CHAPTER - V

The approach adopted by the Union Government in formulation of National policy on Education - 1986 is different on many counts. Before the formulation, the Prime Minister of India in a national broadcast expressed the desire for a national debate on education and asked the academic community and others interested to give their suggestions in formulating a New National Policy on Education. He also formally expressed his views at various official conferences. Consequent to the Prime Minister's appeal, the Union Education Ministry published a document the 'Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective 1985' intended to serve as the basis for national debate. It is described as a status paper not a final document. (In spite of this claim the document and approach paper to seventh plan provided the pointers to the formulation of a new policy). As part of the nation wide debate on the New Education Policy the Union Education Ministry as well as its agencies organized 12 national seminars and 17 sponsored seminars. Following this initiative many state Governments, educational institutions, teachers, students organizations also conducted seminars on the status paper. Here an attempt is made first to present the summary of the 'Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective 1985' and the 'National Policy on Education 1986' (NPE 1986). Secondly a comparative analysis of both the documents is attempted to analyze the similarities and dissimilarities. Finally a critical evaluation of the whole exercise and its relevance for policy formulation is attempted.


This document consists of four chapters.

1. Education, Society and Development.
2. An Over View of Educational Development.
3. A Critical Appraisal

Education - Society and Development:

The document states that India is standing on the threshold of 21st century. To prepare the present generation to face with unprecedented opportunities, challenges and to make the nation a dynamic and cohesive one it is necessary to reshape the education system. Education should make self confident individuals with commitment to democratic and national values. It should also reduce all types of disparities and act as an investment
in Human Resources Development. It has a large role in all national endeavors in
democratic societies. This can be achieved only by modernizing education, changing
curricula and other basic changes in teachers training. The document says that elementary
education is the most crucial stage of education because it lays the foundation for human
beings all round development and strengthens the fabric of democracy. Vocational
education, the document says, provides technical man power required for economic
growth and also provides the linkages between production function, employment and
educational processes. Higher education provides ideas and men to give shape the future,
sustain other levels of education, provides historical, ideological perspective to society,
supplies a wide range of sophisticated manpower required in Industry, Agriculture services
and Administration.

The document says, education is a subsystem of social system, its excellence and
democratic character cannot be preserved if the quantitative and qualitative objectives
are not spelt out by those responsible for nations development.

The document says, that cost benefit ratio should not be applied in educational
planning, and the educational goals should not be postponed on the grounds of the high
cost of implementation while deciding this 'no-change' option is seldom taken into
consideration. It observed two streams in education - a small minority with excellence comparable to the best of the world and a preponderant majority of sub-standard
education with little sense of social or national responsibility. It regretted that even the
gifted do not always show evidence of the expected commitment to social responsibility.

The document identifies various pitfalls in contemporary educational scenario. It
is largely the excessive emphasis on degrees and on unscientific examination system which
made education dysfunctional, producing a large number of unemployable young men
and women. Hence it pleaded for a new approach.

The document opines that pride in national identity has to be rebuilt to counteract
divisive forces which are affecting the national integration. It says, education now
being in concurrent list, it is necessary to demarcate the responsibility to be borne by the
central and state governments in respect of various aspects and levels of education.
The document recognizes the fact that the NPE has to emerge from the perceptions,
active participation of states, local bodies, voluntary agencies, peoples representatives,
An Over-View of the Educational Development:

The document mentions about progress in the field of education in terms of increase in all types of institutions, enrollment, sophistication, diversification of educational programmes. It also mentions where India was lagging behind.

A critical Appraisal:

The document calls for a new approach in the context of changing values; it identifies two formidable tasks for coping with the challenge: one of providing quality education to all to develop his fullest potential and the other of simultaneously transferring the context and process of education to meet the emerging needs of tomorrow. It says, that education with all its ramifications, cannot be altered materially, unless the overall socio-political system requires such alteration for its survival.

It suggests that the provision of minimum outlays required for achieving the constitutional goals in respect of elementary education should be regarded as a national responsibility. The terms of allocation of resources between the centre and states should not be allowed to cloud the issue. It also suggests community involvement in the school system.

