



Impact of National Education Policy on the Education System in India

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Abstract:

Education is a powerful weapon that has always made a person tackle life's challenges and rise above the cultural stigma like deprivation, fear and stature to gain and sustain success and with talented and educated youths, education has the power to change the course of the nation but it requires to have well defined and futuristic education policy for a nation at school and college levels. In ancient India during the Vedic period, there was a Gurukul system, in the medieval period the Mughal and during the British period, British rulers introduced new forms of education. After independence, The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, recognized education as a fundamental right and laid down the principle of free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6 to 14 through an amendment in 2002. The government also initiated various measures to improve the quality of education and make it more inclusive. The present study is going to highlight the history of educational policies in India and tries to focus on the important developments made in the field of education starting from the independence towards the revolutionary step made for NEP 2020.

Keywords: Kothari Commission, NEP1968, NEP1986, NCF2005, Yashpal committee 2009, RTE 2009, NEP 2020.

Introduction:

India was known as the 'land of learning' since ancient times because India has the world's oldest university system such as the University of Takshila, Nalanda, Vikramshila and there was time the students from all over the world always travelled to India for their study. Whereas in ancient India, education was considered a privilege of the elite classes, with only a small portion of the population having access to formal education. The Vedic period saw the emergence of Gurukuls, or residential schools, where students were taught by Guru (teachers) traditionally and holistically. In the medieval period, the Mughal and British rulers introduced new forms of education, such as madrasas for Islamic studies and Western-style schools for English language and literature. With the advent of the modern Indian state, the focus shifted to providing universal access to education. The Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, recognized education as a fundamental right and laid down the principle

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of free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 6 to 14 through amendment in 2002. The government also initiated various measures to improve the quality of education and make it more inclusive, such as the establishment of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to standardize and modernize the curriculum. India introduced the first education policy in 1968 during the government of former Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Rajiv Gandhi's government formulated the second education policy in 1986. Narasimha Rao government made some amendments to this policy in 1992. And finally, after 34 years, the government took the step to introduce the National Education Policy 2020. which leads to the continuous change in the education road map of the country and framing a broad design for the national education policy 2020.

To formulate a new education policy, a committee was formed under the chairmanship of Dr. K.K. Kasturirangan and the National Education Policy was drafted in 2019. The National Education Policy 2020 was approved by the Central Government in July 2020. Before studying the national education policy 2020, we must understand the historical perspective, and the historical development of national education policy since independence.

Evolution of the National Education System and Policy:

India is one of the biggest education hubs in the world and it has a very large history with education. The education system in India continuously developed for a long time from the ancient period to till date and India has seen a series of reforms through education policies, acts, plans of action, and curriculum framework. Major education policies were introduced in the post-independence era and the first step for framing and introducing national education policy was taken in the year 1964 by the Establishing Kothari Commission. However, The Indian government formed the University Education Commission (UEC) in 1948 to address several pressing needs and challenges in India's higher education system following the country's independence, and the University Grants Commission (UGC) was formed in 1953 based on the proposal from UEC.² Dr. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliyar - Secondary Education Commission to improve school education in 1952, Shrimati Durgabai Deshmukh - National Committee on Women's Education in 1958.

1.Kothari Commission:

Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi took over leadership in 1964 and the fourth education commission was set up under the chairmanship of D.S.Kothari, to assess India's educational system and recommend a national pattern of education and the policies and principles that would develop education at all levels. Kothari Commission is one of the most important landmarks for educational reforms in independent India. It laid the foundation of the 10+2+3 schooling pattern. And came up with some visionary recommendations for marginalized students. Its three-language formula, scholarships, and remunerations for teachers proved beneficial in for our

² First Indian Education Commission: 1948-50 And Thereafter by Dr.Rajkumar Singh , <https://www.eurasiareview.com/04092023-first-indian-education-commission-1948-50-and-thereafter-oped/>(visited on 3/12/2023).

mainstream system. Till date, our education policies in India use its recommendations as a baseline in some form or the other.³

Due to the economic condition of the newly independent nation, the recommendations of this commission could not be followed as it is. And this led to certain gaps in the National Education Policy in 1968 which was created on the recommendations of this commission.

