CHAPTER - VII

PUBLIC OPINION ON THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1986
This chapter examines aspects such as what is public opinion? How is it formulated, what are the agencies that mould public opinion and the role of public opinion in policy formulation. It also deals with review of public opinion on New Education Policy and finally examines whether there is any impact of public opinion on policy making.

In any ideal situation, all public policies and, indeed, all historical events are shaped by the opinion of the members of the political communities involved. The legitimacy of the government and its public policies depends upon the popular opinion it enjoys. Public policies deal with a wide variety of substantive areas like defence, welfare, education, etc. There are many agencies, which generate the public opinion i.e. family, peer group, mass media, school, temple, political party etc.

There are some general assumptions about the role of public opinion in a representative democracy. They are:

a. That the public is interested in public policy.
b. That the public is informed.
c. That it would deliberate and would reach rational conclusions.
d. That rationally conceived individual opinions tend to held uniformly throughout the social order.
e. That the public, having reached a conclusion would be enabled into law or policy.
f. That continued surveillance and constant criticism would ensure the maintenance of an enlightened public opinion and consequently a public policy based upon the principles of social morality and justice will be formulated.

The above mentioned exist in an ideal situation. Even in advanced liberal democratic countries like United States of America, it is observed that public opinion is not playing its due role in the formulation of public policy. James Bryce, came to a conclusion that the average American citizen is not particularly aware of the prevailing issues of public policy, until they are brought to his or her attention by the small energetic groups bent upon promoting a specific issue. Yehezkel Dror says that policy making depends on political feasibility and various variables including public opinion shapes political feasibility.
Though there are some limitations, public opinion has to play a major role in the formulation of public policy. Prof. V.O.Key Jr. Stated succinctly that, “unless mass views have some place in shaping public policy, all talk about democracy is nonsense”\(^4\). In fact a democratic form of government is defined as a government by public opinion. According to experts it has three important properties i.e. direction, intensity and stability.

The question whether the government responds to public opinion while making public policy or not largely depends upon the effectiveness of public opinion and channels of access or linkages between public opinion and the decision making machinery. Always a relatively small proportion of the public is believed to participate directly in the formulation of public policy. Generally, the criteria for identifying these attentive public are information and knowledge, an interest in participation in political action and the motivation to do so, and a social position and status that permit access to government decision makers. In this context the public may be divided into three segments\(^5\).

(a) The mass public, which constitutes perhaps 85% of the people, and generally possess a low coefficient of concern for public affairs.

(b) The attentive public are which is around 10% having a high degree of awareness of the political environment, who are called as opinion holders.

(c) And the thin top layer of ‘influentials’ or ‘opinion makers’ who actually formulate the public policy.

In this context an attempt is made to analyze how the public, even if it is a sensitive minority, or attentive public, responded when the government intended to introduce a new policy. It would be naive to regard that public always constitutes the majority. On many occasions the majority are apathetic unless the issue is such emotional and drives every one. Otherwise, only the intense minority (concerned communities) will participate actively in the articulation and decision making processes.

Many student organizations, teachers organizations, a few political parties, national leaders, academicians, professional bodies, teachers and enlightened public expressed their views on the document ‘Challenge of Education A Policy Perspective 1985’ and National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE 1986) The following issues are debated by the academic community and concerned public a) releasing the document ‘Challenge of Education A Policy Perspective’ for public debate, b) universalisation of elementary education c) the role of non-formal education, open university, distance learning, and
audio visual teaching **methods**, d) introduction of model schools or Navodaya Vidyalayas e) introduction of common core curriculum throughout the country f) role **and** status of higher education g) vocational education h) teachers training and code of conduct i) delinking degrees from jobs j) depoliticization of educational institutions g) resources for education h) place of education in the constitutional division of powers between union and state governments.

The academic **community**, students, teachers organizations, and political parties expressed their views in their organizational forums, public meetings, leaders of various organizations wrote articles, published appeals in the journals, conducted seminars, workshops etc. A few student organizations even held rallies against the NPE 1986, and expressed their views through graffiti. **Governmental bodies like** the University Grants Commission (UGC), National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), Professional organizations like the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), universities and research institutes also conducted seminars. Enlightened public, academicians, educational administrators either shared their views by participating in the debate conducted by these organizations, institutions or through their writings in mass media like newspapers and research journals.

A few academicians felt that the document was intended to generate public debate. They welcomed the debate and felt that "the debate and discussion are vital chords of democracy and reaching a consensus is essential for formulating the public policy". It is also felt that releasing a document for public debate is a radical departure form the past and an unorthodox exercise in policy formulation. The document on "Citizens Perceptions" on education brought out by the NIEPA had observed that the success of a good policy depends on the extent to which it satisfies the people's aspirations. This is even more so in the field of education since education is not only a significant attribute of human development but is also a dominant factor in shaping the process of development. Some academicians felt that in any country if people leave the policies of public interest to the mercy of rulers, there is a danger of rulers adopting the policies in a way so as to serve their own ends. The then Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi welcomed an extensive debate on the document to enable the formulation of new policy capable of leading India to the forefront of development. While addressing the National Development Council (NDC) the Prime Minister observed that education is very much a part of the development process... It cannot be separated form the development. They are not two separate things...
Education does lead to development. The document, which was meant for public debate, was well received by the academic community including a few foreign scholars who expressed interest in education. One of them had observed that "the document was fascinating, full of provocative and stimulating ideas about Indian education, and about India itself, a great nation whose commitment to democratic values stands as a beacon in a troubled world". One of the former vice chancellors said that the commendable feature of the document is that it links educational policy with certain immediate imperatives of national development such as national integration and the need for scientific and technological preparation for the 21st century. Furthermore, the general assessment of the achievements and failures and the lags of development in the educational sphere is refreshingly objective. The NIEPA in its publication on national debate entitled "Citizens Perception" had observed that "popular response to governmental policies provides an invaluable feedback, which would guide the implementation of the policies in the desired direction. The people's involvement, which is an index of popular response, provides the basis for the success of the government policies. Such a process could, in the long run become a self-propelling mechanism for the implementation of governmental policies and programmes as envisaged and planned initially. Popular response is an invaluable input for participation a sine qua non for the success of government policies. This is even more so in the case of education. The recent stress of national leadership underscores this principle. Some of the teachers organizations like the United Teachers Federation (UTF) and some students organizations like National Students Union of India (NSUI) also welcomed the release of the document for debate. The eminent Jurist V.R. Krishna Iyer had observed that the central government has imposed the NPE 1986 without undertaking any meaningful consultation with the academic community.

