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A Historical Survey Of National Education Policies In India

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ABSTRACT

The preeminence of education as an instrument of modernization is widely assumed in the contemporary literature on the so-called traditional societies or developing nations. Thus, we are advised that, “the progress of modernization will.....be directly related to the pace of educational advance and the one sure way to modernize quickly is to spread education, to produce educated and skilled citizens and train an adequate and competent intelligentsia.”

The Indian Central Government finds it very difficult to formulate, co-ordinate, or implement national educational policy. Among the principal reasons for this difficulty are a federal structure that places authority for educational matters in the hands of the states, and marked differentials among the states with respect to the nature and level of their educational development. India are facing a mounting demand for more and better education. Adequate financing is required to produce greater quality and equality within the educational system.s

Keywords : Modernization, Contemporary Literature, Intelligentsia, Educational development.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”.

-Nelson Mandela

INTRODUCTION

Education is fundamental for achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society , and promoting national development. Providing universal access to quality education is key to India`s continued ascent, and leadership on the global stage in terms of economic growth, social justice and equality, scientific advancement, national integration, and cultural preservation.

Education is as old as man. Man acted and reacted with his environment and acquired experience. He reduced them to some general principles of conduct and passed them on to the next generation. Informal education was thus born and was acquired through actual living with the elders. Life was simple and so was education. Gradually as knowledge and the population grew man`s environment grew complex. Men organized themselves into smaller communities and then larger ones to satisfy their physical and social

needs. With the complexity of life jobs became specialized and education growing into a complex activity had to be institutionalized.

The Objectives of the Study

- 1 To analyse the educational scenario in India,
- 2 To analyse the national education policies of the government, and
- 3 to suggest policy measures.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study. This paper is basically descriptive and analytical in nature. In this paper an attempt has been made to analyse the Indian education system in the light of Govt. initiatives and also point out various policy and recommendations in the education system. It has been done on the basis of secondary data, books, govt. data newspaper, articles and research journal.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to analyse the history of holistic education in the context of Indian education system and national education policies.

Pre-independence Stage:

The history of education from time immemorial reflects a continuous conflict between the forces those who want to make education the privilege of a few and those who endeavor to rescue it from the prison of caste, religion and dominant economic forces. The educational development is ultimately determined by the economic and political need of the society and in a class divided society by the needs of the dominant class in a society. The class basis of education is seen clearly in the story of Ekalavya, the student from the menial class who have to pay his thumb for having learned the art of archery. The prescription of Manu that molten lead shall be poured into the ears of shudras who happen to hear the recitation of holy scripture is another example to show our ancestors who were aware of the fact that education could act back on the stability of social system. In ancient as well medieval India only such type of education was to be encouraged by the dominant class that could enhance the stability of the system and the system envisaged was an inequitable one and against all democratic values. The Britishers also formulated education policy as reflected in Macaulay and other commission report to cater to the economic and political need of colonialism. From the ancient days till we come to the end of British Raj education has never been the concern of the state. Democratic values have been tampered to suit the need of the ruling class. As a result the ruling elite succeeded in creating a conducive infrastructure for commercialization and communalization of education. In the past there has been many attempts to free education from the clutches of caste, community and religion, but unfortunately movements for democratic values of education did not have powerful momentum in the face of feudal, colonial and capitalist forces.

During the British regime the alien government was not interested in educating the Indian masses, save some upper classes for the limited purpose of providing junior officials for its own administration and to keep its hold on India. The whole initiative, policy-making, organization and administration, were dictated by the Centre as it suited its purse and purpose.

Macaulay On Education (1835) :

He advocated education of the upper classes in India and made a vigorous plea for spreading western learning through the medium of English. Lord Macaulay thought that it was possible through English Education to bring about a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and intellect. This was accepted by the British government and it opened a new chapter in the educational history of India. During the vice-royalty of Lord Curzon, education in India was reviewed very critically and steps were taken to improve the various branches of education. In 1901, Lord Curzon

convened at Shimla an educational conference. This was the first conference on all-India basis. The conference continued for a fortnight and passed 150 resolutions. He took a prominent part in drafting the resolutions which formed the basis of the Government of India's Resolution on Education Policy.

National Education Movement (1920-22)

Raja Rammohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Jayotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Sayed Ahmed Khan, Gokhale, who tried unsuccessfully in 1912 to get a legislation passed to make primary education compulsory. Mahatma Gandhi and BR. Ambedkar's concept of education also failed to meet the growing challenges of the communal world.

