

# MONTHLY SECTOR UPDATE

# EDUCATION



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“The role of the teacher is to create the conditions for invention rather than provide ready-made knowledge.”

-Seymour Papert

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## We Believe

It has been an active quarter on the front lines of education policy reform, even while Unlock 4.0 is still sometime away for the education fraternity. New announcements giving expression to critical nuances of the NEP seem to be propelling us in the direction of an education churn. While this will not be easy, we hope it expands the thinking of decision makers to bring in new practices and discard dated beliefs.

A new vision for school curriculum supports practical values expected to seed competencies in young people, to help them solve real world problems. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's call to action for including agriculture in the middle school curriculum and aligning research and technology in agricultural universities with farmer practice to improve agro-entrepreneurship in the country, recalls Mahatma Gandhi's advocacy of rural technologies under Buniyadi Shikhsa. Such measures will ensure that the agricultural reforms that are underway for food security & for increasing farmer income, will now gain epistemological foundations by creating academic dispositions for the sector in school and college students. Perhaps along with the focus on agriculture, there should also be an equal aspect of nutrition education linking agro-climatic and traditional foods to create an informed environment, that will help address issues of under-nutrition, diet diversity, food fortification and health.

Meanwhile the convergence of focus on internationalising Indian universities will give chase to the goal of the NAAC ranking as a blueprint for sharpening the quality of reform in Higher education institutions. Hopefully an increasing number of Indian States make strides in motivating the institution to attempt this task as a meaningful exercise to explore their own potential for excellence. For example, the Government of Haryana has taken special measures to collaborate with competent agencies to ensure that colleges and universities can undergo this experience with professional help.

As the government made preparations to enable safe commute for students to take the IIT-JEE exams, perhaps there will need to be more thought given to a more widespread coverage of centres across some more tier II and III towns and cities, if conducting online examinations was not an option. There have been reports in the press of families who have struggled to make private arrangements to get their wards to the centres safely, as there still is wariness about using public transport. There will also be attendant concerns about the availability of invigilators and other aspects of monitoring. The efforts and struggles of a multitude of people to get to their examination points despite the challenging circumstances due to the pandemic, has underlined the hopes that ride on these examinations, and it may be an opportune time for state governments to even review their provisions and arrangements for equipping government school students to be academically competent for these tests, using both offline and online modes. It also throws into relief the importance of strengthening and diversifying the coverage of vocational education to make it more employment ready and industry centric.

Over the last couple of months communication over the ether was one of the lifelines that supported businesses and helped netizens wade through the crises. While all communication virtual and online will keep getting an impetus as never before, the spotlight is on language abilities, especially spoken skills in English language communication. Recognizing the importance of English language as lingua franca, a digital application English Pro has been developed by English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad, to help users improve their pronunciation enabling them to transition from regional languages to the English language. While technology tools are useful, it would be of a greater advantage to school students, if at the school level, functional skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (LSRW) were to be imparted in a whole language approach with real-life connections and multi-sensorial reinforcement. Classrooms, especially in government schools, need to create situations for language acquisition in a simulation of real life, required for socialization, contributing to academic proficiency and subsequent employment and professional growth.

**"To inspire this 21st century generation of learners to be the critical thinkers, problem solvers and innovators, it is imperative for Indian HEIs to adopt a transformative curriculum and plan their spaces well. NAAC accreditation process is a positive step towards it."**

**-Renu Punhani  
Education Expert  
Primus Partners**

## In the Spotlight

### A heated debate | The IIT-JEE and NEET entrance examinations, 2020

The decision to hold the IIT-JEE and NEET entrance examinations this year has been highly contended amongst students, parents, teachers and policymakers alike. The notice issued by the National Testing Agency (NTA) to continue on with the examinations was met by a plea against the decision on behalf of student representatives of eleven states to the Supreme Court. The plea gained momentum on news and social media channels with many debating the consequences of holding or postponing/ cancelling the exam.

The plea requested the court to postpone the examinations until the threat of the COVID-19 virus to individual health subsides, citing that the NTA decision violates Article 21 of the Constitution. With India having the fastest increasing positive cases, exposure to the virus is the primary cause of fear and concern. The plea also brought up the issue of students not having sufficient access to examination centers, especially those that hail from rural areas or flood inundated regions.

On the other hand however, teachers as well as students have expressed that a delay in the examination would have debilitating effects on the future of these students. Postponement or cancellation would mean that lakhs of students would lose an entire year due to the pandemic, which would be unfair and discriminatory especially towards those that have spent time in preparations. There is also concern that unless the examinations are conducted, the respective educational institutions will face challenges to accommodate the next batch of students. The stress and uncertainty accompanied with a delay would further affect the mental health of the students.