A few academicians expressed reservations about the practical utility of such a debate. They felt that the government had already taken a decision on some of the major policy issues mentioned in the document; for example both the houses of parliament have already adopted a bill on the open university named after Mrs. Gandhi on 2nd September 1985. Similarly the so-called delinking of degrees from jobs has been almost finalized and a moratorium on the opening of new universities and colleges has been decided upon and a plan to have a central model school in each district was about to be implemented.

Prof. Dinesh Mohan felt that the debate was a national shame since the NEP has no new idea to offer. The main thrust is the same as announced by the Prime Minister in
January 1985, before the publication of *Challenge of Education: A Policy Perspective 1985* by the Ministry of Education. The Prime Minister had announced the establishment of model schools in each district, establishment of an Open University, delinking degree from jobs and modern methods in education. Prof. Dinesh Mohan felt that this alone constituted the core of the proposed new policy. The policy stated that it drew heavily upon two National Commission on Teachers which are not debated by the public. It is further observed that policy is taken beyond the public knowledge and then the public is asked to legitimize it. Many students and teachers organizations criticized that the debate is manipulative. While some other organizations felt that it was inadequate and regarded it only as a confessional document which codified the merits and demerits without having any perspective.

A section of the academicians reacted sharply to the character of the document. P.N. Haksar & G.S. Bhalla were of the view that identification of priorities of social development should precede the formulation of priorities of education. Haksar and others felt that the document itself was a standstill and was a pathological report on a seriously ailing system. He further wanted a clear statement of the objectives of the national development, from the government whose credibility among people was low.

Many academicians felt that the efforts to achieve universalization of elementary education have remained unsatisfactory because of the following reasons:

a. Children’s limited access to schools
b. Inadequate facilities and inaccessible schools
c. Inadequate teaching aids, shortage of teachers
d. Absence of new teaching methods
e. Lack of motivation among parents
f. Paucity of financial resources.

The working groups of the national seminar on elementary education held at Shillong deliberated on the three main aspects of elementary education viz. planning, management and finance. They felt that a realistic time framework to achieve the goal of universalization of elementary education should be decided and there should be legislation on the universalization of elementary education and banning of the child labour. It suggested that all habitations with a minimum of 300 population should be provided school facilities within a distance of one kilometer. They also favoured a multiple approach to achieve the
universalization of elementary education like non-formal education, short duration courses, earn while you learn schemes etc.

The participants at a state level workshop on the NPE 1986 held at Chandigarh recommended provision of free supply of uniforms, textbooks, attendance scholarships and payment of opportunity cost compensation to parents of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and lower income groups who forego the support of children while they are at school to fulfill the constitutional obligation and to bring the uncovered hard core child population especially girls in the stream of formal education system\textsuperscript{22}.

A few observed that poverty or economic backwardness is the main reason and unless some thing is done favourably to change this universalization of elementary education cannot be achieved. Another academician lamented that universalization of elementary education has unfortunately not been the primary concern of the ruling classes all these years. He further added that the root cause of this distressing situation is poverty, which is largely wrap and woof of our socio economic fabric. Moreover, political will to achieve universalization of elementary education is also very much important. One of the distinguished social scientist and educational administrator felt the need for a Gandhian type of mass movement for education as it took it's course in pre independence period\textsuperscript{23}.

Students and teachers organizations also expressed their viewpoints on universalization of elementary education\textsuperscript{24}. All India Democratic Students Organization (AIDSO) opined that universalization of elementary education is possible and effective only with opportunity cost compensation method but not with non-formal education. Another organization felt that the lack of political will is the reason for not realizing the objective\textsuperscript{25}. The problem of poverty was recognized as one of the main reasons for not achieving universalization of elementary education which was neither attendee nor focused upon by the policy document\textsuperscript{26}.

The UTF opined that universalization of elementary education is the responsibility of both the central and state governments and they should put proper effort to achieve the same. The Andhra Pradesh Teachers Federation (APTF) observed that the solutions offered by the government to achieve universalization of elementary education are not practical\textsuperscript{27}. At another state level seminar, conducted the Bhagalpur University, the participants had observed that elementary education is the most important stage of learning. It constitutes the bedrock supporting the whole edifice of education\textsuperscript{\*}. It
expressed its deep sense of regret that the goal of universalization of elementary education could not be achieved even after about four decades of Independence due to the lack of political will, proper supportive strategy and resources. The seminar suggested the accomplishment of the universalization of elementary education through two major approaches a. Formal through primary and middle schools b. Non-formal through voluntary agencies, public trusts, social organizations and government agencies and through community participation. One of the teacher's organizations favoured the role of the non-formal and adult education in achieving the universalization of elementary education. Forging pre primary education, through integration of Balwadis, and Anganwadis as an integral part of primary education to ensure success of universalization of elementary education was suggested by the educational institutions.

The role of the non-formal education, open universities and distance education (audiovisual teaching methods) was recognized by one and all in achieving universal literacy. But they differed in respect to the role they have to play.

A few reasons for dropout at elementary stage were also identified by a researcher.