The Montford Reforms (1919) fanned the flame of national feelings in the country. Just at this juncture, Mahatma Gandhi appeared on the scene and he launched the Non-cooperation Movement. The Resolution passed at the Nagpur Congress in 1920 advised the "gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges in the various provinces". In the course of less than four months, the National Muslim University of Aligarh, the Gujarat Vidyapith, the Bihar Vidyapith, the Kashi Vidyapith, the Bengal National University, the Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapith, Quami Vidyapith, Lahore and a large number of national schools with thousands of students on the rolls were started in all parts of the country as a result of the great impetus given to national education. National education movement emphasized three points: (1) Indian control of education, (2) teaching the love of motherland, and (3) no servile imitation of the west.

Mrs. Annie Besant on National Education

National education must live in an atmosphere of proud and glorious patriotism, and this atmosphere must be kept sweet, fresh, and bracing by the study of Indian literature, Indian history, Indian triumphs in science, in art, in politics, in war, in manufactures, in trade, in commerce.

National education must meet the national temperament at every point, and develop the national character. National education must be controlled by Indians, shaped by Indians, carried on by Indians. It must hold up Indians ideals of devotion, wisdom and morality, and must be permeated by the Indian religious spirit rather than fed on the latter of the creeds.

Sargent Report (1944) :

It was the first comprehensive education plan formulated by the Central Advisory Board of Education. It is popularly known as the Sargent Report, after the name of John Sargent, Educational Advisor to the Government of India. The plan aimed at tackling the problems of education as a whole. In fact the work on educational planning in India had already started in 1938 when a National Planning Committee had been set up to take up educational structure at the national level. However, the Second World War interrupted the work. The central Advisory Board of Education had also taken up the work in 1938 but the final of the reports of various committees could be done only in 1943-44. The Report envisaged that India would reach the educational standard of the England of 1939 in a period of not less than 40 years.

The Report significantly quoted the White Paper on Education: "upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends." It championed basic education for children from 6 to 14 and pleaded for effective teaching at the primary level. It found that a national system of education would take 30 to 40 years to be evolved.

As a result of the recommendations of the Sargent Report an advisory committee was set up in 1945. Its function was to make recommendations for grants to be paid to the various universities. The Ministry of Education forwarded these recommendations to the Finance Ministry, which judged them for itself. Radhakrishnan University Commission (1949) recommended the establishment of a University Grant Commission with its own funds and this was done in 1953. The UGC was established "for the purpose of allocation and disbursement of grants to universities as well as for the purpose of coordination and maintenance of standards of universities in INDIA." Later the UGC was raised to a statutory body by an Act of Parliament passed in 1956 (Act 111 of 1956).

Post-independence Stage (1947-2020):

Soon after Independence, it was felt that Education For All was a must to achieve socio-economic progress, and education was set as a praiseworthy goal after 1947. A separate department for education was established at the center and in all states. Constitutional provisions also elucidated the actions to be taken by the Government and education has undergone a sea change since then.

Since the country's independence in 1947, the Indian government sponsored variety of programmes to address the problems of illiteracy in both rural and urban India. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, India's first Minister of Education, envisaged strong central government control over education throughout the country, with a uniform educational system. The Union government established the University Education Commission (1948-1949), the Secondary Education Commission (1952-1953), University Grants Commission and the Kothari Commission (1964-66) to develop proposals to modernise India's education system. The Nehru government sponsored the development of high-quality scientific education institutions such as the Indian Institute of Technology. In 1961, the Union government formed the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as an autonomous organization that would advise both the Union and State Governments on formulating and implementing education policies.

Article 45 of the Constitution of India laid it down :

The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.

The three National Education Policies of 1968, 1986 and 1992 (NEP 1986 as modified in 1992) envisage a radical reconstruction of the Education sector in India through expressed in different words and the process being directed in entirely different vistas.

National Policy on Education, 1968

Based on the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-1966), the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the first Education Policy on Education in 1968, which called for a "radical restructuring" and proposed equal educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration and greater cultural and economic development. The policy called for fulfilling compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, as stipulated by the Constitution of India. And specialized training and qualification of teachers. The NEP of 1968 called for education spending to increase to six percent of the national income.

