

# PM URGES PRIVATE SECTOR TO HELP IMPROVE QUALITY IN GOVT. SCHOOLS

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Teacher connect:Narendra Modi announcing various initiatives at the Shikshak Parv on Tuesday.PTI

The private sector must come forward and contribute to increasing the quality of education in government schools, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday, while launching a portal to coordinate private contributions for school development.

Addressing the inauguration of a 10-day Shikshak Parv, Mr. Modi praised teachers for using online teaching and assessment methods to promote learning during the COVID crisis, despite recent surveys showing that many students in rural India had no access to digital education during the pandemic.

## Talking books project

He rolled out five initiatives on Tuesday as part of the implementation of the National Education Policy, including a 10,000-word dictionary for Indian Sign Language and a talking books project for visually challenged students.

A teacher training programme for early childhood education, a standards setting authority for the Central Board of Secondary Education and the Vidyanjali 2.0 portal to facilitate private donors, corporate social responsibility contributions and volunteering activities are part of the initiatives.

The Prime Minister emphasised that the transformation of the education sector is “not just policy-based but also participation based”, and noted that the NEP had involved consultations with academics, teachers and other stakeholders at every level.

“Now we have to take this participation to a new level, we also have to involve society in it,” he said. “In this society, our private sector has to come forward and contribute to increasing the quality of education in government schools.”

Mr. Modi praised teachers for their efforts during the pandemic. “In this corona period, all of you have shown the power of our education system. The challenges were many but you all resolved them swiftly. Online classes, group video calls, online projects, online exams, many such words were not even heard before. But our teachers, parents and our youth have easily made them a part of daily life.”

However, a recent report on the impact of school closures in 15 States by a team headed by economist Jean Dreze noted that only 8% of rural students and 24% of urban students had regular access to digital education during the pandemic. Among rural students, 37% had stopped studying altogether.

Another survey from the Annual Status of Education Report in rural Karnataka found that primary and elementary students have suffered a year of learning losses in foundational literacy and numeracy.

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