Reasons for dropping out at elementary stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Percentage of dropouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Poverty and social backwardness</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Carelessness</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. HI health of children</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>d. Helping parents in their work</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>e. Long distance from school</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>f. Physically handicapped</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>g. Attending household work</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>h. Indifferent attitude of parents</td>
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Some academicians strongly opined that the non-formal education should play a complementary role rather than an alternative role. It is further observed that to recognize non-formal education as an alternate to formal education will mean farewell to the hope of even having a functioning accountable system of elementary education. Prof. G. Ram
Reddy, Vice Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University and architect of open
university system in India proclaimed that Open Universities are a boon for Ekalavyas
(persons who are deprived of instruction). With the establishment of Open Universities
there is going to be a qualitative change in the situation because the universities adopt a
multi media approach, and the modern technology. The point to be noted here is that a
highly motivated student can learn without the personal supervision of a teacher, with
great ease in a much shorter time, not only for his satisfaction but also for the betterment
of the society in general and today's society, cannot, and must not, tolerate whims of
Dronacharyas.33

The National Conference on Distance Education recommended the development of
the open non formal education systems using the mode and methodology of distance
education to ensure equality of educational opportunity by offering a variety of need
based self instructional materials to a fairly large body of learners. Thus, distance education
can be helpful in extending and equalizing educational opportunities at a minimum cost,
thereby enabling us to attain the objective of the socialistic pattern of society44. Some of
the academicians are also of the view that National Open University as envisaged by the
new policy is expected to make a qualitative difference in the development of man power
and pleaded that the courses should have social relevance.35 Others felt that audio-visual
methods including print media is accessible only to 20% of the population. Hence this
will not be effective.36

Student and teachers organizations expressed their viewpoint on this issue. A few
student organizations opined that non -formal and distance education could only play a
complementary role.37 While another student organization nurtured a belief that this
method can play a major role if it is properly implemented.38 It is observed by one
student organization that the proposed distance learning only ensure the distance of people
from learning and dialogue is not possible through this method which is actually very
important.39 Another student organization opined that non-formal and distance education
did not contain drop-out and absenteeism rate.40 While another teacher's organization
set forth that non- formal education should not be a short cut and pretext for government
to achieve universalization of elementary education through it. This should only strengthen
the professional skills for absentee and adults.41 The STU also felt that non-formal and
other methods should play only a complementary role and it opposed the idea of open
school, which according to it is against the equalization of educational opportunities. It
favoured the use of Radio, TV as effective teaching aids only for Teachers Educational Programme. Some participants at a national seminar on education favoured a mass approach using educated sections of the community as a resource and mobilizing it for the eradication of illiteracy. By and large, majority opined that non-formal education should play only a complementary role not an alternative role.

Opening of model schools generated a lot of public debate. The academicians and representatives of various organizations and the political elite debated the merits and demerits of model schools. The idea of setting up of model school was very much favoured by the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. He lamented the loss of excellence in the drive for mass education. To tackle this problem, a scheme of model schools, which are centers of excellence need to be setup. He further embraced the idea that these institutions will stand for equality, excellence integration and reduces elitism. Jerome M Zielger of Cornell University had observed that creation and maintenance of models of excellence would be particularly important and useful in India to establish standards of practice to which other institutions could look. A former Secretary of Education, Government of Punjab was of the view that model schools were an effective method to bridge the gap between the town and country and would facilitate implementation of government programmes as the quality of education in these schools would be an incentive for bureaucrats to stay in remote districts along with their school going children. He contested the charge that any opposition to the model school is anti-rural. L.K. Jha (famous economist) welcomed the idea of the model schools because the doubly handicapped (quality and cost of education) rural poor will be benefited. Another scholar suggested that pursuit of excellence should go hand in hand with pursuit of justice economic, social and political.

The Karnataka Chief Minister and the Janata Party leader, Mr. R.K. Hegde, opined that proposals like computer literacy, public schools in each district are hardly the answer to the problems confronting children of less privileged sections. He laid more emphasis on fulfilling the constitutional objective of universalization of elementary education and using the present trained manpower. Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy opined that certain aspects of the NPE 1986 are contra constitutional and are a fraud on the people. He equated the proposed Navodaya Vidyalayas with one Doon School in every district. “It is a device to perpetuate the class orientation of our education and culture. It is a strategy to produce an exclusive group to provide ideological support for bourgeoisie economics.
The whole NPE 1986 is nothing but a negation of Articles 45 and 46 of the constitution. Many educationists, noted public figures including two education ministers of West Bengal and Tripura opposed the concept of model schools. For them model schools only promote elitism. The then Vice President, Shankar Dayal Sharma opined that the present form of education benefited only upper and middle classes of society. It is further presumed that the concept of model schools contradicts the neighborhood school concept propounded by the Kothari Commission. It will be a sky carper in the educational slum and in conflict with the objectives of democratization and equal opportunities for the rural folk. Another dominant opinion put forward against model schools is that they aim at mass devaluation and elitist glorification. It is commented that model school is an island of affluence in an ocean of mediocrity. In turn it is advocated by many that quality, equality and quantity should be maintained in education. This view is also endorsed by the noted educationalist J.P Naik. The NIEPA's report on “Restructuring Indian Educational System Suggestions of Educational Institutions” pointed out educational institutions favoured diverting the energy and resources of the proposed model schools for the improvement of existing schools to stem the further accentuation of rural-elite divide.

Some students and teachers organizations also aired their views on this aspect. They opposed the model schools because they help only the elite sections of the society. Other organization suggested the implementation of common school system and upgrading the standards in all schools. Notably, while opposing model schools the AIDSO felt that setting up of a model school is a part of a national strategy on education to ensure the availability of highly educated-trained manpower for dealing with the challenges, which are inherent in modernization and globalization of the economy. The Students Federation of India (SFI) felt that education has continued to be the privilege of a small minority of the better off, whose position has been further reinforced by the introduction of elitist Navodaya Vidyalayas under the New Educational Policy. On the whole, while the advocates of model schools argued the necessity for model schools for promoting quality, its critics felt that this move promotes elitism in education.

