

CBSE AI Curriculum and Student Preparedness

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CBSE AI Curriculum Latest News

- On 1 April 2026, the government launched a CBSE curriculum on Computational Thinking (CT) and AI for Classes 3–8.
- The aim is to build skills like logical reasoning, problem-solving, and pattern recognition, and introduce students to AI in daily life.
- The programme will begin from the 2026–27 academic session and is seen as a step toward future-ready education.
- While the initiative is ambitious and welcome, its success depends on proper implementation and sequencing.

The Missing Foundation: LSRW Skills in AI Learning

- **Importance of LSRW Skills** – Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing (LSRW) form the core of meaningful learning. They are the cognitive foundation for understanding, processing, and expressing ideas across all subjects, including AI.

- **CT Curriculum Built on Language** – Computational Thinking (CT) is integrated across subjects, not a standalone discipline. It is delivered through language, requiring students to read, interpret, and respond to text.
- **Learning Activities Depend on Comprehension** – Curriculum includes puzzles, pattern exercises, and problem-solving tasks embedded in textbooks. Students must interpret texts and analyse information to complete these tasks.
- **Assessment Requirements** – Evaluations involve: Written tests with CT questions; Group activities; Teacher observations. All require basic reading and comprehension skills.
- **Core Concern** – The CT curriculum effectively functions as a literacy-based learning tool. Students who lack grade-level reading ability will face it as a reading challenge rather than a thinking exercise.

What the Data Reveals: Learning Deficit Across Schools

- **Evidence from ASER 2024** – The ASER 2024 report shows that over half of Class 5 students in government schools cannot read a Class 2-level text. This basic reading benchmark has remained unchanged since 2006.
- **Persistent Literacy Gap** – Even after five years of schooling, many children fail to achieve foundational reading skills. This highlights a serious gap in basic learning outcomes.
- **Not Limited to Rural or Government Schools** – The assumption that private or urban schools perform better is incorrect. Learning deficits exist across different school types.
- **Findings from PARAKH 2024** – The national assessment covering 23 lakh students found that:
 - Urban private school students performed worse than rural counterparts at Grade 3 level.
 - Government school students scored higher in Language and Mathematics.
- **Implication for CBSE Students** – Students entering CBSE classrooms are not insulated from the literacy crisis. They are directly affected by the same foundational learning challenges.

A Promise and a Deadline: Literacy Goals vs Reality

- **NIPUN Bharat Mission** – Launched in 2021 to ensure foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3. Target year set as 2026-27.
- **Current Status of Learning Levels** – ASER 2024 shows improvement since 2022. However, more than half of Class 5 students still cannot read a Class 2-level text.
- **Gap Between Target and Achievement** – The literacy goal remains incomplete as of the latest data. Foundational learning levels are still below expectations.
- **Overlap with CT Curriculum Launch** – The CT curriculum is introduced in the same year the literacy target was to be achieved. This creates a mismatch between policy goals and ground reality.

What the Curriculum Assumes: Dependence on Foundational Skills

- **Focus on Higher-Order Cognitive Skills** – The CT curriculum aims to develop logical, critical, and analytical thinking. These are advanced skills that depend on basic comprehension.
- **Comprehension as a Prerequisite** – Abstract reasoning cannot develop without the ability to understand written text and instructions. Weak reading skills hinder the development of computational thinking.

- **Increasing Complexity in Class 6** – From Class 6, assessments include: Project presentations; Reflective journals; Written assignments. AI concepts are also introduced at this stage.
- **Risk of Early Learning Breakdown** – Students struggling with reading in earlier classes may fail to build foundational CT skills. The gap becomes visible later, indicating an early breakdown in the learning pipeline.
- **Assessment Challenges** – Evaluation methods require strong written and oral skills (LSRW). Without these, assessments measure literacy gaps instead of computational thinking ability.

The Unfulfilled Parallel: LSRW and CT

- **Foundational Priority of LSRW** – Foundational literacy and numeracy were identified as the highest priority under NEP 2020. NIPUN Bharat was launched to achieve this goal.
- **Gap Between Policy and Outcomes** – Despite policy focus, LSRW has not been achieved at scale. Data shows that foundational learning gaps still persist.
- **CT as the New Priority** – Computational Thinking (CT) is now being promoted as a key educational priority. The curriculum is: Well-designed and ambitious; Developed by leading academic institutions; Based on activity-based and ethical approaches.

The Sequencing Question: Literacy Before AI

- **Global Experience** – Countries like Finland, Singapore, and South Korea introduced AI education after achieving strong foundational literacy. Curriculum reforms followed literacy, not preceded it.
- **India's Current Position** – India has institutional momentum with initiatives like NIPUN Bharat. ASER 2024 shows improvement in reading levels, though gaps remain.
- **Need for Careful Sequencing** – The issue is not whether to introduce CT and AI, but whether students are ready. Foundational literacy must support the rollout.
- **Ground Reality in Classrooms** – Students in Class 3 face CT tasks alongside existing reading gaps. The effectiveness of the curriculum depends on the child's readiness.

Conclusion

- A curriculum's success depends on learning foundations. Addressing CT without fixing literacy gaps does not achieve true transformation.

Source: TH

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