etc—they are not just fed pre-decided answers, rather, they are encouraged to question why these problems exist, and who benefits or suffers. In getting to the root of the issue, learners develop awareness of how power, politics, economics, and other factors are the real cause of various problems, which most often are conveniently hidden under the surface. In this teaching-learning process, knowledge is co-constructed through dialogue between teachers and learners. Teachers act as facilitators, encouraging in-depth questions and multiple perspectives on different issues, which enable learners to recognize causes and consequences across ecosystems. Learners are also encouraged to analyse and question various dominant paradigms, such as consumerism, neoliberal development, and exploitative models of growth.

An important aspect of critical inquiry is that it helps learners see themselves as integral to the issues that are being studied, and to consider whether they are contributing to the problem or to the solution. Learners are encouraged to continuously reflect on their own values, lifestyles, choices and assumptions. Thus, learning does not stop at intellectual understanding, it is meant to lead to ethical self-transformation. In this way, critical inquiry truly becomes a formative process that shapes a person's character, mindset, lifestyle, relationships, and actions.

Hopeful Praxis

The knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills that ecopedagogy enables learners to develop, ultimately find expression in praxis—transformative action directed towards building a better world. Learning is not confined to intellectual understanding; it also involves practical engagement with real-life issues. During their time in school, learners are actively involved in projects that respond to social and ecological needs within their local contexts, whether through environmental restoration, community service initiatives, or advocacy for social justice. These experiences nurture a sense of responsibility and equip learners with the skills to become agents of change. Through such practice, ecopedagogy moulds learners into life-long active citizens who challenge unjust and unsustainable systems, and work for the wellbeing of all.

In ecopedagogy, praxis is driven and sustained by hope. This is not naïve or unrealistic optimism, rather, it is a hope rooted in the conviction that unjust and unsustainable systems can be challenged and transformed (“another world is possible”). Hope not only drives individual action, it also helps to build joint effort. Thus, hopeful praxis leads to a collective movement that seeks to achieve collective flourishing.

Conclusion

These five principles form the bedrock of ecopedagogy. While ecopedagogy is grounded in the metaphysics of integral ecology, collective flourishing is the ideal within which its ethics is developed. Immersive learning, critical inquiry, and hopeful praxis, are defining aspects of its teaching-learning process. Thus, ecopedagogy forms ethical and engaged citizens, who believe in the good of all and work towards building a just, peaceful, and caring world, a world in which everyone can flourish together!



STANDARDIZING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN INDIA: A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTITY, INTEGRITY AND INSTITUTIONAL EXCELLENCE

FROM CHARISM TO SYSTEM: THE CALL TO STRUCTURED EXCELLENCE

Catholic education in India has a distinguished legacy. For decades, our schools have been associated with discipline, academic seriousness, character formation, and nation-building. They have shaped leaders in public life, civil services, academia, medicine, science, and social transformation. Yet history alone cannot sustain the future.

We are living in an educational era shaped by policy reform, technological acceleration, increased regulatory oversight, global benchmarking, and rising parental expectations. In this evolving landscape, a critical question must be faced with intellectual honesty:

Is our excellence systemic, or does it depend on individual institutions and personalities?

Many Catholic schools are outstanding. However, excellence that is personality-driven rather than system-driven cannot guarantee consistency across regions or generations. What is required today is not sporadic brilliance but **structured, sustainable excellence**.

Standardization does not mean uniformity. It does not suppress diversity, charism, or local creativity. Rather, it establishes clarity of expectations, coherence of practice, and credibility of outcomes. It ensures that every Catholic school—whether urban or rural, large or small—reflects the same foundational commitments to identity, quality, safety, and holistic formation.

Standardization is not administrative rigidity. It is institutional maturity.

A Framework Rooted in Catholic Identity

Any attempt to standardize Catholic schools must begin with identity. Catholic education is not merely a service provider within the educational marketplace. It is an ecclesial mission rooted in the Gospel and committed to forming persons of conscience, competence, compassion, and civic responsibility.

A national framework for Catholic schools must rest upon three interconnected foundations: identity, holistic development, and governance.

1. Identity: Clarifying Who We Are

Every Catholic school must clearly articulate and consciously live its mission. Christian values cannot be incidental; they must be embedded in institutional culture. Faith formation should be integrated into assemblies, classroom discussions, leadership training, service activities, and interpersonal relationships. Respect for diversity, commitment to justice, and constitutional responsibility must be consciously cultivated.