Introduction of common core curriculum evoked mixed response. A few educationists welcomed it. It was suggested that a sizable part of National Core Curriculum should be built around the local environment and culture. The Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi favoured a national core curriculum around which local subjects and issues cultural
and linguistic and others can be added\textsuperscript{55}. The report brought by the NIEPA had observed that majority of respondents \textit{favoured} uniform curriculum and comparable standards throughout the country. It observed that the plea for uniform content and curriculum stems from the respondent's hope for national unity, integrity and comparability of standards and easy mobility of the students\textsuperscript{56}. The \textbf{Minister} for Human Resource Development (HRD) said that national \textbf{curricular} frame work should be flexible to imbibe common national values with ample scope for variations depending on the regional, local and cultural milieu, requirements of environment and needs of the learners\textsuperscript{57}.

A few others feared it might lead to centralization and \textit{hegemonization}. Notably, Mr. Kanti Biswas, Education Minister of West Bengal observed that common syllabi, Operation Black Board are trends of centralization and authoritarianism. He said that in the name of strengthening national unity, the attempt to impose \textit{mechanically} a uniform syllabus without taking into consideration the diverse social and economic factors is a wrong move. He further said that the curriculum should reflect the diverse historical developments, social system, traditions and cultures. It should be in such a way that promotes unity in diversity\textsuperscript{58}. The Education Minister of Tripura believed that the attempts to dwarf the different cultures of different races and tribes in the name of upholding national tradition and the bid to introduce pseudo sciences in the name of fostering spiritualism should be stopped. Responding to this, the Chief Minister of Karnataka perceived that it is neither necessary nor possible to have uniform curricula. Instead he favoured the \textit{broad} curricular Homework at national level, and insisted that states should be allowed to develop their own syllabus and \textit{material}\textsuperscript{59}. Prof. Moonis Raza (Vice Chancellor, Delhi University) contended that the content and syllabi of books should not contain hatred towards different sections of the people\textsuperscript{60}. Some sociologists felt that whether this idea can strike roots in a country ridden with linguistic chauvinism and exclusiveness is a moot question. Furthermore, the concept of core curriculum is closely related to the more controversial issue of value component in learning. Fears have already been expressed as to whose values will be incorporated, as education is also an ideological and emotional process. The others observed that curricular offerings have become jejune and irrelevant\textsuperscript{61}. The \textbf{STU} of Andhra Pradesh affiliated to All India School Teachers Federation (AISTF) opined that curriculum should be evolved by experts from \textit{all} the states in the \textbf{country} with a provision for adding the additional factors according to their local conditions and environment\textsuperscript{62}. More or less the same views are \textit{expressed} by the SFI. Another student's organization favoured national core curriculum for national
Thus, the issue of introducing national core curriculum evoked mixed response. While a few favoured it for strengthening national integration others dubbed it as a move of centralization.

From all corners different opinions were aired on the state of higher education. While a few educationists and representatives of teacher's organization flayed the new policy's move to curtail higher education in the name of preserving quality, others justified moratorium on new institutions and curtailment of higher education on different grounds.

The Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, indirectly favoured restrictions on higher education. While delivering the speech at the Conference of Education Ministers of States and Union Territories, he said that "we lost excellence in the drive for mass education and every thing is reduced to mediocrity. To tackle this a scheme of model schools and points of excellence were to be set up." More or less same views are expressed by the educational administrators and vice chancellors. For example Prof. Iqbal Narain member secretary Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) said that access to higher education and professional institutions must be selective and admissions are made on the basis of scholastic aptitude test. Prof. K. Sachidananda Murthy (Vice chairman UGC) also favoured restrictions of admission to higher education but felt that modality should be very democratic. The Vice chancellor's of leading universities felt that access to higher education should be restricted as far as possible only to meritorious students, stressing the need to open up post graduate and research studies to those who have the aptitude and competence to pursue the studies. They said all others be allowed to pursue education related to their occupation and career advancement. Some of them felt that the basic malice of the Indian Education system was the higher education has been thrown open even to those who were least competent largely due to political pressures. Consequently, the system has turned out poor products, with disastrous effects on the quality of education in the country. Prof. P.N. Srinivastava (Vice Chancellor Jawaharlal Nehru University) felt that education has been allowed to expand in an absolutely unplanned manner without providing basic facilities for it. Dr. Madhuri R. Shah expressed her distress over the present state of higher education. She said that the present education is in unsatisfactory state of affairs due to uncontrolled expansion of universities. She says that the painful reality is the general decline of quality in our university education and of low standards of attainment of our graduates.

The Minister of Education, Government of West Bengal and others have pointed
out that the higher education in India caters to just six percent of those entering the education system and was unevenly distributed among different sections of the people. Hence curtailment of higher education is unjustified. It is argued that curtailment of higher education is nothing but advocating the needs of the ruling classes. From Vice chancellors to the Prime Minister, all are convinced that there are too many students in colleges and universities, which is not true. Per hundred of the population aged 25 years and more, India in 1981 had a stock of 3.12 graduates which is less than the number 10 35 of other developing countries. They cited the document, which also admits the same. (Para 2.21 Challenge of Education A Policy Perspective chapter V). Similarly, as a proportion of the relevant age group, the number of students in higher educational institutions is low in India (4.8%) as compared with 25% in Philippines, 18% in South Korea and 30% in Japan. This proves that there is no over crowding. But the document advocates moratorium on establishment of new institutions. The Education Minister of West Bengal and others observed that the class interest of the ruling classes compelled them to consider educated unemployment as more dangerous than uneducated unemployment70.

Further, it is observed that the Indian policy makers are following the footsteps of Raleigh Commission of 1902 appointed by Lord Curzon, which restricted the growth of higher eduction to curb specifically nationalist upsurge in Indian universities. The other argument presented against the curtailment of higher education is that higher education for a tiny minority based on the principle of merit without any equality of opportunity is necessarily adverse to the achievement of optimum quality that the society is capable of producing. And merit is not absolutely determined at the level of genetics. In a class society it has a generalized co relation with the hierarchy of class relations and a specified relationship with the occupation pattern and income distribution. The following trends were also noticed a). Drastic cut in expenditure on secondary and higher education b). More rigorous application of principle of “merit” in the institutions of higher education. c) Further concentration of higher education (mainly by drastically raising the privalt cost of education). Further, it is observed that the policy of restricting education and the series of proposals attacking the democratic rights of academic community pose a big danger to the democratic movement, and the danger has to be understood particularly since it is being camouflaged under populist slogans of modernization and preparing the country for the 21st century71.

