



Global Education Monitoring Report 2023: UNESCO

For Prelims: [Global Education Monitoring Report 2023](#), [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#), [Covid-19 Pandemic](#), [SDG \(Sustainable Development Goals\) 4](#).

For Mains: Global Education Monitoring Report 2023.

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Why in News?

Recently, the [UNESCO \(United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization\)](#) has released the **Global Education Monitoring Report 2023**, titled '**Technology in Education: A Tool on Whose Terms**' endorsed ban on smartphones in schools **where technology integration does not improve learning**.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- **Rationale for Restricting Smartphone Usage:**
 - The report highlighted that **“mere proximity to a mobile device was found to distract students** and to have a negative impact on learning in 14 countries, yet less than one in four have banned smartphone use in schools.
 - It cited a study of young people between the age 2 and 17 years which showed that higher screen time was associated with **poorer well-being; less curiosity, self-control and emotional stability; higher anxiety;** and depression diagnoses.
- **Inequity in Access:**
 - During the [Covid-19 Pandemic](#), the rapid shift to online learning left out at least half a billion students worldwide, **disproportionately affecting the poorest** and those in rural areas.
- **Limited Adaptation of Digital Technology:**
 - The fast pace of technological change puts strain on education systems to adapt.
 - **Digital literacy and critical thinking skills** are crucial, especially with the growth of generative AI.
 - However, adaptation efforts **are still in progress, with only a limited number of countries having defined skills** and curricula for AI.
- **Data Privacy:**
 - Children’s data are being exposed, yet only **16% of countries explicitly guarantee data privacy** in education by law.
 - One analysis found that 89% of 163 education technology products recommended during the pandemic could survey children.
 - Further, 39 of 42 governments providing online education during the pandemic fostered uses that risked or infringed on children’s rights.
- **Consideration of Costs:**
 - Many countries ignore the **long-term financial implications** of technology purchases, and the **EdTech market** continues to expand while **basic education needs remain**

unmet.

- Technology is often brought to plug a gap, with no **view to the long-term costs for national budgets.**
 - The cost of moving to basic digital learning in low-income countries and connecting all schools to the internet in lower-middle-income countries would add **50% to their current financing gap** for achieving national [SDG \(Sustainable Development Goals\) 4](#) targets.

What are the Recommendations?

- There is a need for **rigorous and impartial evidence** of technology's effectiveness in learning. Policymakers need to have **reliable evidence to make informed decisions** about technology integration in education.
- Technology should enhance **learning experiences and support the well-being** of students and teachers rather than replace in-person, teacher-led instruction.
- The right to education is increasingly tied to meaningful connectivity, and it calls for setting benchmarks to connect all schools to the internet by 2030, with a focus on reaching marginalized communities.
- While technology offers potential benefits in education, it is essential to consider the long-term costs.

What is UNESCO?

- UNESCO is a specialized agency of the [United Nations \(UN\)](#). It seeks to build peace **through international cooperation** in Education, the Sciences and Culture.
- It is also a member of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)**, a coalition of UN agencies and organizations aimed at fulfilling the SDGs.
- UNESCO's **Headquarters are located in Paris** and the Organization has more than 50 field offices around the world.
- It has **194 Members and 12 Associate Members** and is governed by the General Conference and the Executive Board.
 - Three UNESCO member states are not UN members: Cook Islands, Niue, and Palestine.
 - While two UN member states (Israel, Liechtenstein) are not UNESCO members.

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