When identity is systematized, it becomes resilient. When it depends only on individuals, it becomes fragile.

Standardization ensures that Catholic identity is not ornamental but operational.

2. Holistic Formation: Defining What We Form

Catholic education seeks the integral formation of the human person. This includes spiritual depth, intellectual rigor, emotional maturity, ethical responsibility, social awareness, cultural sensitivity, ecological consciousness, and civic commitment.

Holistic formation cannot be left to chance. It must be supported by structured programs, clearly defined

objectives, documented initiatives, and measurable outcomes. Student development must be understood not as an abstract ideal but as a concrete institutional responsibility.

A standardized framework allows schools to ask essential questions: Are we nurturing emotional resilience? Are we fostering critical thinking? Are we promoting ethical discernment? Are we strengthening life skills and employability? Are we safeguarding student well-being?

Excellence in Catholic education must be visible in the lives of students—not merely in prospectuses.

3. Governance and Sustainability: Securing the Future

Strong institutions are built upon strong systems. Governance must move beyond routine administration to strategic leadership. Schools require documented policies, long-term development plans, transparent financial systems, structured staff appraisal, and mechanisms for review and renewal.

Without governance frameworks, institutions become reactive rather than proactive. Leadership transitions may weaken direction. Data may remain unused. Improvement may become accidental.

Standardization provides continuity beyond individual tenures. It transforms schools from personality-dependent institutions into mission-driven systems.

The Integrated Domains of Institutional Excellence

A comprehensive standardization model for Catholic schools in India must address multiple interrelated domains. These may be articulated as:

- Identity and Mission
- Student Development
- Teaching, Learning and Curriculum
- Environment and Safety
- Community and Partnership
- Infrastructure and Resources
- Governance and Leadership



These domains are not isolated compartments. They are mutually reinforcing dimensions of institutional life. Weakness in one area inevitably affects the others.

A school that excels academically but neglects safety is incomplete. A school with strong identity but weak governance is unstable. A school with infrastructure but without leadership development lacks direction.

Standardization creates integration.

The Credibility Imperative

Today's stakeholders demand accountability. Parents seek assurance regarding safety, learning outcomes, technology integration, leadership formation, child protection, and grievance mechanisms. Regulatory authorities expect documented compliance. Alumni and communities expect institutional integrity.

If Catholic schools cannot provide structured evidence of quality, historical reputation will not suffice. Standardization equips institutions with:

- Clearly articulated benchmarks.
- Transparent documentation systems.
- Measurable indicators of performance.
- Mechanisms for self-evaluation and improvement.

Standardization strengthens credibility not only externally but internally.

It gives schools a common language of excellence and a shared pathway toward continuous growth.

(To be continued)

Compiled by Fr. Maria Charles

TRANSFORMING MATHEMATICS EDUCATION THROUGH RESEARCH-BASED FINNISH PEDAGOGY

Education today must go beyond rote learning and examination scores. It must nurture curiosity, build confidence, and cultivate a lifelong love for learning. Around the world, schools are reimagining mathematics education to make it more engaging, inclusive, and competency-driven. One proven pathway comes from Finland — a country globally recognized for its excellence in education.

The Need for Joyful and Competency-Based Learning

Mathematics is often perceived as challenging or intimidating by students. Traditional methods that rely heavily on repetitive worksheets and manual correction can limit engagement and place significant workload on teachers. Modern classrooms require solutions that:

- Encourage conceptual understanding over memorization
- Support diverse learning needs
- Provide real-time insights into student progress
- Empower teachers with actionable data
- Align with competency-based education frameworks

To meet these evolving needs, digital platforms grounded in pedagogical research are playing an increasingly important role.

The Vision & The Solution

- Bringing Finland's Pedagogical Excellence to India's Catholic Schools
- A Partnership for Joyful, Competency-Based Learning



How the Learning Cycle Works

The Learning Cycle should follow a continuous improvement workflow designed to support both teaching and learning:

1. Assign Curriculum-Aligned Exercises

Teachers select topics aligned with their curriculum and assign practice sets based

on grade level and learning objectives.

2. Student-Centered Practice

Students solve exercises at their own pace — either in class or at home — ensuring flexibility and independence.

3. Gamified Engagement

As students complete tasks, they earn stars,

points, and rewards. This gamification element increases motivation and makes practice enjoyable.

4. Instant Assessment

Answers are automatically checked, providing immediate feedback to students while saving teachers valuable time.