2. National Education Policy,1968:

The first national education policy was introduced by the Govt. led by, Smt. Indira Gandhi under the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. The policy had the following highlights.

i) Free and Compulsory Education:

Article 45 of the Indian constitution says that there should be a provision for free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 years. NPE 1968 was aimed to fulfil this directive principle. It was also aimed at eliminating the barriers to quality education across all parts of the nation; accordingly recommending the developing of suitable programs which prevailing wastage and stagnation in the schools. It was also focused on students from rural, backward, or tribal areas and was given special emphasis on the education of the girl child. Prevailing wastage and stagnation in the schools. It was also focused on students from rural, backward, or tribal areas and was given special emphasis on the education of the girl child. Report of National Education Commission,1964-66.by the National Council of Educational Research and Training

ii) Development of Languages:

Makes recommendations for the development of regional and modern Indian languages and

introduce three language formulas at the secondary stage which includes English, Hindi and regional language.

iii) Work experience and National Service:

To bring schools and society closure recommended suitable mutual programs of mutual service and support. Work experience and National service including participation in meaningful and challenging community service and national construction.

iv) Secondary and University Level Education improved:

The policy emphasised the need to increase the facilities for secondary education, especially in the areas that were denied these. Vocational education was also focused to improve employment opportunities. Special emphasis was made to improve the facilities in the fields like agriculture, trade, medicine, arts, crafts, commerce, home management, secretarial training, etc. It also took emphasis to open new universities.

³ Report of National Education Commission ,1964-66.by National Council of Educational Research and Training

v) Adult Education was emphasized:

The policy aimed at promoting functional literacy within the masses through adult literacy. It was targeted to impart education to the employees in the industries through literacy campaigns and emphasize the training of the youth for improved self-employment opportunities.

vi) Teacher Training and Professional Competence:

The education policy of 1968 highlighted the need to uplift the condition of teachers. It promoted teachers' academic freedom. More importance was given for their professional competence, their emoluments and service conditions. The policy also focused on their training and education.

vii) Restructuring The Indian Education System:

A new structure of the educational system was introduced. That was in the form of 10+2+3. By this, the idea of retaining students within the mainstream education system was helped. By this overall infrastructure and educational opportunities were developed across the nation.⁴

3. National Education Policy,1986:

The Government led by Shri. Rajiv Gandhi introduced a second national education policy. The major highlights of this policy are:

i) Student Retention and Quality Improvement:

The most important step under this education policy was to get all children under 14 years of age into schools. To achieve this, it was aimed at improving the school environment, student handling, and teaching methodologies. It was intended a no-failure policy at the elementary school level. It was also arranged for non-formal education for out-of-school students. Navodaya Vidyalayas and primary schools were opened in remote areas.

ii) Uniform pattern of Education:

The uniform pattern of 10+2+3 was introduced in nationwide schools under the recommendation of the Kothari Commission, This pattern included 5 years of the primary stage to be followed by 3 years of the upper primary. NPE 1986 also aimed to achieve the aim of free and compulsory education for all by the year 1995.

iii) Retention in the Mainstream System:

Retaining students within the mainstream system was the main focus of NPE 1986. To achieve this, it was suggested to undergo surveys (house to house) to check the regularity of attendance and relevance of schooling.

⁴ Govt. of India (1968). National Policy on Education, Govt. of India (1968). National Policy on Education, 1968 https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/NPE-1968.pdf(visited on 3/12/2023)

iv) Facilities for the Girl Child :

To encourage the education of the girl child, two sets of free uniforms, free textbooks, stationery, etc. were to be given free of cost. Besides this, students attending elementary schools were also given free transportation facilities.

v) Delinking Degrees from Jobs:

This proposal created a new trend of reducing the importance of degrees from jobs. It was focused on re-designing job-specific courses to help the right candidate with the required skill sets to take up a suitable job. To achieve this purpose, it promoted the vocationalisation of education. NPE 1986 did aim at eliminating the disparities in the education system.

