



DAILY EDITORIAL ANALYSIS

TOPIC

**GENERATIVE AI IN SCHOOLS:
BAN, REGULATE OR INTEGRATE?**

www.nextias.com

GENERATIVE AI IN SCHOOLS: BAN, REGULATE OR INTEGRATE?

Context

- New York City Mayor has announced a one-year moratorium on most generative AI tools for public-school students up to Class 8 during 2026–27, citing concerns over independent thinking and human connection.
- The debate is equally relevant for India as schools experiment with AI.

What is Generative AI?

- Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) refers to AI systems capable of producing **new text, images, audio, video, code or other content** from user prompts.
- **Large Language Models (LLMs)** such as ChatGPT and Gemini can explain concepts, generate questions, personalise learning and assist teachers.
- GenAI can produce answers dynamically unlike conventional digital learning tools.
- It makes it powerful, but also raises questions about **cognitive development, accuracy, privacy, bias, academic integrity and over-dependence**.

GenAI in Schools: Global & Indian Perspective

- Globally, education systems are moving from enthusiasm towards **guardrails and responsible integration**.
- **UNESCO** recommends a human-centred approach, while the OECD stresses that digital technologies should improve, not undermine the quality of teaching and learning.
- Teachers using tools such as **Kahoot! and Quizlet** can make learning gamified, interactive and sensorial rather than purely rote-based.
 - ♦ AI can generate stories, worksheets, quizzes and differentiated assessments.
- Similarly, platforms such as **Seesaw** can document children's learning through writing, videos and reflections.
- **In India**, governments are exploring AI pilots in government and rural schools, particularly where shortages of quality teachers and learning resources persist.
 - ♦ However, policy remains evolutionary rather than based on a single comprehensive framework for GenAI in school education.

Arguments Favouring GenAI in Schools

- **Personalised Learning:** AI can provide alternative explanations according to a child's learning level.
- **Teacher Augmentation:** A teacher can ask AI for visual or activity-based ways of explaining difficult concepts such as fractions.
- **Resource Creation:** AI reduces preparation time by generating lesson plans, slide decks, stories, worksheets and assessments.
- **Inclusion:** Translation and adaptive tools can make educational content accessible to children with diverse needs.
- **Bridging Resource Gaps:** In rural schools, AI can supplement teachers where specialist resources are scarce.
 - ♦ The key principle is that **AI should extend the teacher, not replace the teacher**.
 - ♦ Schools are not merely knowledge centres; they are spaces where children learn empathy, judgement, collaboration and how to become responsible human beings.

Arguments Against Unrestricted Use

- **Over-reliance:** If a child simply enters homework into ChatGPT, copies the response and submits it, the child loses the crucial process of trial, error and reasoning.
- Learning often occurs in the '**liminal space**' between not knowing and understanding, a period of productive struggle in which ideas develop.

- Excessive technological assistance can turn AI into a **cognitive crutch**.
- Other concerns include:
 - ♦ hallucinated or factually incorrect answers;
 - ♦ weakening of independent problem-solving and creativity;
 - ♦ plagiarism and assessment-integrity problems;
 - ♦ algorithmic and linguistic bias;
 - ♦ collection and misuse of children's data;
 - ♦ unequal access, potentially widening the digital divide.
- Thus, the issue is not merely **AI versus no AI**, but *how much cognitive work should remain with the child*.

Specific Concerns for India

- India needs to consider its **digital divide, multilingual environment, uneven teacher capacity and rural-urban disparities**.
- An AI tool trained predominantly on global datasets may perform poorly with Indian accents, languages or local contexts.
- Moreover, allowing AI to substitute for teachers could institutionalise inequality rather than solve it.
- Privacy safeguards are especially important because children's educational and behavioural data are sensitive.

Related Efforts & Initiatives

- UNESCO's **Guidance for Generative AI in Education and Research** advocates human-centred regulation, data protection and age-appropriate use.
- OECD's **Digital Education Outlook 2026** similarly emphasises purposeful, pedagogically sound digital transformation.
- In India, the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**, the **National Digital Education Architecture (NDEAR)** and initiatives around AI literacy and digital learning provide a foundation for technology-enabled education.
- Government AI pilots can be useful laboratories for developing locally appropriate safeguards.

Way Forward

- A **blanket ban is neither practical nor necessarily desirable**. Since children encounter AI through search engines, email, games and the Internet at home, schools should become places where they learn to **question, verify and responsibly use AI**.
- India should adopt an **age-graded, risk-based framework**: stronger restrictions for early primary years; supervised and purpose-specific use in higher classes; mandatory teacher verification; privacy-by-design; AI-literacy curricula; and assessments that reward the *process* of thinking rather than merely the final answer.
- A useful classroom rule is: **'Think first, write second, ask AI to verify last'**.
 - ♦ The objective should not be to keep children away from AI, but to ensure that **AI remains a tool in a child's hands, not a substitute for the child's mind or the teacher's wisdom**.

Daily Mains Practice Question

[Q] Should India ban, regulate or integrate Generative AI in school education? Critically Examine

Source: TH

■■■■