5. AI-Powered Insights

The system analyzes performance data, highlighting strengths, learning gaps, time spent, accuracy levels, and common mistakes.

6. Targeted Teacher Intervention

Teachers access detailed dashboards to identify struggling learners, adjust lesson plans, and provide personalized support.

7. Continuous Improvement

Based on insights, new or remedial exercises are assigned, ensuring steady academic growth and mastery. This structured cycle creates a dynamic learning ecosystem where teaching decisions are informed by real-time data.

Supporting Teachers and Inclusive Classrooms

One of the most significant benefits of research-based digital platforms is teacher empowerment. Automated correction and ready-made lesson planning tools significantly reduce administrative workload. This allows educators to dedicate more time to mentoring, conceptual clarity, and student interaction.

The adaptive engine personalizes difficulty levels according to each learner's pace. Advanced students can move ahead confidently, while those needing support receive structured reinforcement — ensuring no child is left behind. We understand that Catholic institutions prioritize holistic development and teacher well-being. The innovation supports this mission by:

- **Reducing teacher workload.** Automated marking and lesson planning tools free up teachers to focus on mentoring students.
- **Joyful learning.** We turn math into an engaging experience using gamification, ensuring students want to practice.
- **Inclusion, differentiation.** Our AI-enabled engine adapts to each student's pace, ensuring no child is left behind — a core value of inclusive education.

Alignment with Indian Educational Priorities

The platform aligns seamlessly with the goals of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, particularly:

- Competency-based learning
- Experiential and joyful classrooms
- Data-driven teaching practices
- Holistic student development

Proven Impact

Schools using this approach have reported:

- Improved calculation accuracy
- Higher student engagement levels
- Stronger conceptual understanding
- Measurable academic improvement

Beyond grades, the model builds confidence and reduces math anxiety — helping students view mathematics as a skill they can master rather than fear.

Looking Ahead

As education continues to evolve, integrating research-based digital tools can play a transformative role in strengthening mathematics outcomes. With structured onboarding, teacher training, and continuous support, schools can adopt such platforms seamlessly and sustainably.

The future of mathematics learning lies in combining strong pedagogy with intelligent technology — creating classrooms where students are motivated, teachers are empowered, and learning becomes truly joyful.

Watch Testimonials from Schools

Special Catholic Schools' Registration Drive & Experience it Firsthand

Eduten is running a special initiative for Catholic schools to integrate digital math excellence.

They would also like to invite the students to participate in the upcoming Eduten Olympiad. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to showcase their math skills on a global platform using Finnish pedagogy. Eduten has run the Olympiad every year for the last 4 years. The round for this year will open soon!

Ready to transform math learning? Eduten's team provides complete implementation, onboarding, and continuous teacher training. Please feel free to connect with **Mr. Avan Goel**, Business Head – Southeast Asia, for further discussions.

Phone: +91 98158 08085

Email: avan@eduten.com

LIVING BY *Constitutional* VALUES

SERIES 2

GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR PROGRESS OF THE NATION

In the Preamble to the Constitution of India it is declared "We, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens..."

Being sovereign means having complete political freedom and being the supreme authority. It implies that India is internally all powerful and externally free. It is free to determine for itself without any external interference (either by any country or individual) and nobody is there within to challenge its authority. 'We the People of India' in the Preamble clearly indicates that sovereignty rests with the people of India. This means that the constitutional authorities and organs of government derive their power only from the people.

Democratic ideals represent various aspects of the broad idea of "government of the people, by the people and for the people." The Fathers of our Constitution envisaged a federal structure to our government, declaring it to be a 'Union of States'. The constitution of India has essentially prescribed a federal state of government. As you already know we have several levels of government, the Government at the centre, which is the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. Then the various state governments, and finally, we have the Municipal Corporations and the Panchayats, which are forms of local governance.

What is GOVERNANCE?

Governance is a set of principles, rules and procedures according to which the people want the country to be governed and the society to move on. India is a country made up of different communities of people with language and culture and who share certain beliefs, but may not necessarily agree on all issues. Our Constitution envisages providing good governance. This includes not only an agreement on the type of government but also on certain ideals that the country should uphold.

Good governance has eight major characteristics: It is participatory, consensus oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and follows the rule of law. Good governance is the transparent and accountable political leadership, management

of human, natural, economic and financial resources for equitable and sustainable development; It entails clear decision-making procedures at the level of public authorities; the primacy of law to prevent and combat corruption and ultimately it means securing justice, empowerment and efficient delivery of services.