The document suggests a common core curriculum with some flexibility to include regional variations and culture is necessary to ensure quality, national cohesion and inter-regional mobility. Non-formal education should be accorded priority to achieve universalization of elementary education. It also recognizes the importance of adult literacy. It observed a phenomenal expansion in secondary education and called for a careful planning. It also observed the urban bias of scientific and technological professions. It advocated pace setting schools with a provision for reservation for the students of rural areas to ensure quality education. Regarding vocational education it suggested a strong vocational base at the 10 plus stage, the pre-vocational and work experience programmes in Class IX and will have to be reconstituted. The document opines that the important indicator of a country's future is state of its higher education,
though there are conflicting views among educationists regarding school education versus higher education. It observed two different sets of institutions i.e. the centers of excellence and others of sub-standard. It also observed disparities among various sections and lack of encouragement for technical and other professional courses. It suggests various measures for effective improvement of institutions of technical education like establishment of networking arrangements between different types of institutions and strengthening the linkages of technical education with manpower planning. It also admits that there is no justification for subsidizing higher education, to the extent that is being done today, at the cost of the tax payer. University autonomy, creative role for teachers, teachers training, depoliticization of educational institutions are also suggested to clean the present educational system.

In its conclusion, it observed that there are wide disparities in the system of education from the view point of access, equity and impact. It says that the people from rural areas, girls, children from Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are still at the lowest order of educational attainment. It also observes the continuance of the colonial impact which divided people into elite-men of letters who lack skills and a majority of the people who will have professional skills but lack knowledge.

The document said the failure to improve the education system was because the real initiative for planning is entirely in the hands of state governments and it felt that because of the state governments control over planning, national expert bodies like National Council For Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute For Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and University Grants Commission (UGC) failed to meet with the expected response.

An Approach to Educational Reorientation:

The document emphasizes that some of the time worn concepts and patterns should be replaced by new thrusts and institutions from time to time, in view of the sweeping changes in the world. It observes that “education is an instrument of all round development of individual and a critical input in the developmental process”. But the education system cannot be improved by marginal changes and it requires a radical transformation.

The document, in its approach, touches upon various issue like access, equity, quality and a new management to make the system work.
It says that the outreach and effectiveness of education can he enhanced by the use of new technologies and through a major role to Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)\textsuperscript{35}.

It favours the formulation of New Education Policy in an atmosphere of realism which takes into account various constraints. It says that self-seeking politicians and individuals oppose depoliticization and various economic, technological legal constraints also effect the educational reform\textsuperscript{36}.

The document justifies the need of education being in the concurrent list. It says that "if the management of universities is to be restructured to align them to the realities of the day, state and central governments will have to amend their laws. The much debated issue whether or not the central government should assume some powers for depoliticizing and modernizing universities will also have to be discussed through consultations\textsuperscript{37}. It also favours constitution of joint commission of states and centre to study the problem of resources and working out a strategy for mobilizing them on a long term basis. It also states the Indian society does not always respond warmly to new initiatives and change oriented measures. The intellectual sophistication nurtured through centuries of philosophical debate is misused by the bureaucracy\textsuperscript{38}.

As stated earlier the new approach looks into the problems of (a) accessibility and minimum threshold (c) quality, social relevance, diversification (d) methodology and management.

It says educational coverage and retention which constitutes the core of universalization of elementary education requires to be matched with hard financial decisions. In addition to this, non-formal, distance education strategies have to be worked out to make the society a learning society. The document also pleads for behavioral, conceptual, methodological and organizational modifications\textsuperscript{39}. It favours de-linking degrees from jobs though appropriate machinery such as National Testing Service (NTS) and a moratorium on the expansion of traditional pattern of colleges and universities\textsuperscript{40}. It favours socially relevant returns from technical education and network for sharing facilities among centres of excellence and other educational institutions and promoting research for the development of unorganized sector. It favoured quality education which makes individual capable and confident concomitantly a value system which is conducive to
harmony, integration and the welfare of weak and disadvantaged.