National Policy on Education, 1986

In 1986, the government led by Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new National Policy on Education. The new policy called for "special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity", especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST), and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities. The NPE called for a "child-center approach" in primary education and launched "Operation Blackboard" to improve primary schools nationwide. The Mid-Day Meal Scheme launched in 1995 as the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education, a centrally-sponsored scheme. The policy expanded to open university system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University, which had been created in 1985. The policy also called for the creation of the "rural university" model, based on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, to promote economic and social development at the grassroots level in rural India. 1986 education policy expected to spend 6% of GDP on education.

Programme of Action (1992)

The 1986 National Policy on Education was modified in 1992 by the P.V. Narasimha Rao government. In 2005, Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopted a new policy based on the "Common Minimum Programme" of his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. Programme of Action (POA) 1992, under the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 envisaged to conduct of a common entrance examination on all India basis for admission to professional and technical programmes in the country. This

also solves problems of overlaps and reduces physical, mental and financial burden on students and their parents due to multiplicity of entrance examinations. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Scheme was launched in 2001 for elementary education. Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 (RTE ACT). Also known as Right to Education Act. It provides for free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 to 14 years in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. India also launched Rashtriya Uchchatar Siksha Abhiyan (RUSA) in 2013. It aims strategic funding to higher educational institutions.

Vision of 2020 National Education Policy

Education is important catalyst for a country like India for its human development and economic growth along with social development. Knowledge -cum -skill development is an important driver to address poverty reduction by improving employability, productivity and helping sustainable enterprise development and inclusive growth. Only an access to equitable quality education and the opportunity is vital to develop skills and competencies in preparing youth for the future. An investment in their human capital is an investment in the socio-economic future of our societies.

Knowledge and skill are the driving force for economic growth and social development of any nation in the 21st century. India realizes the same need in order to develop competitive future workforces. Accordingly, the National Education Policy(NEP) 2020 has put emphasis on the aim of education not only towards cognitive development, but also building character and creating holistic and well-rounded individuals equipped with the key 21st century skills.

This National Education policy envisions an education system rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower. The vision of policy is to instill among the learners a deep-rooted pride in being Indian, not only in thought, but also in spirit, intellect, and deeds, as well as to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen.

Holistic Education in the context of the NEP 2020:

The NEP 2020 is the first education policy of the 21st century and replace the 34 years old National Policy on Education (NEP), 1986. Built on the foundational pillars of Equity, Quality, Access, inexpensive and Accountability, this policy is aligned to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and aims to transform India into a high-spirited knowledge society and global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, multidisciplinary, flexible suited to 21st century needs and aimed at bringing out the unique capabilities of each student. New Education Policy 2020 has been introduced by the Indian government to flourish all human potentials, qualities and possibilities of the child. At the same time the policy makers have balanced between past heritage of Indian education and future possibilities of the student's career in the context of virtual and global education. The policy makers "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all"

Conclusion

Sri Aurobindo was one of the most versatile personalities of Bengal Renaissance Period. Indian philosophers, educationists, and leaders like Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and many were desperate to contribute in a holistic transformation in Indian education system. In their writings and their educational experiments, each of tried to visualize a better India considering intellectual, socio-cultural, spiritual and political factors.

The new education policy must provide to all students, irrespective of their place of residence, a quality education system with focus on historically marginalized, disadvantaged, and underrepresented groups. Education is a great leveler and is the best tool for achieving economic and social mobility, inclusion, and equality. Initiatives must be in place to ensure that all students from such groups, despite inherent obstacles, are provided various targeted opportunities to enter and excel in the educational system.

Considering the aforementioned facts, the Union Cabinet has approved the New Education Policy (NEP) , 2020, with an aim to introduce several changes in the Indian education system- from the school to college level. The NEP 2020 aims at making “India a global knowledge superpower”. The Cabinet has also approved the renaming of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to the Ministry of Education. The NEP cleared by Cabinet is only the third major revamp of the framework of education in India since independence. The two earlier education policies were brought in 1968 and 1986. Cabinet approval of National Education Policy 2020 paved the way for transformational reforms in schools and higher education system in the country.

I conclude that if India wants a proper system of education, she will have to follow the practice of other countries and pay for it.

There is a Chinese saying:

“ If you are planning for one year , plant grain; If you are planning for ten years, plant trees; If you are planning for a hundred years, plant men.”

Trees may mature more slowly and men more quickly in India than in China but the moral applies to both.

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