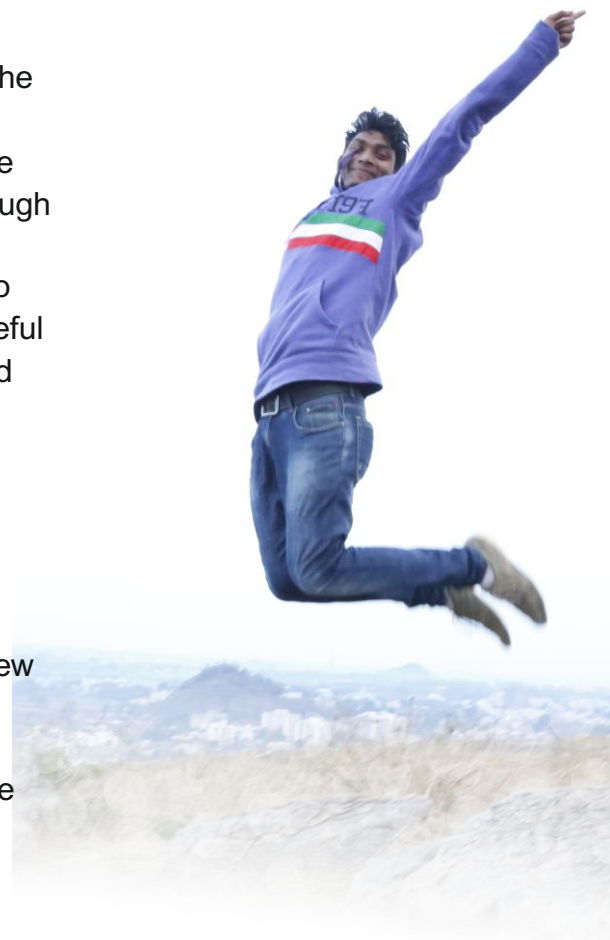
How is GOOD GOVERNANCE?

The Preamble reflects democracy as a value. As a form of government, it derives its authority from the will of the people. The people elect the rulers of the country and the elected representatives remain accountable to the people. Hence people have the ultimate responsibility to secure good governance through electoral processes.

Democracy forms the pillar of good governance. It contributes to stability, continuous progress in the society and it secures peaceful political change. It allows dissent and encourages tolerance. And more importantly, it is based on the principles of rule of law, inalienable rights of citizens, independence of the judiciary, free and fair elections and freedom of the press.

In Good Governance the executive must be empowered; the judiciary unencumbered and capable of providing timely justice, and Parliament functional for debates and legislation. It requires entrepreneurial decision-making and a systemic receptivity to new ideas and innovative solutions.

The question is, do the elected politicians and party colleagues understand the nature of these requirements? Do they recognise that good governance can only be built on the above pillars?



YOUTH participation in CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

1. Young People need training in critical thinking through discussion and discourse on the challenges of Governance and Society.
2. Young People need formation in civic participation, constitutional values, rule of law, life skills and non-violent communication.
3. Young People need training to have a right sense of citizenship through participation in the electoral process, by exercising their right to vote, contesting the elections, electing right representatives and making them accountable.
4. Young People need to be empowered to stand against all forms of corruptions and disassociate themselves from individuals and forums that engage in this practice.

YOUTH for GOOD GOVERNANCE

The youth population in India has a major role to play in uplifting country's stature. Their participation in democracy and good governance cannot be underestimated. The crisis of governance in India today is a consequence of the breakdown of democratic institutions and the emergence of an unholy nexus between inefficient, corrupt civil servants and vote-hungry politicians. Hence, the involvement of civil society in governance has become crucial, particularly for the youth; without their voices, without their participation and representation, democratic ideals and governance cannot become a reality. The youth are called to become responsible citizens by exercising their right to vote as enshrined in the constitution, spreading awareness on constitutional rights of the people, participating in local body elections and by being critical about current practices of governance.

Youth evolve and deliberate strategies on what must be done to modernise governance. What changes must be made to improve the delivery and quality of service? What needs to be done to inject a spirit of entrepreneurialism and innovation into decision-making?

ACTIVITIES

1. Write four elements of 'Good Governance' and discuss them in the group. A final list of six elements can be listed by the group.
2. Each one can identify five 'first-time' voters and motivate them to exercise their right to vote and participate in the governance of the country.
3. Study the structure of your Panchayat/corporation and understand the roles and responsibilities in the local body elections. Create awareness among local people on your understanding.
4. Make a visit to a local Panchayat with success stories in good governance and share your experience with your peer group and with local people.