However, it did not materialize its aims of standard education opportunities across various groups of society.

vi) Establishment of Apex National Body:

The policy envisages the establishment of a national body covering higher education in general, agriculture, medical, technical, legal and other professional fields for greater coordination and consistency of policy, sharing of facilities, and developing interdisciplinary research.

vii) Research in Universities:

Recommended to set up facilities of research in universities in all disciplines.

viii) Accreditation and Assessment Machinery:

It is proposed to develop a mechanism for accreditation and assessment for maintaining and raising the quality of institutions of higher education. As a part of its responsibility for the maintenance and promotion of standards of education, the UGC will, to begin with, take the initiative to establish the Accreditation and Assessment Council as an autonomous body.⁵

This policy contributed to the chain of educational reforms in India. It was again scrutinized in the year 1992. Later in the year 1992, this education policy was reformulated through a 'Plan of Action'. This further helped to improve the areas like adult education, micro-planning, and non-formal schooling options to meet the goals of the national education policy.

4.Reformulation Of NEP,1986 in 1992:

The National Education Policy 1986 was required reformulation. A committee was made to review the NPE 1986 and come up with a detailed programme/plan of action. The review committee included six education ministers, and eight educationists under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri N Janardhana Reddy. Other than this, twenty-two taskforces including educationists and government officials were also

⁵ Govt. of India (1986). National Policy on Education, Govt. of India (1986). National Policy on Education, 1986, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/upload_document/npe.pdf (visited on 3/12/2023)

constituted (for varied subject areas) along with a steering committee. The major changes were made in the following ways:

i) Universalization of Elementary Education – UEE:

Many innovations and revised schemes were suggested. They were like the ‘Non-Formal Education’ for students who cannot attend full-time schools. Besides this, it also focused on 10 states (educationally backwards), wherein the responsibility was shared between the centre and state government in a ratio of 50:50.

ii) Quality of Education through Navodaya Vidyalayas:

The POA 1992 emphasized the opening of Navodaya Vidyalayas across the nation. These schools were planned to help the high achiever students irrespective of their socio-economic backgrounds. By this proposal, improvement was made in the stream of the quality of schooling for the masses.

iii) Education for women:

Women's education was also given a top priority as per this programme of action. It proposed more development programs and also aimed at enhancing their legal literacy (awareness about their rights). It was aimed to run gender and poverty sensitization programs to curb issues like gender disparity. Teachers were to be trained in women's empowerment. It also envisioned creating new women's study centres through institutions and women's organizations

iv) Adult Education and Micro-Planning:

Suggestions were made to improve the educational opportunities for adults under the Non-Formal Education initiatives. To fulfil this aim, innovative programs like distance education and open school systems were suggested for female students residing in remote, rural, and urban areas. Educational micro-planning was suggested for students living in tribal areas, Special focus was also made on the education of adult illiterate women.

v) Education for Students with Disabilities:

The committee suggested some important steps for children with disabilities. To achieve the needs of special students, teacher training was to be reoriented as per the inclusive classrooms.

The need to reorient non-formal and adult educational programs was also highlighted.⁶

The next main reform was made in education through the NCF 2005.

5. National Curriculum Framework -2005:

As a periodic revision of the curriculum framework, NCF 2005 was launched with the vision of 21st-century education. It introduced the idea of student-centric learning. And helped in reducing the curriculum load for improved results. It highlighted an instructional delivery that can support the student's learning beyond the

⁶ NEP 1986 as modified in 1992, https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/NPE86-mod92.pdf

textbooks and rote methods. In addition, this framework also added a dimension of constructivist learning and focused on the inculcation of new-age skills like critical and creative thinking.

This framework mainly dealt with the curriculum, pedagogies, and instructional delivery and it did help in bringing more students into the mainstream schooling system.⁷

6) Yash Pal Committee (2009):

The Yash Pal Committee was formed to review the status of higher education in India. The committee's report, titled "Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education," recommended the establishment of a National Commission for Higher Education and Research. Some of its recommendations were:

- i) Promoting Interdisciplinary Study: The committee recommended promoting interdisciplinarity in higher education and breaking down the traditional barriers between disciplines.
- ii) Improving Access and Equity: The committee recommended improving access and equity in higher education by providing scholarships and other financial assistance to underprivileged students.
- iii) Revamping Curriculum and Pedagogy: The committee recommended revamping the curriculum and pedagogy of higher education to make it more relevant to the country's needs and to promote critical thinking and creativity.
- iv) Strengthening Governance: The committee recommended strengthening the governance of higher education institutions and establishing independent regulatory bodies to oversee their functioning.
- v) Increase in Funding: The committee recommended increasing funding for higher education and promoting public-private partnerships to support the sector's growth.⁸

Despite a series of reforms for decades, Indian students did not enjoy education as a fundamental right and finally, in the year 2009, education was made a fundamental right for students between 6 to 14 years of age.

