



# Education for Viksit Bharat @2047: Transformation Reforms and Emerging Challenges of Shadow Education

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## Abstract

The vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 reflects India's long-term commitment to becoming a developed, inclusive, and knowledge-driven nation by the centenary of its independence. Education occupies a central place in this national aspiration, as sustainable development and social inclusion are unattainable without an equitable and high-quality education system. In recent years, India has undertaken significant reforms in education, especially the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, through digital learning platforms expansion of competency-based curricula, and Learner-centric pedagogy. These reforms aim to move the systems beyond rote learning towards holistic development, critical thinking, creativity, and skill-oriented. However, alongside these positive developments, the rapid growth of shadow education comprising private coaching centres, tutoring services, and exam-oriented preparatory institutions has emerged as a serious challenge. Shadow education increasingly reinforces exam-centric Learning, unhealthy competition based on memorization, often undermining the broader educational objectives envisioned under NEP 2020. Drawing on an extensive review of scholarly Literature and policy documents, this paper critically examines how the expansion of shadow education exacerbates educational inequity, promotes further marginalization disadvantage learners, and weakens the focus on character building, vocational education, and life skills. The study highlights structural challenges, such as unequal access to quality schooling, commercialization of education, and the growing disconnect between formal education and national development goals. By situating these challenges within the broader framework of Viksit Bharat @2047, this paper argues that unchecked shadow education jeopardizes inclusive growth and social equity. The paper concludes by offering policy-oriented recommendations to strengthen public education, regulate supplementary education, and realign learning practices with holistic, value-based, and skill-oriented outcomes essential for building an empowered and developed India by 2047. Coordinated approach between policy reforms and emerging educational trends is essential for sustainable and equitable national development

**Keywords:** Viksit Bharat @2047, Shadow Education, National Educational Policy 2020, Educational Equity

## Introduction

The concept of Viksit Bharat @2047 symbolizes India's ambitious and visionary commitment to becoming a fully developed nation by the time it celebrates 100 years of independence. This vision goes beyond economic prosperity and industrial growth; it integrates social justice, technological advancement, and environmental sustainability, cultural integrity, and human development. Among all these dimensions, education stands as the most powerful and transformative pillar, because the development of a nation is fundamentally linked with the development of its people. A country can not truly progress without equipping its citizens with knowledge, skill, ethical values, creativity, and the ability to think critically and innovatively. In the Indian context, education has historically played a significant role in shaping social mobility, reducing poverty, and fostering democratic participation. However, the demands of the 21st century characterized by rapid technological change, globalization, and knowledge-based economies, have intensified the need for a more responsive, inclusive, and future-oriented education system. Recognizing this necessity, the Government of India introduced several large-scale reforms, the most notable being the National Education Policy (NEP)2020. NEP2020 marks a paradigm shift from rote memorization and exam-centric evaluation toward experiential learning, multidisciplinary education, competency-based assessment, and the integration of vocational and digital skills. It emphasizes flexibility, creativity, and multilingualism, holistic development, thereby aligning education with global standards and future workforce demands. Parallel to policy reforms, India has also embraced technological transformation through initiatives such as Digital India, SWAYAM, DIKSHA, PM e-Vidya, and Skill India. These initiatives aim to democratize access to knowledge, bridge geographical barriers, and empower learners through digital platforms. Online courses, open educational resources, and hybrid learning models have expanded opportunities for students from remote and underserved regions. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of digital learning, highlighting both the potential and the challenges of technology-driven education. Despite these progressive developments, the Indian education system faces persistent structural and cultural challenges. One of the significant emerging concerns is the expansion of shadow education, a parallel system of private tutoring, coaching centres, and supplementary instruction operating outside the formal schooling framework. Shadow education has become deeply embedded in urban as well as rural educational culture, primarily driven by competitive examination, parental aspirations, and perceived inadequacies in mainstream schooling. While it may provide academic support to some learners, its unregulated growth has generated issues related to commercialization, inequality, mental stress, and the erosion of holistic learning. Shadow education often emphasizes examination performance and short-term academic gains rather than conceptual understanding and long-term intellectual development. This tendency contradicts the holistic vision promoted by NEP 2020 and broader national goal of nurturing creative, innovative, and ethically grounded citizens. Furthermore, access to high-quality private tutoring is largely determined by financial capacity, thereby widening socio-economic disparities and undermining the principle of equitable education. the commercialization of learning also shifts focus away from public schooling reforms and teacher empowerment, creating a cycle where parents increasingly rely on private alternatives. Therefore, the realization of Viksit Bharat@2047 requires not only progressive policy frameworks but also critical engagement with systemic challenges such as shadow education. Educational transformation must be inclusive, balanced, and sustainable. It must prioritize equal opportunities, mental well-being, skill development, and ethical values alongside academic excellence. The success of this national vision depends on building an education system that is capable of nurturing empowered citizens who can contribute meaningfully to economic growth, social harmony, and global competitiveness. In this light, examining the role of education, evaluating the impact of shadow education, and identifying transformational reforms become essential scholarly and policy.