EDUCATION IN BRIEF

INTERNSHIPS IN KERALA BECOME UNSCRUPULOUS PAY TRAPS

By Sreerag PS: February 23, 2026



The Kerala government introduced mandatory internships as part of its new Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) to provide students with structured industry exposure and practical learning. However, what was envisioned as a bridge between academic learning and workplace experience has instead become a significant financial burden for many students. Most of the opportunities listed on the official Internship Kerala portal are offered by private firms that charge substantial fees, sometimes up to ₹10,000, effectively turning the programme into a pay-to-learn model rather than a pathway to meaningful training or employment.

Students interviewed for the article expressed frustration over the lack of clear guidelines and the scarcity of internships that offer stipends or are free of charge. One second-year student described how the portal largely lists paid options that many cannot afford, making the promise of a free undergraduate education feel hollow. Another student from an arts discipline said she was still searching for a relevant, free internship opportunity in her field without success. These testimonies highlight a disconnect between policy intentions and student realities, especially for those in non-professional streams.

Faculty members and educators also pointed to confusion and implementation gaps. With the programme rolled out rapidly, many teachers are unsure how to guide students. In some colleges, students are being registered as volunteers at cultural or educational institutions just to secure credits; an improvisation whose educational value is unclear. This reflects deeper issues in programme design and execution, particularly in disciplines where industry placements are harder to organize.

Critics, including university officials and syndicate members, have framed the situation as institutionalized financial exploitation. A syndicate member formally raised concerns with the state governor, emphasizing that adding financial burdens on students under the guise of internships is “unjust and morally indefensible.” These critiques point to the risks of corruption and collusion, where private entities may leverage academic requirements to generate revenue rather than provide genuine experiential learning.

In response, students and educators are calling for transparent accreditation norms, robust vetting of internship providers, and a commitment to expand stipend-based opportunities, particularly for economically weaker students. While officials claim the portal lists only reputable firms and efforts are underway to include public sector units, there is broad agreement that clearer policy frameworks and quality control mechanisms are urgently needed to ensure internships fulfil their stated educational purpose.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/internships-in-kerala-become-unscrupulous-pay-traps/articleshow/128713213.cms>



EDUCATION IN BRIEF



OVER 93000 SCHOOLS SHUT ACROSS INDIA IN LAST TEN YEARS

By The South India Times: 23, February 2026



According to data presented in the Lok Sabha, more than 93,000 schools have shut down across India in the last ten years. The majority of closures occurred between 2014–15 and 2019–20, with states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh reporting the highest numbers. Several other states, including Odisha, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra, also saw significant reductions.

The government attributes these closures to declining enrolment, rural-urban migration, and school rationalisation policies aimed at merging under-enrolled institutions. Officials maintain that students have been adjusted to nearby schools.

However, education experts warn that the disappearance of neighbourhood schools, especially in rural and remote areas, could increase travel distances, discourage attendance, and disproportionately affect girls and economically weaker families. The large-scale closures raise concerns about equity, access, and the long-term strength of India's public education system.

<https://thesouthindiatimes.com/national/over-93000-schools-shut-across-india-in-last-ten-years/>



CBSE'S DIGITAL EVALUATION REFORM: PREPAREDNESS WILL DEFINE ITS PROMISE

By The South India Times: 23, February 2026



CBSE is introducing digital (on-screen) evaluation for Class 12 board exams from 2026, where answer sheets will be scanned and marked online. The reform aims to improve speed, accuracy, transparency, and reduce manual errors in assessment.

However, the success of this shift will depend on infrastructure readiness, teacher training, and reliable digital connectivity, especially in schools across smaller towns and rural areas. While the move is seen as forward-looking, experts caution that effective implementation, not technology alone, will determine whether the reform fulfils its promise.

<https://www.thehindu.com/education/cbses-digital-evaluation-reform-preparedness-will-define-its-promise/article70674600.ece>





EDUCATION IN BRIEF



KERALA, INDIA'S EDUCATION FRONTRUNNER, NOW FACES ENROLMENT DIP AND POLITICISATION

By R.K Roshni and Sarath Babu George:
February 25, 2026



Kerala, long regarded as India's education frontrunner with high literacy rates and strong school systems, is now confronting a decline in student enrolment and the rising politicisation of education policy.