It is felt by a few academicians that selective admission to higher education based
on scholastic interests or aptitude which the document propose is only relevant at the post graduate level. But selectivity or selection raises questions regarding the basis and methods of selection, which is not intelligently, sympathetically and effectively handled. This mishandling of selectivity would have disastrous consequences as our avowed objective of removing prevailing social inequalities are concerned and defeats the programme of positive discrimination. Further, it is neither practicable nor desirable unless alternative avenues of employment and training are made available to those who are deprived of higher education. A few others are of the view that higher and technical education should be restricted to the existing demands of society and economy.

The view that higher education should be restricted was contested by Prof. G.S. Bhalla, D.R. Choudary, H.S. Mehta and Tanseem Bahia. They wanted technical education to be streamlined. To support their contention that higher education should be expanded, Prof. D.R. Choudary cited a World Bank report. It stated that higher education enrollment had trebled in India during 1960-79. The enrollment had increased 20 times in Kenya, 12 times in Ecuador, 10 times in Dominican Republic, 9 times in Nicargna, 6 times in Congo and 4.5 times in Liberia. Thus, India lagged behind comparatively with the other backward countries world in the field of higher education enrollment. Prof. Moonis Raza and other faculty members of CRRID opined that under graduates and postgraduate streams were not properly linked and the link should be strengthened. They felt that a sizable expansion at the undergraduate level had created a vast reserve of people fit to perform only clerical jobs. These jobs were rated highly during colonial times, but the continued creation of a reserve was adding to the number of unemployed and unemployable citizens.

The curtailment of higher education and moratorium on establishing new institutions was criticized by many organizations. It is alleged that government is deliberately abdicating the responsibility of providing literacy to the poor. More or less same views were expressed by many participants at a seminar in New Delhi conducted by Asian Studies Information Center.

This shows that there are two different sets of opinions on higher education. Scholars and persons of prominence who favoured restrictions on higher education have put forward the argument that recently higher education has been producing large number of unemployed and unemployable men and women and excellence is lost in the drive for mass education. This was contended by some organisations political leaders and
academicians. They felt that higher education is not over crowded (they have cited studies also) and products of higher education are becoming unemployed because of lopsided economic policy and manpower planning. Curtailment of higher education is only obstructionist and a dehumanized notion.

Academicians, political leaders, students and teachers organizations expressed their views on vocational education. Rajiv Gandhi, while talking about vocational education, said that we should build up the demand in the market for vocational education and then provide the linkages within the system and with the societal system as a whole. He favoured vocational education for self-employment. One of the educational administrators had observed that vocationalization of education recommended by the Kothari Commission did never take off and it is essential for promoting manpower development. Another academician and educational administrator felt that vocationalization should not be linked only with employment and industry, it should be aligned with agriculture, the service sector and with other various programmes of rural development as well. It should also prepare young people for self-employment. While supporting vocational education, Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, is cautious about vocationalisation of entire education. To quote “vocational education may be acceptable, but vocationalisation of whole education is to make mechanics, make robots, make automations, to prevent this country from providing men of imagination.”

The Education Minister of West Bengal, Kanti Biswas raised some points regarding vocational education, which have been supported by the Education ministers of Tripura, Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. He opined that vocational education has failed because it did not have any access to employment, particularly, self-employment. They favoured the link between vocational education and production process. He said that it is pointless to discuss vocationalization in isolation of overall economic realities. At the same time he suggested changes in curricula, teaching methods and improvement in facilities. The Education Minister of Tripura felt that vocational education is going to be shaped with an eye on its relevance to the wide use of computers and electronic equipment's which are going to be introduced through multi-national companies. He further suggested that practical steps should be taken to ensure employment through self-employment schemes and other means after completion of vocational education. The scope for such technical education which benefits society as a whole and which is relevant to practical situation in life should be expanded. A seminar organized by Department of Education, Government of Meghalaya came with the following recommendations regarding vocational education.
a) It is not feasible to tag the general education with vocational education.

b) It is possible to run vocational courses independently since work experience has been proposed from the lower levels and also because of the introduction of core *curriculum* including for Science and Mathematics to be provided.

c) To ensure flexibility, it may be considered to impart general courses of academic streams to the willing talented in the evening after they have completed the vocational courses in the daytime.

d) Vocational courses should be started only when it can ensure that the students of vocational courses get employment either in some organized sector or able to start *self-employment*. A few others suggested greater inputs into vocational education. It is further observed that though much has been proclaimed about vocationalization, it has not made head way, the enrollment in vocational courses at the secondary stage is estimated to be only about 9% of the total. It was also noticed that there are not sufficient employment opportunities for vocational certificate and diploma holders and the incidence of *unemployment* among them is already quite high. Unless more jobs are created, the expansion of vocational education may not only be wasteful but also lead students into a blind alley.