## Review of Literature

The scholarly discourse on education and national development consistently highlights the interdependence between human capital formation and socio-economic progress. Classical human capital theory, proposed by Becker (1993), argues that investment in education leads to increased productivity, innovation and economic stability. International organization such as UNESCO and the World Bank also emphasize that equality in education fosters social cohesion, democratic participation, and sustainable development. In the Indian context, the National Educational Policy 2020 has been widely discussed as a transformative document aimed at reshaping educational structures, curriculum design, and assessment systems. Rangarajan Sharma and

Grove (2023) observe that NEP 2020 promotes inclusivity and equity by encouraging multilingual education, vocational integration, and learner-centred pedagogy. Pandita et al. (2023) highlight the role of blended learning models and digital collaboration in enhancing accessibility and flexibility in education. However, alongside positive reforms, a growing body of literature critically examines the phenomenon of shadow education. Bray (2023) describes shadow education as a global parallel system that often undermines public schooling and increases academic pressure. Gupta (2021) argues that private tutoring normalizes performance oriented culture and intensifies socio-economic stratification. Studies by Kumar, Pandita, and Singh (2024; 2025) reveal that Indian parents increasingly depend on coaching centres due to competitive examination and fear of academic failure, which in turn perpetuates inequality and mental stress among students. Tan and Yang (2019) emphasize that shadow education contributes more to status reproduction than genuine intellectual empowerment. Collectively, existing literature suggests that while educational reforms aim to democratize learning and enhance quality, the expansion of shadow education introduces contradictions related to equity, accessibility, and holistic development. These findings underline the necessity of balanced reforms that strengthen formal education systems while regulating commercial tutoring practices.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the role of education in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.
2. To analyze the impact of shadow education on holistic development, equity and quality in education.
3. To explore transformational educational reforms and policy strategies necessary for national development and inclusive growth.

#### **Objective 1: To examine the role of education in achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047**

Education serves as the cornerstone of national transformation, influencing economic productivity, technological innovation, cultural preservation, and civic responsibility. In the pursuit of Viksit Bharat @2047, education is not merely an institutional sector but a strategic instrument for shaping the nation's intellectual and moral fabric. A well-educated population contributes to economic growth through skilled labour, entrepreneurship, and innovation. It also strengthens democratic values by fostering critical thinking, tolerance, and informed decision-making. The NEP 2020 envisions education as a holistic process that integrates academic knowledge with life skills and ethical awareness. By promoting interdisciplinary learning and vocational training, it seeks to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. This alignment is crucial for preparing youth to participate effectively in global knowledge economies and emerging technological industries. However, the realization of this transformative role is contingent upon equitable access and quality assurance. Despite policy initiatives, disparities persist between urban and rural regions, private and public institutions, and socio-economic groups. The digital divide, infrastructural limitations, and teacher shortage remain significant barriers. If these inequalities are not addressed, the benefits of educational reforms may remain concentrated among privileged communities, thereby limiting the inclusive potential of national development. Critical, education must also cultivate the social and emotional competencies, environmental awareness, and ethical leadership. A developed nation is not defined solely by GDP growth but by the well-being and integrity of its citizens. Therefore, the role of education in Viksit Bharat extends beyond employability; it encompasses character building, innovation culture, and social responsibility. Sustained investment in teacher training, curriculum modernization, and community participation is essential for ensuring that education fulfils its transformative promise