Overhauling of the education system particularly higher education, according to the document requires, examination reform, teachers training, code of conduct for teachers, evaluation, introduction of multi disciplinary courses, autonomy and accountability of educational institutions with participant relationship between universities and colleges, depoliticisation of educational institutions.

It also favoured effective educational infrastructure at the central, state, regional, and district levels. In brief, the new approach envisages a strategy for universalization of elementary education, production of sophisticated man power in adequate number. Vocationalization and other measures to improve the quality and output of all other educational sectors. Hence it is an inescapable need for setting up and maintaining institutions of excellence at all levels to tap the best talent and nurture with care and competence. It is inescapably a response to modernization and globalization of the economy.

National Policy on Education 1986

The NPE 1986 is divided into twelve parts. It almost covered all the aspects of education from primary education to higher education, role of teachers, students services, amenities, curricula, management and resources. Since it was a policy statement unaccompanied by a report it lacks in details. After some preliminary observations in the first two parts, the document deals with certain issues which are already mentioned in the document ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’.

The NPE 1986 is approved by the Parliament in May 1986. It stated that the formulation of 1968 policy had not been translated into action. This had caused serious problems concerning access, quality, quantity and utility of education. In this context the policy called a new design of Human Resources Development, education is described as an investment in the present and future which was to further the goals of crucial values, apart form developing man power to serve the economy. It says “there are moments in history when a new direction has to be given to an age old process”. The policy favours a National System of Education. It implies that the provision of access to education of a comparable quality up to a level without discrimination on ground of caste creed, location or sex. It also envisages a common educational structure 10 2+3 and a common core
curriculum. This common core curriculum will not be rigid it also allows the recurring variations to be introduced in it. The curricula and processes of education will be formulated in such a way that they bring about a fine synthesis between change oriented technologies and the countries continuity of cultural tradition. It favours at the secondary level, conscious internalization of a healthy work ethos and of the values of a composite culture through appropriately formulated curricula. It says education should foster universal and international values oriented towards the unity and integration of the people of the country with a view to eliminate obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism. Education, according to the NPE 1986, should also promote environmental consciousness and work ethos.

With the 42nd constitutional amendment of 1976, education was brought under the concurrent list. Hence the policy called for a new sharing of responsibility between the Union Government and the State Governments. The inclusion of education in the concurrent list of the Indian Constitution was interpreted as a meaningful partnership which enabled the Union government to accept larger responsibility without eroding the roll of the states.

The policy envisaged education for equality and advocated for carrying to the specific needs of those who had been educationally disadvantaged i.e. SC and ST, Minorities, the Handicapped and Mentally Retarded.

It recognizes the need for the entire nation to pledge itself to the eradication of illiteracy particularly in the 15-35 years age group, and, favours a vast programmes of adult and continuing education.

The new thrust in elementary education will be on two aspects universal enrollment and retention up to 14 years of age and a substantial improvement in the quality of education. Elementary education is to be child centered and activity based. It recommends Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) to be integrated with pre-primary education.

Non-formal education is devised to supplement the efforts of formal education. The policy statement says that highest priority is to be given to solve the problem of children who dropout of school.
The main emphasis, with regard to secondary education, is on consolidation at the same time widening access to cover areas that remained uncovered. Children with special talent were to be provided opportunity to proceed at a faster pace and pace setting schools—Navodaya Vidyalayas with reservation to the children of rural areas will be established in each district for that purpose.  

Regarding vocational education, the NPE 1986 says “vocational education is to facilitate enhancement of employability, reduce the mis-match between the demand and supply of skilled man power.” It is proposed that vocational courses will cover 10% of higher secondary schools by 1990 and 25% by 1995.

In the field of higher education, the emphasis is on consolidation and expansion of facilities in existing institutions. The strategies for improvement of higher education are: development of autonomous colleges, redesigning courses and programmes, establishment of State Councils of Higher Education, enhanced support for research, creation of a National Council for Higher Education to coordinate general, agricultural, medical, technical and other professional fields of education, the open university system as an instrument of democratizing education, delinking degrees from jobs except in case of occupation specific courses and concomitantly an appropriate machinery National Testing Service will be established for this purpose, consolidation and development of rural universities for the development of rural areas.