A few academicians had observed the predominance of products of *IIT's* and *IIM's* because of the penetration of *multi* national companies. The products of *ITI's* and Polytechnics are lagging behind because of lack of middle range industries. It is further observed that computerization and mechanization in the name of *modernization* only aggravates the problem of unemployment instead of solving it. A few others felt that focus of an integrated and coordinated national education Policy should be in the *direction* of introducing professional or vocational course right from the stage of elementary education which would *help* in promoting innovative, creative and imaginative talent in the student, community. It is conceived that there is growing unemployment due to the dysfunctional relationship between education and works linkages, which can be re established by vocational education, which is also *the* main concern of the New Education *Policy*. The present degrees have *lost* their credibility since they are not capable of ensuring *employment* to their holders. Therefore, there is a widespread feeling that courses should be designed to promote job opportunities. Steps should be taken to remove the stigma
that vocational stream is for the unworthy by improving the quality of courses, by appointing qualified persons in respective fields, by making vocational stream really vocational without language load and by giving field exposure to the students. It is also said that vocationalization which is being forwarded as the core of the New Education Policy, however, is not a new concept. The introduction of 10+2 scheme was preceded by the propaganda that the +2 stage would essentially give vocational training to the students. But the record in this direction is very dismal. With no exception, all the states are suffering from acute shortage of funds for the laboratories and workshops required at the +2 stage. The net result is that these students have neither acquired any vocational training nor are they eligible for formal degree courses. This has resulted in effectively curtailing the entry into higher educational institutions. It is demanded adequate resources for vocationalization and employment guarantee. It is also stressed that vocationalization must be linked with employment opportunities or providing support like bank loans, ensuring market etc. for self-employment. One student organization felt that more stress should not be laid on vocational education alone, even general education has to be encouraged. In addition, it opined that unless the present economic system is changed no amount of vocational education could ensure employment or self-employment for all. Some other organizations felt that though vocational education is desirable it should be linked with proper planning which is very much absent at present. The Democratic Students Organization (DSO) suggested that up to secondary education vocational education (which they called as productive education) should be taught and in higher vocational courses general education should be taught to the students. The Panchayat Raj teachers' Union (PRTU) suggested the introduction of vocational education from the secondary stage. The STU suggested that vocational education should be an integral part of the school curriculum from the elementary stage. Lastly, the UTF entertained the idea that vocational education should be part of general education up to school level and then a specialized one at +2 stage. It further felt that vocational education would be successful only when there is proper industrial and agricultural policy. On the whole, every one favoured vocationalization with few modifications. Majority of them felt that it should be properly linked with planning. The status of teachers, the need of in service, pre service training, code of conduct and other aspects were discussed not only by teacher's organizations but also by prominent people, educationists, students organizations, teachers organizations etc. Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma (the then Vice president of India) praised the role of Guru who dispels the darkness of ignorance. 

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stands for darkness, RU stands for removal of darkness) and appreciated the teachers student relationship [Guru Sishya parampara]³. The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi mentioned about the role of teachers and while talking about teachers he preferred a teacher who inspires rather a teacher who explains and demonstrates. He favoured dialogical method and suggested in service training for teachers⁴. The then Vice chairman of UGC attached great importance to teachers training and said that Indian secular education has been ruined by the concept of a teacher as the all knowing one to whom genuflection and prostration are due and whose teaching should be accepted as inherent and final. He favoured better pay and treatment for teachers⁵. One of the Vice-Chancellors and former Presidents of the AIU doubted that whether there are enough dedicated teachers who shape the destiny of the nation in the classroom. He also deplored the pressure tactics of teachers to achieve some of their goals⁶.

Educationists and representatives of various organizations refuted the negative perception of the document. While the need for code of conduct is recognized, the modalities, and the implicit intentions of the policy makers were criticized⁷. It is observed that teachers will certainly not find much to cheer with the attitude of the document towards them. Teachers alone were made responsible for lost credibility and motivation⁸. Another educationist had observed that though the document mentioned about the sad state of affairs of teaching, it is vague as to what action should be taken to rectify this situation. He also opined that preparing code of conduct should be entrusted to teachers alone, and in any case, the government is not morally competent to perform this task because it itself lacks a code of conduct. And further in a society where no facet of life is free from the canker of corrosion of the moral fiber starting with government and its hand made bureaucracy, it is unfair to single out teachers for special treatment Mrinmoy Battaharya and others felt that ‘the government is clearly in favour of depriving teachers of their political rights.’ And such an attempt is against recommendations of previous expert bodies like Education Commission, United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and International Labour Organization (ILO)⁹.

Teachers and students organizations are equally vocal about teacher’s status and code of conduct. Many teacher organizations favoured both in-service and pre-service training and improving their socio-economic status. The All India Federation of Teachers Organization (AIFTO) opined that teachers should be consulted on matters such as education policy, school education service, professional conduct, disciplinary action etc.
It suggested the establishment of statutory machinery where it is a right of teachers to negotiate through their organizations with employers either public or private. There is a need for setting up of appropriate joint machinery to deal with the settlement of disputes between the teachers and their employers arising out of the terms and conditions of employment. Regarding salaries, it said that teacher's salaries should reflect the importance of the teaching profession in a society. They should be paid on the basis of salary scales established in agreement with the teacher's organizations.

Regarding the rights of the teaching community, the AIFTO said that teachers should be allowed to enjoy all civic rights as other citizens. Any system of inspection or supervision should not diminish freedom, initiative and responsibility of teachers. It also expressed that where there is a need for direct assessment of teachers work, such assessment should be objective and should be known to the teachers. Teachers, student's organizations and some academicians recognized the negative perception of the document about teachers and their services. One teacher's organization regretted the absence of any concrete proposal of service matters of teachers and it favoured experience as the criteria for giving promotions. Every one recognized the need for in-service and pre-service training of teachers. While contending the negative perception of the teachers many favoured formulation of code of conduct in a democratic way by consulting and involving teachers and their organizations.

As part of the educational reform it is proposed to de-link degrees from jobs. It is argued that the present form of university education is not related to the successful performance of many of the jobs, which are manned by graduates after their education. This is particularly in the case of white-collar jobs. This results in a considerable wastage of national resources for the individuals. The belief is that the duration of three or five years wasted in an unrelated university education could be very well utilized for specifically decided training programmes or on the job training programmes, resulting in higher effectiveness.

The other argument is that higher education with all its limitations, still develops certain basic skills and expands the horizons of the youth, which if not explicitly at least implicitly contributed to better performance. Further it is said that the university degrees have a certain degree of validity, objectivity and credibility and in view of this dispensing with university degrees as a pre requisite for jobs may vitiate the employment process.
and all extraneous factors may come into operation.