7.Right to Education 2009:

RTE 2009 gave a new dimension to the vision of the education policies in India. It made education a fundamental right and made the government directly responsible for the education of students in the defined age bracket. It streamlined the process of school transfers, infrastructure, and amenities and addressed the issues of quality education for students from weaker sections of society through 25% reservation.

Of late, RTE has been a game-changer for student enrolments and it helped in standardizing the processes further in the next and most recent education policy, the National Education Policy 2020

⁷NCF,2005,https://fmuniversity.nic.in/getdata?dir=lectureNote&rid=lecturenotesem3_27120231674814930884.pdf (Visited on 6/12/2023)

⁸Yashpal committee Report,2009 <https://www.aicte-india.org/downloads/Yashpal-committee-report.pdf> (Visited on 6/12/2023)

8. The National Education Policy: 2020:

By far, we have discovered the striking features and contributions of the various education policies in India. The most recent addition to this lineup is the NPE 2020 which would replace the 34-year-old national policy of education, 1986. **The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** is a comprehensive policy framework that aims to reform and revitalize the education system in India. The NEP emphasizes the importance of equitable and inclusive education and focuses on providing quality education to all, regardless of their socio-economic background or location. It also promotes the use of technology, innovation, and education research and prepares students for the 21st century.

The National Education Policy (NEP), a committee drafted in 2020 constituted by the Ministry of Human Resource/Ministry of Education), Government of India. The committee was headed by the Former Chairman of the ISRO, Dr. K. Kasturirangan the committee was tasked with developing a comprehensive policy document that would provide a roadmap for education. development in India for the next few decades. The NEP 2020 was approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020, and was subsequently released by the Ministry of Education. It is the first of its kind that aims to make India a global knowledge superpower. The policy has the following highlights:

i) Goals of NEP 2020:

Educational policies in India have been instrumental in improving the conditions of education at the basic level. However, recent educational policy faces the greatest challenge of all time. As announced right in the middle of the pandemic. Overall, the need for this policy was to improve general life skills training to develop employability skills in students. However, the pandemic created an additional opportunity to revamp the outdated education system. NPE 2020 goals include bringing approximately two crores of out-of-school students back into the mainstream system. In addition, it also aims to align the new education system with the 21st-century vision of learning.

ii) The Structure and ECCE:

The 10+2 schooling structure is now changed to 5+3+3+4 (covering age groups from 3 years to 18 years). This makes Early Childhood Care and Education part of the main structure. Because previous children from 3 to 6 years old were not included in this structure (class 1 starts at 6 years old). Policymakers aim to invest more in early childhood care and education as millions of students in India are deprived of ECCE. It suggests creating a framework (National Early Childhood Care and Education Curricular and Pedagogical Framework) based on research on ECCE and best practices followed in the industry. This will improve the quality and accessibility of ECCE throughout the country, with more trained workers/teachers and better infrastructure.

iii) Universal Access to Education:

1) With some notable results from the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and the Right to Education Act, the enrolment and retention of students at the primary levels is much better. However, the policy highlights an area of opportunity

for the upper grades where the gross enrolment rate for classes 6-8 and 9-10 was only 90.90% and 79.3% respectively. In grades 11-12 it drops even further to 56.5%.

2) The policy highlights the need to retain students in the upper grades. And it aims to create opportunities for quality learning (including vocational education) from preschool through grade 12. 3) To do this, policymakers have drawn up two plans. The first is to support schools with the necessary infrastructure and teaching support. And restore public schools for quality learning. The second plan is to track students and their learning levels. To ensure student retention, the policy suggests that social workers and counsellors work closely with students and parents.