While the plea did not hold ground for the apex court, educational institutions, State Governments and Union Ministries began initiating efforts to safeguard student's health. The Union Minister of Railways announced the functioning of Examination Special and Regular Special trains for the South Western Railways in the country. Additionally, students as well as their guardians were allowed to travel by special services in the Mumbai Suburban Region, while additional booking counters were also opened at key stations to prevent overcrowding. At the centres, measures were taken to phase entry and exit timings and post a temperature check and sanitisation, each student was provided with fresh masks. Social distancing was followed at all times and rooms were sanitised pre and post the examination. Special considerations have been made to postpone the exam especially for those students impacted by the floods.



### Too much of a good thing | Online education taking a toll on students, teachers, as well as parents

While the immediacy with which schools and colleges across India adopted online forms of education was phenomenal, the continued use of the same is now rearing an ugly side. With the increase in online classes and daily screen time for both teachers and students, many have voiced concerns on the health impacts these practices have on the student's physical and mental health. Extended months of a sedentary lifestyle while using electronic devices have or are likely to result in numerous health conditions such as dry or strained eyes, head or body aches, weight gain, depressive tendencies, anxiety, trouble sleeping, and lack of motivation.

Young parents on the other hand are also reportedly feeling the strain of staying indoors, have to play juggler with responsibilities involving their own careers and work schedules, household chores, their children's physical and emotional needs as well as tutoring their children as and when required. Excessive time indoors and social isolation is taking a heavy toll on all involved and teachers as well as students are facing troubles delivering and receiving a quality of education similar to that pre-COVID. While the pandemic shows no signs of slowing down, resilience, patience as well as balanced teaching practices will prove beneficial.



## Our Changemakers

### A Teacher's Day Tribute | The National Awards to Teachers, 2020

The National Awards to Teachers instituted by the Ministry of Education is an annual felicitation of the nation's greatest teachers and their initiatives and contribution to education sector, their schools, fellow teachers as well as their students. The teachers are awarded after multiple rounds of selection at the regional, state and national level, on the occasion of Teacher's Day on the 5th of September. Below are the contributions of a few teachers making outstanding contributions:



**Ms. Sudha Painuli**  
Eklavya Model Residential School  
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Ms. Painuli has been recognised for her contributions to innovation in education for tribal communities. Prominent initiatives begun by her include the Eklavya Birthday Garden, the Theatre in Education, the Eklavya Tribal Museum, as well as Skill Development Workshops etc.



**Mr. Yakub S. Koyyur**  
Government High School  
Dakshin Kannad, Karnataka

Mr. Koyyur was awarded for the development of a one-of-a-kind "Maths World" laboratory that supports students in grasping the subject through Youtube videos, models, charts and AV tools. He has succeeded in improving learning outcomes for his students.



**Ms. Joshi Sudha Gautambhai**  
Secondary School for the Blind  
Ahmadabad, Gujarat

Ms. Gautambhai has been selected for her role in supporting her differently-abled students through creative arts and other confidence building techniques. She has also developed her own inexpensive learning materials, encouraging reading in braille.



**Mr. Dhilip S.**  
Government Higher Secondary School  
Viluppuram, Tamil Nadu

Mr. Dhilip has been using new innovative techniques, using Augmented and Virtual Reality to teach English to his students. He involves the use of games and his own phonetic techniques to teach grammar and pronunciation.



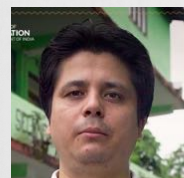
**Ms. Padma Priya Vummaji**  
Government Nehru Memorial High School  
Hyderabad, Telangana

Ms. Vummaji has been contributing to innovations in Math instruction, using daily objects to explain difficult concepts. She has also taken on the responsibility of reducing school dropouts and encouraging girls to attend school.



**Mr. Smith Kumar Soni**  
Government Middle School Bano  
Simdega, Jharkhand

Mr. Soni has been taking consistent actions to prevent social malaises such as child marriage, child labour, human trafficking and high dropout rates within the tribal community in his district. He has also improved infrastructure and learning practices in his school.



**Mr. Lomas Dhungel**  
Government Senior Secondary School  
East Sikkim, Sikkim

Mr. Dhungel is well known for his work in sustainability and student support. Through his initiative 'Hariyo Makha - Sikkim Against Pollution', he generates funds by recycling waste from his school along with his students and is currently paying it towards the tuition fees of five students.