A section of academicians felt that de-linking of certain jobs from degrees should not result in a loss of status and prestige for these jobs. And proper steps should be taken to identify jobs where a large number of university graduates, out of pressure of unemployment, seek refuge even though the job would not require any of the skills or knowledge acquired by these people. One scholar quipped that "we have polluted the social atmosphere by linking jobs to degrees; hence we need a dramatic step to de-link them. We have to create an atmosphere where no one will opt for higher education considering it only as a means for a better job. At present we are neither ensured them neither a decent living nor a higher degree of discipline needed for higher education. Many of the students in higher education aspire just for better standard of living than that of their parents. At a national seminar some participants agreed that degree is unnecessary and unwanted for several categories of jobs available in our country at present, except in high-level management service. They further felt that insistence on a degree for a job means perpetuation of colonialism. The present education system is a relic of the past and if we stick to the same system, rules and regulations and job requirements, it means that we do not have the capacity and will to come away from the British yoke. Another study conducted by the NIEPA had observed that "De-linking degrees from jobs is a topical issue in the Indian Education Scene. There is a significant body of opinion which feels that de-linking degrees from jobs will answer many problems like reducing the rush for university education, innumerable unfair means of acquiring degrees, the loss of purposiveness of higher education, the devaluation of degrees in the job market as well as the progressive inflation of qualification with least relation to job requirements."

The former Vice-Chairman of the UGC is of the impression that de-linking degrees and jobs may not be a magical solution to the educated unemployment and overcrowding in institutions of higher education. More than de-linking, reorientation of courses in such a way that knowledge and skills needed for different avocations in a developing economy and planned admissions to them may solve the problem to a great extent. More or less, similar views are expressed by the AIU. It opined that de-linking degrees from jobs is not desirable. Instead, structure of courses should be so oriented that the nexus between degrees and jobs is strengthened and the fresh graduates are more suited to employment market.

The then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, favoured de-linking degrees from jobs
which will reduce the pressure to set up colleges which give degrees of dubious value and standards\textsuperscript{109}. The then Vice President of India had observed that de-linking degrees from jobs is based on the hope that it would ensure reduction of rush to the universities and save huge amounts of youth hours wasted which our country cannot afford\textsuperscript{110}.

The critical view presented in this regard is that de-linking degree from jobs in not a panacea by itself, and may even prove to be counter productive. And it is further observed that it is naive to imagine that with the act of "de-linking", the pressure for university seats would be automatically be reduced. On the contrary, it may increase because in the case of recruitment to jobs based on competitive examinations requiring advanced knowledge, irrespective of whether the degree or certificates act as an eligibility criterion. Positive competitors will tend to go to college or university or such other intuitions to enhance their chances of passing the examination. If the competitive examinations now in vogue are any indication, they are at best a mirror of university examinations. The opinion of the academicians is that de-linking will not decrease student's enrollment in institutions of higher learning but it will also enable those without degree to compete for a job. The abolition of recognition to degrees result in breft of norms. A professor observed that de-linking jobs from degrees could increase the probability of a smuggler working as a customs clerk. A journalist observed that it will further frustrate the young hearts and will give free hand to corrupt structure\textsuperscript{111}.

The proposal to de-link jobs from degrees was severely criticized by political elite. They said that it is another way of reserving jobs for those who can pay\textsuperscript{112}, it is an authoritarian attempt to centralize the examination system and to deny the validity of degrees\textsuperscript{113}. Further it will create few more tutorial homes. Evaluation of students through National Testing Service will also benefit the upper strata\textsuperscript{114}. The other set of opinion is that the rush for degree can only be regulated if jobs are guaranteed. With no job available, de-linking degree from job is an empty slogan\textsuperscript{115}. A.B. Bardan, Secretary Communist Party of India (CPI) national council felt that "de-linking of degrees form jobs may come to mean neither degrees nor jobs within the present capitalist system"\textsuperscript{116}.

Apart from educationists, political elite, teachers and student organizations also made their stand explicit on this aspect. One student organization said that it is a device which de-links student both from degrees and jobs and it is a policy of permanent unemployovability. It further observed that it will result in large number of workers without degrees and large number of students without jobs\textsuperscript{117}. The SFI opines that this move will
only widen the scope for legitimized corruption and nepotism that characterizes the employment today\textsuperscript{118}. The UTF feared that de-linking may lead to many malpractices and maintained that it is nothing but doubting the credentials of their own products\textsuperscript{119}. Another teachers organization, the STU felt that for most of the jobs we don't require degree holders except in case of jobs requiring higher technical, professional skills and managerial skills, recruitment to all other jobs may be de-linked from degrees. But objective criteria, fool proofness and valid tests may be evolved to select persons for the job. Some other student's organizations also opposed de-linking jobs from degrees. It is felt that unless the employment opportunities are widened, there will not be any impact whether one links or de-links. Further the de-linking may lead to malpractices, nepotism and corruption\textsuperscript{121}.

The forty second the constitutional amendment transferred education from the State List to the Concurrent List. Educationists and representatives of organizations regarding the education being in the Concurrent List expressed two kinds of opinions. Some of the academicians felt that education to be in the Union List to bring about uniformity in the education system but says that one should carefully think of what kind of uniformity it should be\textsuperscript{122}. The Union government favoured education to be in the concurrent list.

For effective implementation of New Education Policy within time bound framework it is favoured to put education in the Union List. The policy itself revealed that the concurrency did not aim at domination or infringing the rights of the states but it is a meaningful partnership in view of the vitality of education. The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi indirectly favoured the concurrency. He said that having education in the Concurrent List, people at the center and state should involve for the full implementation to give the best within the constraints that we have. A few felt the need for an enactment of a law for educational administration\textsuperscript{123}.

This move and other aspect of the NPE 1986 like common core curriculum, establishment of Indian Education Service (IES) were treated as trends of centralization\textsuperscript{124}. Kanti Biswas and Dasharath Deb, Education Ministers of West Bengal and Tripura demanded inclusion of education in the State List respectively through a proper constitutional amendment\textsuperscript{125}. Many academicians also supported devolution of powers to different governmental levels\textsuperscript{126}. Organizations also aired their views on this aspect, while a few organizations wanted the concurrency and others favoured education to be in the
State List. Participants at a regional seminar on the NPE recommended that multi level or area planning on participatory basis should substitute highly centralized and non-participatory planning. Others, while favouring education to be in the state list pleaded for more autonomy to the institutions in the state. Though the STU opposed centralization, it favoured enactment of a law since education is a national concern requiring a national perspective, common national standards and a national motivation for development. Therefore, they thought that national direction is needed in this matter.  