4) Apart from this, the policy provides for a system of incentives for the same purpose. However, this will be done after the infrastructure and participation is established. 5) The policy equally supports non-formal education through options such as homeschooling, NIOS or other alternatives (such as digital education, etc.). It recognizes alternative modes of schooling similar to other educational policies in India

Four steps of new education policy

- a) **Foundation Stage:** The Foundation Stage of the New Educational Policy for children from 3 to 8 years old is included. The Foundation Stage has been set for 5 years. In which 3 years of pre-school education will be held in Anganwadi and class 1, 2 school education under which language skills and ability level of students will be tested and focus on their development
- b) **Preparatory Stage:** The time of this stage is maintained for 3 years. This stage includes children from 8 to 11 years old. In which he will have children up to grade 5. At this stage of the new educational policy, special attention will be paid to strengthening the numerical skills of students. At the same time, all children will also be given knowledge of the regional language. Along with this, the children will be taught science, art, math, etc. through experiments.
- c) **Middle Stage:** The period of this stage has been set at 3 years. In this stage, children from 6th to 8th grade have been included in whom the curriculum will be taught by subjects and coding will also begin from 6th grade children. At the same time, all children will have the opportunity to take vocational tests and vocational internships, the aim of which is to make children eligible for employment only during school education.
- d) **Secondary Stage:** The period of this stage is 4 years. This is from 9th to 12th grade. In this, an intensive study of the topics will be made. Here, students can choose their subjects according to their choice, not within a specific stream. Students can simultaneously take the subjects of Science and Arts or Commerce.

iv) Higher education:

Turning the pages of the NEP-2020 we find the plan to remodel higher education in the country. It talks about establishing renowned universities with high standards. It will establish a National Research Foundation (NRF) to fund research at universities and colleges. The gross enrolment rate at HE, including vocational education, will increase from the current 26.3% (2018) to 50% by 2035. Research will be included at UG, and PG levels and will have a holistic and multidisciplinary educational approach. Pedagogy in HEIs will focus

on communication, presentation, discussion, debate, research, analysis, and interdisciplinary thinking. Four-year bachelor's degree with multiple exit options, one- to two-year master's depending on the number of years spent on the bachelor's degree as four or three respectively, and the option to do a Ph.D. for four years Bachelor's degrees with research are possible. Two-year master's degree with full research in the second year, one year master's degree for a four-year bachelor's degree, and five years integrated bachelor's/master's degree. Student-centric teaching and learning process instead of the teacher-centric teaching model.

V) Inter-disciplinary Higher Education:

An interdisciplinary educational regime is a great initiative that will provide flexibility to the students to study the subjects of their choice. For ages, Indian universities have developed in a very compartmentalized manner, and scholars and professors have remained fiercely protective of their subject speciality turf. This culture is deep-rooted with very few exceptions and the new policy calls for changing the same. To implement

vi) Curriculum for Better Student Engagement:

The curricular and pedagogical structure will be restructured to adapt to the development needs of the students. Their goal is to create a more interactive classroom with plenty of opportunities for experiential learning. In the secondary stages, the focus will be on improving critical thinking, attention to life aspirations, and flexibility.

vii) Focus on Local Languages and Mother Tongue:

The policy emphasizes instruction in the home language through grade v. High-quality textbooks must be available in the native language. Because this will avoid gaps in the spoken language and the teaching medium. There is an additional emphasis on the idea of multilingualism to satisfy the formula of the three languages throughout the country. In addition, it aims to popularize language learning through the use of technology.

viii) Physical Education:

Under the new educational policy 2020, along with the education of students, skills will also be developed. In which all the students of the minimum class will be trained in subjects such as Horticulture, Yoga, Music, Dance, Sports, Sculpture, etc. So students are competent in physical activities as well as other skills.

ix) Education Through Online Mode:

Within the framework of NPE 2020, e-learning platforms will be expanded. Through the 'Digital India Campaign', the Government of India launched various online learning platforms and tools. Platforms like 'SWAYAM', 'DIKSHA' and SWAYAMPBHA were introduced in the system for online classes. And in the coming years, such platforms will be further developed for students⁹

⁹ Government of India. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. Ministry of Human Resource Development. https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf (Visited on 6/12/2023)

Conclusion:

It can be concluded that, evolution in Indian education system starts with NEP,1968 and its under contentious development till date and NEP 2020 is an incredibly ground-breaking and innovative document, which definitely brings revolution, reforms in the Indian education system. NEP2020 is an advanced regime that will facilitate value-based education and scientific learning. It will replace the older system, the NEP 2020 lays emphasis on making the education system holistic, flexible and aligned to the needs of 21st-century education. It aims making India a global knowledge superpower. It might take some time to implement these changes but it will bring about some excellent transformations and revolutions in the Indian education system. Undoubtedly, the new Indian Education Policy will help our country to transform into a vibrant knowledge hub.