Once a model for near-universal schooling and broad educational access, Kerala's enrolment figures have started dipping, especially at certain stages of schooling and in some districts. Experts point to a combination of demographic shifts, declining birth rates, and increased competition from private and alternative education pathways as contributing factors.

At the same time, the state's education sector has become increasingly entangled with political debates and institutional rivalries. This has manifested in controversies over governance, the direction of curricular changes, and the role of different educational councils and boards; with critics warning that politicisation risks undermining long-term planning, teacher morale, and community trust.

The article underscores that maintaining Kerala's educational excellence will depend not just on historical reputation but on policy renewal, equitable access, and institutional coherence in a rapidly evolving social and political environment.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/kerala-indias-education-frontrunner-now-faces-enrolment-dip-and-politicisation/article70483443.ece>





EDUCATION IN BRIEF



AI SUMMIT: WHY EDUCATION NEEDS TO BE RETHOUGHT FOR AI ROLLOUT

By Viprav Baxi: February 23, 2026



At the India AI Impact Summit 2026 in New Delhi, education leaders, policymakers, and technology experts emphasised that the spread of artificial intelligence demands a fundamental rethink of how education is designed and delivered; not just the adoption of new tools but a deeper transformation of purpose, pedagogy, and values.

Speakers at the summit argued that AI is not just another technology to be added to classrooms but a force that reshapes knowledge, learning processes, and the relationship between learners and teachers. They highlighted the need to move beyond rote learning toward skills like critical thinking, ethical reasoning, creativity, and interdisciplinary understanding; areas where human judgement remains central even as AI systems become more capable.

Experts also stressed that human oversight and ethical awareness must remain at the core of AI-enabled education, to ensure technology serves learners and societies; rather than replacing human values with algorithmic logic. Close collaboration between educators, policymakers, and technologists was presented as essential to align AI adoption with broader educational goals and societal values.

In essence, the summit underscored that preparing India's learners for an AI-intensive world requires moving from incremental tech use to reimagining curricula, teacher roles, assessment systems, and governance frameworks; shaping an education ecosystem that equips students not only with technical fluency but also with ethical, cognitive, and creative capacities for the challenges ahead.

<https://www.thehindu.com/education/ai-summit-why-education-needs-to-be-rethought-for-ai-rollout/article70666093.ece>

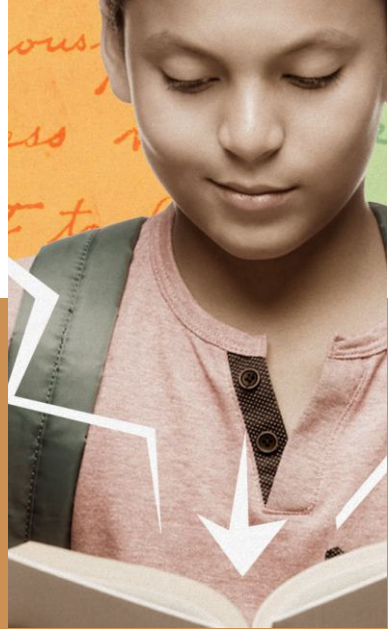




EDUCATION IN BRIEF

WHY HISTORICAL LITERACY MATTERS TODAY

By Albert P'Rayan: February 22, 2026



The article argues that historical literacy, the ability to understand, interpret, and critically engage with the past, is essential in today's world. It's more than memorising dates or facts; it involves analysing sources, recognising multiple perspectives, and drawing connections between past and present events. This form of literacy helps learners make sense of current social and political debates, strengthens critical thinking, and builds informed citizens who can better navigate misinformation and competing narratives.

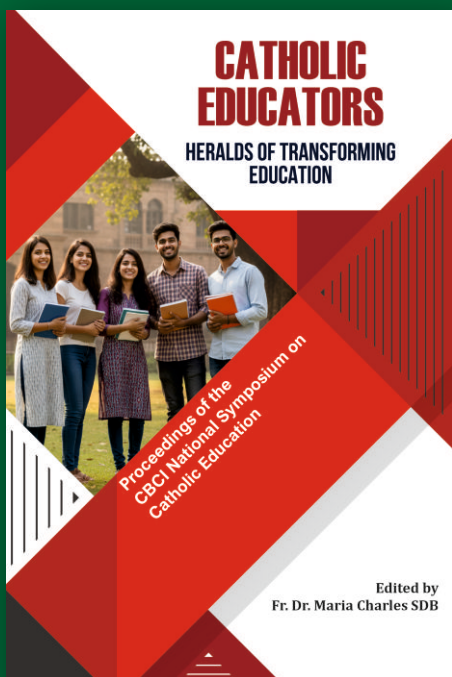
Historical literacy encourages people to question simplistic versions of the past, understand complexity, and resist polarised or distorted interpretations of history; skills that are crucial in democratic societies and globalised contexts where history is frequently invoked in public discourse. Ultimately, the article underscores that a strong grounding in history helps students better understand themselves, their communities, and the world they live in.