#### **Objective 2: To analyze the impact of shadow education on holistic development, equity and quality in education.**

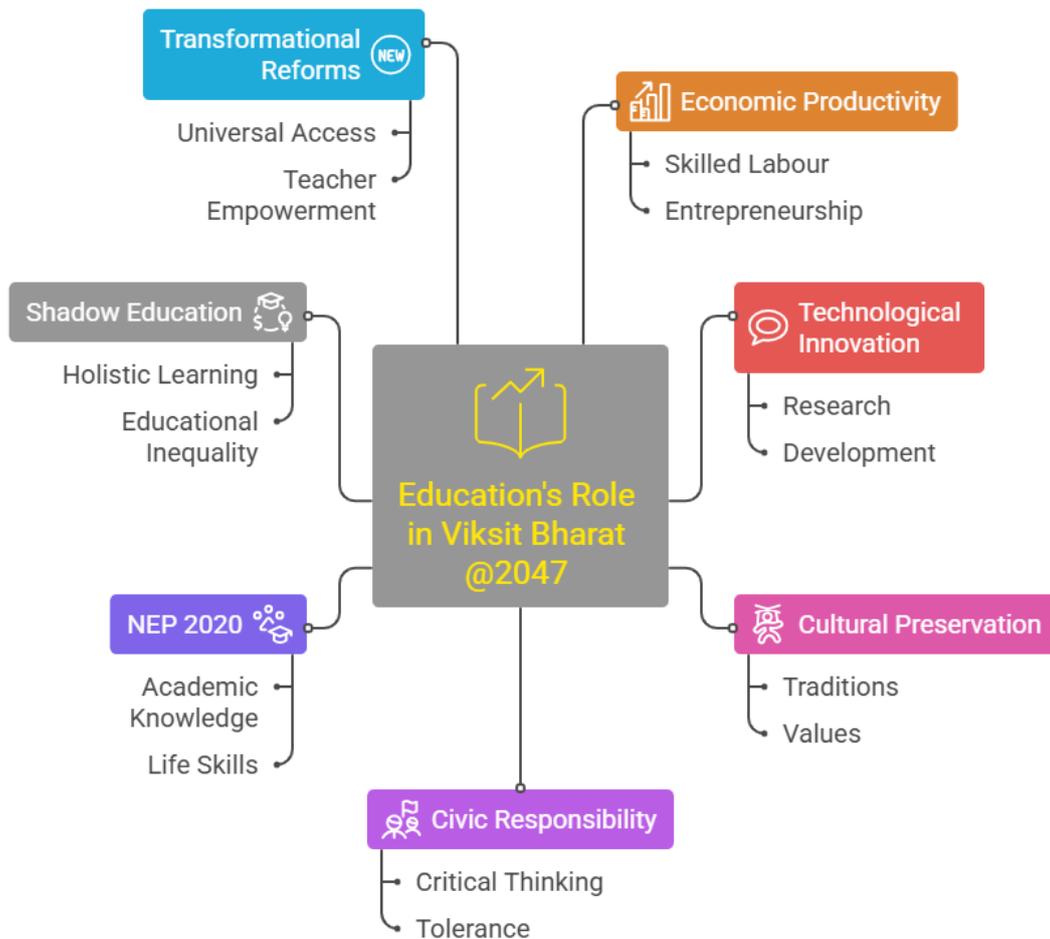
Shadow education has emerged as one of the most influential yet controversial elements within contemporary Indian education. Its growth is driven by intense competition for limited higher-education seats, societal expectations, and parental aspirations for academic excellence. Coaching institutes, online tutoring platforms, and private tuition classes have become normalized components of students' academic routines. While these services may offer additional support, long-term implications raise serious concerns. One major issue is the erosion of holistic learning. Shadow education often prioritizes memorization, speed, and examination strategies rather than conceptual clarity, creativity and analytical thinking. This narrow focus contradicts the