Regarding technical and management education the policy says that the reorganization of technical and management education will take into account the anticipated scenario corresponding to changes in the economy, social environment, production and management process, science and technology. Continuing education covering established as well as emerging technologies will be undertaken by all higher technical institutions. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) was to be vested with statutory authority in order to make it effective in regulation of standards in technical education.

The strategy envisaged for making the system work is to ensure that teachers will teach and students study. Teachers will be given a better deal with greater accountability. Student services will be improved. A system of performance appraisal will be created.

Another important element of the NPE 1986 is the call for an overhaul of the system.
of planning and management of education. The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) is to play an important role of reviewing educational development. In the states there were to be State Advisory Boards on the model of CABE. District Boards of education are to be created to manage education up to higher secondary level and school complexes are to be promoted on a flexible pattern. In due course of time they will take over much of the inspection and functioning. Local communities will be involved in programmes of school improvement. There will be consultations with the states in the matter of establishment of India Education Service.

The NPE 1986 consider education as a crucial area of investment for national development and survival. It called for stepping up of outlay on education to the extent essential for policy implementation in the Seventh Plan. It also envisaged that from 8th Five Year Plan onwards it should uniformly exceed to the six percent of the national income while resources mobilization from the beneficiaries is also contemplated. The main task for the future advocated by the NPE 1986, is strengthening of the base of the pyramid of education, at the same time ensuring that those at the top of the pyramid are amongst the best in the world.

The Parliament after adopting the NPE' 1986, constituted 23 task forces to prepare a Programme of Action (POA). Each Task Force was assigned a specific subject covered by the NPE 1986. Educationists, experts and senior officials of Central and State Governments were associated with these taskforces. The subjects assigned to Task Forces were as follows.

1. Making the system work
2. Content & Process of School Education
3. Education for Women's Equality
4. Education of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Sections
5. Minorities Education
6. Education of the Handicapped
7. Adult & Continuing Education
8. Early Childhood Care and Education
9. Elementary Education (including non-formal education and operator blackboard)
10. Secondary Education and Navodaya Vidyalayas
11. Vocationalisation
12. Higher Education
13. Open University and Distance Learning
14. Technical and Management Education
15. Research and Development
16. Media and Educational Technology
17. De-linking degrees from Jobs and Manpower Planning
18. The Cultural Perspective and Implementation of Language Policy
19. Sports, Physical Education & Youth.
20. Evaluation process and Examination Reform
21. Teaches & their training
22. Management of Education
23. Rural Universities and Institutes

The above described subjects of the NPE — POA were covered by NPE 1986 also. The NPE — POA deals with the modalities of the implementation & the other details. Since the study covers only the policy formulation the details regarding the POA were not covered in this chapter.

A Comparison:

Both the 'Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective 1985' and the 'NPE 1986' have many common things to say. For example, both suggested appropriate provisions for an integrated programme of education like common core curriculum, common educational structure, modernization of education, changing curricula, basic changes in teachers training, code of conduct for teachers, developing new devises for achieving universalization of elementary education like non-formal education, adult education and education through open universities, etc. Both the documents suggested a new model of universalization of elementary education which ties up the anganwadis with primary schools and provide for pre-primary education up to classes V.

Both the documents emphasized vocationalization of education a systematic linkage with manpower planning and establishing networking arrangements among different institutions.

The 'Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective' provided the pointer for concurrency to ensure certain reforms. NPE 1986 took a very firm stand on concurrency and justified education being in concurrent list to ensure a larger responsibility for Union Government and for a meaningful partnership. It is quite understandable that the Union
Government requires the legal authority to ensure the implementation of common core curriculum, common educational structure and other programmes.

Model Schools or Navodaya Vidyalayas, which are opposed by some academicians and the State Governments ruled by opposition parties, prominently figured in the New Education policy. One of the members of CABE and many bureaucrats in the Education Ministry confided with the researcher that but for the model schools, there is nothing new in the New Education policy. The ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ after making a critical appraisal of education system proposed pace setting schools to ensure quality in education.

