Mapping India's Education Landscape

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation** has released the data of **Comprehensive Modular Survey: Education (CMS:E), 2025,** conducted as part of the **80th Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS).**

- The NSS is conducted by the **Field Operations Division** of the **National Statistical Office (NSO),** earlier known as the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).**

What are the Major Takeaways from CMS:E Survey 2025?

- **School Enrolment Patterns:** Government schools continue to play a pivotal role, accounting for **55.9% of total enrolments**, with a significantly higher share in **rural areas (66%)** compared to **urban areas (30.1%)**.
- **Education Spending:** The **average per-student expenditure** on school education was estimated at **Rs 8,382 in rural India** and **Rs 23,470 in urban India**, covering all levels of enrolment across both government and non-government schools.
- **Private Coaching:** Around **27% of students** availed private coaching during the current academic year, with the trend more prevalent in **urban areas (30.7%)** than in **rural areas (25.5%)**.
- **Sources of Educational Finance:** About **95% of students' educational expenses** were met by **household/family members**, while only **1.2% reported government scholarships** as their primary source of funding.

What are the Key Developments Shaping Indian Education Landscape?

- **Digital, Online, & STEM Education**: **Online and hybrid learnin**g have i**ncreased access to education,** especially in remote areas, supported by initiatives like **PM eVidya** and **edtech investments** of USD 3.94 billion (FY22).
  - The sector is expected to **grow by USD 2.28 billion by 2025** at a **20% CAGR.**
  - **STEM education** is strengthened through over **8,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL)** nationwide, fostering creativity and innovation.
- **Vocational & Skill-Based Education**: **NEP 2020** includes **skill development in school and higher education** to enhance employability.
  - The **Skill India Mission** has trained millions, and the **Union Budget 2025-26** allocated **Rs. 500 crore for a Centre of Excellence in AI for Education** to promote advanced technology skills.
- **Rising Private Investment & FDI in Education**: The government allows **100% FDI t**o attract foreign players and improve infrastructure.
  - The Indian school market is projected to reach **USD 125.8 billion by 2032,** with total **FDI inflows of Rs. 83,550 crore** (Apr 2000–Sep 2024), promoting competition and innovation.

- **Expansion of Higher Education &Research**: India has **1,362 universities and 52,538 colleges (FY25)**, a **10% growth between 2020-25,** with the **Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) rising to 28.4%**.
    - **Research and innovation** are promoted through initiatives like **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), Research and Innovation in Higher Education (RISE) program** and **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF).**
- **Regional Language & Inclusive Education**: **NEP 2020** promotes **multilingual education to reduce disparities** and preserve cultural identity.
    - The government has allocated **Rs. 500 crore under PM e-Vidya** to create **digital learning materials** in multiple languages, improving **access for rural and regional students.**

Government's Key Initiatives Related to Education

What Major Challenges Confront India's Education Sector and Reforms Needed to Tackle Them?

Challenges in Indian Education Sector	Reforms to Strengthen Indian Education Sector
Infrastructure Challenges: In rural & remote areas, many schools still lack basic amenities. Government data from 2023 shows that only **47% of schools have drinking water**, **53% have separate toilets for girls.**	**Enhanced Investment in infrastructure**: To provide clean water, electricity, toilets, safe classrooms, playgrounds, and digital learning resources in rural and remote schools.
Teacher Shortage & Quality of Educators: Sanctioned teaching positions decreased by **6%**	**Enhanced Teacher Training**: Systematic **pre-service and continuous**

(2021-22 to 2023-24), over 4,500 secondary teachers lack proper education. Less than 25% receive training.	**professional development** with modern pedagogy, subject expertise, and technology integration
Inadequate Funding: India spends only about **3–4% of its GDP on education,** far below global benchmarks, despite the **NEP 2020 recommending an increase to 6%.**	**Boosting Investment in Education: Increase public investment in education** as per NEP 2020 and leverage **PPP models and targeted grants** to enhance quality and equity.
Socio-economic Disparities: Tribal and economically disadvantaged children still face barriers. Eg :**Eklavya Model Residential Schools** students struggle with language issues.	**Inclusive Education Policies**: Strengthen support for **tribal and disadvantaged children** through multilingual education, bridging courses, and expansion of schemes like **EMRS** with **trained local teachers**
Focus on Rote learning: 75% of Class 3 students cannot read Grade 2-level text. **Competency-based learning** not widely implemented.	**Curriculum Reform & Assessment Change:** Promote **critical thinking,** problem-solving, project-based learning; implement formative and continuous assessments (**PARAKH under NEP 2020**).
Technological Barriers: In 2024, **internet access** was available in **only 18.47% of rural schools against 47.29% in urban schools.**	**Bridge Digital Divide**: Expand **broadband connectivity, provide affordable devices,** and improve digital literacy among students and teachers.
Gender-Based Barriers: Girls' dropout remains high; **33% of girls drop out due to domestic work** (**UNICEF**).	**Promote Gender Inclusivity**: Provide scholarships, safety measures, awareness campaigns, and support for **girls' education, especially in rural areas.**

Conclusion

India's education system, guided by **NEP 2020** and digital learning initiatives, has significant potential but faces challenges like **infrastructure gaps, teacher shortages, and socio-economic disparities**. Strengthening governance, promoting **inclusive and multilingual education**, bridging the **digital divide**, and fostering **research and innovation** are essential to achieve **UN-SDG 4 (Quality Education)**, building a resilient and equitable system.

Keywords for Mains

- **"From Rote to Reason"** – Shifting focus from memorization to critical thinking and problem-solving.
- **"Equity in Education, Equity in India"** – Addressing socio-economic and gender disparities.
- **"Vocational Vision"** – Integrating skill-based and industry-aligned learning.
- **"Research: The New Reformer"** – Promoting innovation and research in higher education.
- **"Every Child, Every Classroom"** – Striving for inclusive access across regions and communities.

Drishti Mains Question:

Equity, quality, and affordability remain the central challenges in India's school education system." Discuss with suitable examples.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following provisions of the Constitution does India have a bearing on Education? (2012)

1. Directive Principles of State Policy
2. Rural and Urban Local Bodies

3. Fifth Schedule
4. Sixth Schedule
5. Seventh Schedule

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 3, 4 and 5 only
(c) 1, 2 and 5 only
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans- (d)

Mains

Q. How have digital initiatives in India contributed to the functioning of the education system in the country? Elaborate on your answer. (2020)

Q. Discuss the main objectives of Population Education and point out the measures to achieve them in India in detail. (2021)

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