learner-centred and inquiry-based principles advocated by NEP 2020. Students frequently experience cognitive overload and limited opportunities for extracurricular engagement, social interaction, and emotional. Another critical dimension is educational inequality. Access to high-quality tutoring is strongly influenced by financial capacity, creating an uneven playing field. Economically privileged students gain competitive advantages, while marginalized learners struggle to keep pace. This dynamic reinforces social stratification and undermines the principle of equal opportunity that lies at the heart of democratic education. Shadow education also affects mental health and well-being. Extended study hours, performance pressure, and fear of failure contribute to anxiety and burnout and reduce motivation. Classroom dynamics are distorted as students rely more on coaching centres than on school instruction, weakening trust in public education systems. Teachers may feel demotivated, and schools risk becoming secondary rather than primary learning spaces. From a policy perspective, the commercialization of education diverts attention from systemic improvements in public schooling. Instead of addressing curriculum gaps or teacher shortages, families often resort to private solutions, creating a cycle of dependency. Therefore, while shadow education responds to shortcomings, its unregulated expansion poses structural threats to equity, creativity, and national development goals.

### **Objective 3: To explore Transformational educational reforms and policy strategies necessary for national development and inclusive growth.**

To align education with the Viksit Bharat vision, multi-layered transformational reforms are essential. First, universal access to foundational literacy and numeracy must be ensured through effective implementation of programs such as NIPUN Bharat. Early childhood education, nutritional support, and community engagement are crucial components for strengthening foundational learning. Second, curriculum and pedagogy must continue evolving toward competency-based and interdisciplinary models. Project-based learning, vocational integration, and digital literacy should become standard classroom practices. Such approaches not only enhance employability but also nurture creativity and problem-solving ability. Teacher empowerment is another critical reform area. Continuous professional development, technological training, and pedagogical innovation are necessary for transforming teachers into facilitators of learning rather than transmitters of information. Incentive structures, mentorship programs, and research opportunities can further motivate educators to adopt progressive methodologies. Addressing shadow education requires a balanced strategy involving regulation and systemic strengthening. Public schools must be improved through better infrastructure, smaller class sizes, and accountability mechanisms. Simultaneously, assessment systems should shift from high-stakes examination to formative and competency-based evaluation through a framework such as PARAKH. Reduced exam pressure will gradually decrease dependence on coaching cultures. Digital inclusion policies are equally important. Affordable devices, internet connectivity, and multilingual content delivery can bridge the digital divide and ensure that technological advancements benefit all learners. Community participation, parental involvement, and a transparent governance structure further enhance accountability and ownership of educational reforms.

## Education's Role in Viksit Bharat @2047



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## Conclusion

The realization of Viksit Bharat @2047 is inseparable from the transformation of India's education system. While progressive reforms such as NEP 2020 and digital initiatives have laid a strong foundation, emerging challenges, particularly the rise of shadow education, require critical attention. Education must transcend exam-centric performance and embrace holistic, inclusive, and value-oriented learning that nurtures creativity, innovation, and ethical citizenship. Addressing inequities, regulating commercialization, empowering teachers, and fostering digital inclusion are essential steps toward sustainable transformation. The ultimate success of Viksit Bharat depends not only on economic achievements but on the quality of its human capital, citizens who are knowledgeable, compassionate, innovative, and socially responsible. By harmonizing transformational reforms with equitable practices and by mitigating the distortions caused by shadow education, India can ensure that its centenary celebration in 2047 symbolizes genuine development in substance, spirit, and societal well-being.

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