Curtailment of higher education is the common concern of the ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ and the NPE 1986. To ensure a systematic curtailment of higher education and restricted access, de-linking degrees from jobs though an appropriate machinery known as National Testing Service was introduced. While the ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ suggests moratorium on further expansion of traditional pattern of institutions, the NPE 1986 suggests the consolidation of facilities with in the existing institution. It is apt to quote Mr. Rajiv Gandhi in this context "Higher education is producing a large scale of unemployed and unemployable youth."

The 'Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective' visualized more effective use of new technologies in the distance education method which would be a boon for those who, for economic and other reasons cannot have access to formal higher education. Corresponding to this the ‘NPE 1986’ envisaged open university system which adopts a multimedia approach to ensure access to education for more people who could not get through conventional and formal stream. According to the policy statement open university system democratizes education.

Both the documents aimed at describing a strategy which looks into the problems of (a) access (b) equity to minimum threshold (c) social relevance and (d) methodologies and management.

The Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ has elaborately dealt with teachers, code of conduct for teachers, lining and evaluation of teachers and problems of politicization of educational institutions. It suggested various remedies. The final policy
though, approves these issues indirectly did not mention the same clearly and elaborately. Unlike the status paper it concentrated more on how to make the system work.

It is observed that diagnosis made by the ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ is correct regarding the state of affairs of education. But the remedies, or correctives recommended by it are inadequate. It is also observed that the ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ suffers from a few contradictions. For example, it observed two streams in education or two sets of institutions i.e. institution of excellence and institutions which are substandard. It also observed absence of expected commitment from higher educational institutions like IITs and IIMs. But it advocated one pace setting school with larger allocation of funds for a district. These model schools also reinforce elitism. The document itself admits that there is urban bias in scientific and technological professions and only the affluent urban populace have garnered the benefits of the professions. Then it suggests a moratorium on higher education. This further distances the rural people from having access to these institutions, because the limited seats from having in these institutions will be governed by people of urban areas. Another vital question is whether the people with urban socialization will show concern for the development of a research which is useful for the unorganized as advocated by document.

The conclusion one can draw is that there is not much that is new in the policy statement i.e. the ‘NPE 1986’ when compared to ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective 1985’. Some of the social scientists have observed that there is nothing new at all in the NPE 1986 when compared to the previous policies. For example establishment of rural university was suggested by Dr. Radhakrishnan Commission, pace-setting institutions, autonomous colleges existed in pre-Independence period. Even pace setting institutions or centers of excellence were advocated by the Kothari commission. The ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ and the ‘NPE 1986’ acknowledges the contribution of Kothari Commission on various issues like three language formula, common educational structure, resources allocation etc. Various political factors like political instability, secessionism, communalism, casteism, regionalism, alienation of youth, compelled the union government to formulate a New National Policy on Education, with emphasis on common core curriculum which promotes national integration and expected to contain divisive tendencies and confer more powers on central government to facilitate intervention in the functioning of state governments in the crucial area like education. Economic factors, like modernization and liberalization, also compelled the government.
to have a limited highly qualified man power. The New Education Policy thus is a product of several factors social, economic and political.

Though releasing the document for public debate is a healthy beginning, the views expressed by the State Governments and the concerned public did not provide the basis for the formulation of the policy. The document was released for the sake of legitimacy. The responses of the State Governments and the public are analyzed in the subsequent chapters.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


5. *Ibid* pp. 3-4


22. *Ibid* pp.43-44.
23. Ibid p.44.
   Ibid pp.52-53.
31. Ibid p.60.
32. Ibid p.65.
34. Ibid pp.73-78.
35. Ibid pp. 73-80.
36. Ibid pp.81-82.
37. Ibid p.83.
38. Ibid p.84.
39. Ibid pp. 89, 93 & 94.
40. Ibid pp. 96 & 111.
42. Ibid p.111.
44. Ibid p.119.
47. Ibid pp. 20-21.
49. Ibid pp. 22-23.
50. Ibid p.5.
51. Ibid pp. 6-9.
52. Ibid pp. 9-10.
54. Ibid pp. 11-12.
55. Ibid p.12.
58. Ibid pp. 16-7.

63. Ibid pp. 28-29.

66. Ibid