<https://www.thehindu.com/education/schools/why-historical-literacy-matters-today/article70646365.ece>



CBCI OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE RELEASES FOUR LANDMARK VOLUMES ON CATHOLIC EDUCATION

In a landmark contribution to the field of faith-based education, the CBCI Office for Education and Culture has released four new books that together chart a comprehensive vision for Catholic education in India and beyond. These volumes—Catholic Educators: Heralds of Transforming Education, The Teachings of the Catholic Church on Education, Saint Educators: The Story of Holiness and Education in the Church, and Education 5.0: Nurturing Gen Next for Excellence and Service—reflect the Office's ongoing mission to form leaders, inspire renewal, and strengthen the Catholic educational apostolate across the nation.

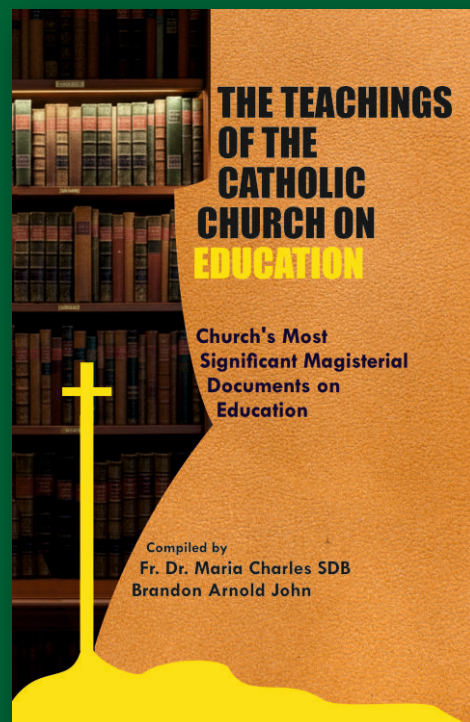


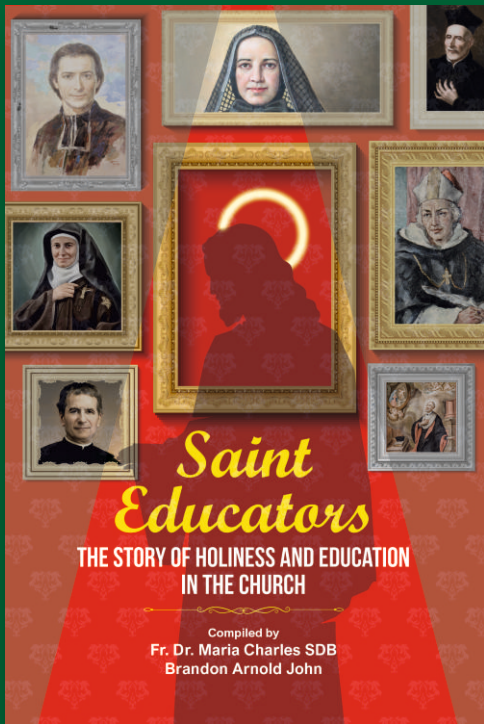
CATHOLIC EDUCATORS: HERALDS OF TRANSFORMING EDUCATION

This volume celebrates the vocation of Catholic educators as agents of transformation in today's complex world. Through reflective essays and case studies, it highlights the sacred calling of teachers who not only impart knowledge but awaken faith, compassion, and moral vision in their students. Rooted in Pope Francis' Global Compact on Education, the book reminds educators that true education transforms both the learner and the teacher through a dialogue of life, values, and hope.

THE TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON EDUCATION

Drawing from the rich magisterial tradition of the Church—from Gravissimum Educationis to Veritatis Gaudium—this scholarly volume presents the foundational principles of Catholic education. It serves as a vital reference for educators, administrators, and researchers who seek to understand education as a ministry of integral human formation. The book traces how the Church views education as a partnership between faith and reason, nurturing wisdom, conscience, and the pursuit of truth.