**Ms. Thankaleta Thankappan**  
Government LVLPS Chavara South  
Kollam, Kerala

Ms. Thankappan has been making continuous efforts in collecting community and local corporate funds towards infrastructure in her school. She has developed an English and Math Laboratory, an open auditorium, a library, toilets as well as washing areas.



**Mr. Madhu Asapanna**  
Z.P. High School Kasibugga  
Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh

Mr. Asapanna has been engaging his students through ICT tools, design animation especially using theatre to increase motivation and confidence. He is also highly involved with the community in an attempt to improve enrollment rates and celebrate student achievements.

## On the Trail

### Top 5 News on the sector

Unlock 4.0 has begun, however schools, colleges, universities will only open post the 30th of September according to the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs. In areas outside of containment zones however, students of classes 9 through 12 may go to school for additional support from their teachers if required. [Read Here](#)

The Prime Minister has advocated the introduction of Agriculture as a subject for middle school children in a vision to improve agro-entrepreneurship in India. There is also a parallel effort to improve research and technology in the sector by aligning agricultural universities to farmers. [Read Here](#)

The Union Minister of Education launched an English pronunciation application developed by the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU), Hyderabad. Named 'EnglishPro', the application guides beginner level students to transition from their regional languages to Indian English, improving overall language abilities in the nation. [Read Here](#)

According to the Director of the NCERT, the preparation of the NEP framework would take one year, while the development of the early childhood care and education, school education, teacher education and adult education curricula and production of the subject textbooks would take another two years, implementable in 2023-2024. [Read Here](#)

Due to online classes increasing, the demand for foreign universities has reduced. While few foreign universities have not reduced tuition fees, others are supporting international students by providing fee waivers, provisional admissions and career support. [Read Here](#)

### Top 5 Sector Player News

Google has announced the establishment of The Anywhere School. The solution will integrate existing Google applications while adding newer features such as greater controls for teachers, breakout rooms, attendance tracking, multiple languages, citation and composition tools, auto correct as well as an assessment LMS. [Read Here](#)

In response to the NEP 2020 guideline to internationalize Indian universities, the Central Government is already in talks with the Indian Institutes of Technology towards the same end. According to IIT Delhi director V.R. Rao, the move will allow India to reach its goal of 50% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER). [Read Here](#)

The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative has invested in Eruditus, an edtech firm valued at USD700 million. The company collaborates with globally renowned universities to provide executive level courses to its students. The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative has also invested in Byju's, a valued global edtech player. [Read Here](#)

Education Television is experiencing a new lease on life as a popular mode of distance education during the COVID-19 lockdown. The SWAYAM Prabha with its 12 additional channels is airing educational content for at least four hours in a day, while Doordarshan is providing educational content on some of its regional channels. [Read Here](#)

BSS School, Kolkata has been awarded India's Most Admirable Education Brand - 2020, adding another feather to its cap. The BSS School was selected for excellence in its pedagogy, teaching staff and infrastructure. [Read Here](#)

## About Primus Partners

Primus Partners has been set up to partner with clients in 'navigating' India, by experts with decades of experience in doing so for large global firms. Set up on the principle of 'Idea Realization', it brings to bear 'experience in action'.

Idea Realization'— a unique approach to examine futuristic ideas required for the growth of an organization or a sector or geography, from the perspective of assured on ground implementability.

India is and will continue to be a complex opportunity. Private and Public sector need trusted advisory partners in order to tap into this opportunity. Primus Partners is your go-to trusted Advisory for both public and private sector organizations involved intricately with nation building, and the creation and growth of robust corporations as engines of progress.

Our core strength comes from our founding partners, who are goal-oriented, with extensive hands-on experience and subject-matter expertise, which is well recognized in the industry. Our core founders form a diverse cohort of leaders from both genders with experience across industries (Public Sector, Healthcare, Transport, Education, etc), and with varied specialization (engineers, lawyers, tax professionals, management, etc).

Primus Partners brings experience of working in more than 30 countries with private and public sector, including working with Government of India, building and leading large consulting teams at the leadership level, and creating one of the largest public sector consulting practice in India. They also represent 200 person years of experience in leading global and Indian consulting firms and the public sector.

The founding team is supported by a distinguished advisory board that includes experts with leadership experience across government, large corporate and notable civil society organisations.

## Primus Partners Contacts



**Nilaya Varma**  
Co-Founder & CEO



**Charu Malhotra**  
Co-Founder & MD



**Pooja Ahluwalia**  
VP & Head of Research



**Juhi Talwar**  
Consultant

For further details please write to [research@primuspartners.in](mailto:research@primuspartners.in)

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