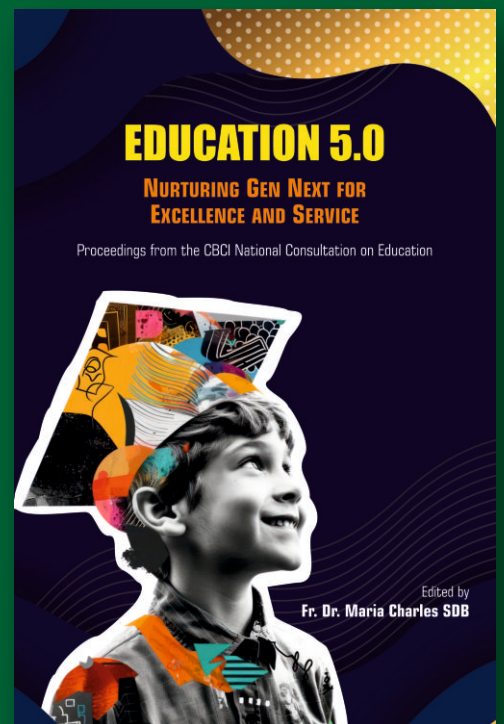


SAINT EDUCATORS: THE STORY OF HOLINESS AND EDUCATION IN THE CHURCH

This inspiring collection brings to life the stories of great saint-educators—from St. John Bosco and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton to St. Albertus Magnus and St. Claudine Thévenet—whose lives embody the union of holiness and pedagogy. Each chapter illustrates how education becomes a path to sanctity, and how holiness itself becomes the most compelling form of teaching. The book invites today's educators to rediscover the spiritual roots of their vocation in the witness of these luminous figures.

EDUCATION 5.0: NURTURING GEN NEXT FOR EXCELLENCE AND SERVICE

Addressing the challenges and opportunities of the digital age, this forward-looking volume explores how Catholic education can respond to emerging technologies, innovation, and socio-cultural shifts while remaining grounded in Gospel values. It proposes a model of “Education 5.0” that combines excellence with service—forming young people who are intellectually competent, ethically grounded, and socially engaged. With insights on AI, digital literacy, ecological education, and inclusive pedagogy, it calls Catholic institutions to lead with creativity and conscience.



Together, these four publications form a constellation of thought and action—linking the wisdom of the Church, the example of the saints, the dedication of educators, and the promise of future generations. They reaffirm the CBCI Office for Education and Culture's vision: to make Catholic education in India a beacon of faith, excellence, and transformative hope for the world.



ALL INDIA CATHOLIC EDUCATION POLICY

PUBLISHED BY CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF INDIA. (CBCI)

All India Catholic Education Policy 2023 is brought out by the CBCI Office for Education and Culture of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India. This revised edition offers many avenues for relevant pedagogies and educational choices. This comprehensive policy contains norms and directives for all the Catholic educational institutions of India regarding the multi-dimensional approaches of our education ministry. The Policy emphasizes the care of Catholics, especially the poor and the marginalized; the identity and role of the Catholic education ministry in India and our contribution to school education, higher education and technical and vocational education. This policy offers guidelines for a value-based educational climate, administrative and management policy and sets standards for our education ministry in the future.

PRICE: RS. 160

All India Catholic Education Policy 2023



CBCI Office for Education and Culture
CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDIA

CBCI CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PUBLISHED BY CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF INDIA. (CBCI)

CBCI CHILD PROTECTION POLICY
FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN INDIA 2023



CBCI Office for Education and Culture
CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDIA

The Catholic Church in India operates and manages nearly 20,000 educational institutions which include formal primary schools, middle schools, high schools, colleges and trade schools. The Catholic Bishops' Conference (CBCI) of India envisions not only providing quality education for the children and youth but also creating a safe and conducive environment for enabling the well-being, growth and development of each child it serves. This child protection policy brought out by the CBCI Office for Education and Culture is an expression of the commitment of the Catholic Church to ensure that each child feels secure and receives an enabling environment for their development. This policy establishes processes procedures and duties for all stakeholders working directly or indirectly with children in their schools.

PRICE: RS. 140



CBCI OFFICE FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE
CBCI Centre, 1 Ashok Place, New Delhi - 110001
Office: +91 11 23747290 (Office)
Mobile: +91 9968747667 (Personal),
+91 9868141139 (Office)
Email: cbcieducation@gmail.com,
cbcieducationinfo@gmail.com
Website: www.cbcieducation.com



ATC PUBLISHERS
St Mary's Block, Archdiocesan Pastoral Centre
No. 5, Nandidurga Road, Benson Town
Bangalore - 560046
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