A variety of issues pertaining to the whole gamut of educational planning and administration are being discussed by educational institutions. These relate to (a) objectives underlying educational planning (b) the role and extent of jurisdiction and responsibilities of the center, state, district and other authorities, (c) the levels and extent of autonomy (d) place of education in the range of national activities and its management.  

There are divergent opinions on educational management and planning. Neither there is any consensus on the state government's responsibility over education nor is there any unanimity over the extent of the center state jurisdiction. Most of the educational institutions supported more role to the state governments and total decentralization up to block and village levels. Educational institutions favoured that the central government should be concerned with providing the national policy and perspective, providing financial assistance to backward areas and sections, entrusting the states with the task of operationalising national policy with sufficient flexibility to adopt them to the local conditions and needs. Concurrency was favoured in the name of meaningful partnership and shouldering the additional responsibilities by the center in view of national significance of education. It is refuted by others that it is infringing the right of the state governments and a move towards centralization.  

The depoliticisation of education had evoked an interesting debate. The document itself took a stand on depoliticisation of education. It said without depoliticization of education it would not be possible to clean the universities and establish a suitable environment for work. Few academicians supported this argument. In this regard R.K. Hegde observed the political interference of policy makers in educational administration and suggested that appointment of the heads of the institutions should be on the basis of qualification and competence. Dr. Gopal Singh, Lt. governor of Goa emphasized that the education must be depoliticized. Teachers must restrain from participating in party politics. A few social scientists like Ramshray Roy expressed
reservations regarding common core curriculum as stated by the **NPE 1986**. He observed that the Indian society is characterized by social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversities. The objective of education is to integrate the society. If corrective is sought to be provided by a selective inclusion in school curricula of elements from differentiated cultural traditions for projecting and fostering unity based on commonality it will **only** politicize the curricula and encourage **filiopectism**. For if traditions unite they also divide. Prof. Upendra Baxi said that though the New Education Policy acknowledges the problem of academic corruption and corruption in general, unfortunately it did not distinguish between them. Since this is not done, the report assumed a frightening anti-democratic dimension. The exercise of the fundamental right of **freedom** of speech, expression, conscience, assembly, association are perceived as inimical to intellectual excellence. Institutional policies are seen only in negative terms. He said that the NPE treated what may be good for society at large need not be good for the educational institutions. It is further observed that politicization and political manipulation was not differentiated. The Educational Ministers of West Bengal and Tripura opposed depoliticization and favoured democratization. The political parties like Telugu Desam Party (TDP) favoured the amendment of University Acts to create democratic atmosphere in educational institutions.

Some of the teachers’ and student organizations opposed depolitization as abrogation of democratic rights of students, teaching and non teaching community. One teachers organization opposed the teachers having link with political parties, since this will reduce their professional honour. While another teachers organization favoured politicization as an imperative and felt that the contempt with which some look at politics is cynical rather than practical. Recommendations of regional seminars organized by the NIEPA reveals the fact that many academicians favoured participation of students in academic and administrative decision making bodies to ensure more discipline. Many scholars and representatives of organizations wondered how politicization, which is instrumental for **societal excellence**, is viewed as inimical to intellectual or academic excellence.

One and all recognize that resources are vital for the success of any policy. Other dominant opinion that prevailed has been that in addition to financial inputs, non-monetary inputs such as political will, peoples commitment and co-operation are also matters of considerable importance.

The then Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi felt that apart from financial inputs, change in the attitude is very important. Dr. P.M. Bhargava said that social, political and economic will is necessary to achieve designed goals. Others emphasized the
importance of both political will and financial assistance. While participating in a seminar on the NPE, one of the university professors mentioned the following five sources from which resources for education could be mopped up.

i) Ten percent surcharge on all import duties.
ii) Suitable surcharge on corporate income tax.
iii) Suitable cess on operational law holdings in excess of legally permitted owner land holdings.
iv) Matching contribution schemes in village panchayats, municipal committees, market committee's etc contributed along with the state government.
v) The use of mounting food stocks for mid day meals and construction of school buildings and approach roads through Food for Work Programme.

The Southern Regional seminar on Planning and Management Aspects of the Education Policy at Ban galore had made concrete recommendations regarding resources.

It had observed that even after the transfer of education from the state list to the concurrent list, the central government spends as little as 2% of its budget on education. The conference recommended that the central government should spend at least 10% of the total (both plan and non-plan) expenditure on education. The states should spend at least 25% of their respective budgets. It also suggested in the total plan expenditure 60% spending of the resources for elementary education, 20% of secondary and adult education, 20% for higher education (including University, professional, technical).

Others suggested 10% of GNP and levy cess if necessary. The former vice chairman of UGC pointed out that a strong political will is important and favoured 6 to 8% GNP and mobilization of additional resources like levying educational cess on all business concerns, collection of fees from the children of economically well off in proportion to their incomes. Economists like Malcom. S Adiseshaiah called for mobilization of 60% from state funds for education.

The AISF observed the decline in allocation of resources from plan to plan and asked for more resources namely 6% of National Income. The STU treated education as a process of human resources development and hence pleaded for top priority. At least 10 percent of central annual budget, 30 percent of state annual budget should be allotted for education and 7.5 percent of GNP should be invested on education by 1990. The
TDP favoured 5 percent of GNP for education. While the other organizations demanded 6 to 10 percent of the GNP to be invested in education. Though every one recognized the imperativeness of financial inputs, they also stressed the need to have a strong political will to achieve desired educational targets.

The above analysis shows that the nature of public opinion in developing country like India is not uniform, it is highly diverse and heterogeneous. In the absence of any agreed upon societal goals or values, it is easier for the government of a pluralist society to continue existing programmes [with incremental changes] rather than to engage in overall policy planning towards a specific societal goals. Since public policy is not totally based on public opinion, it does not reflect the demands of masses but rather prevailing values of the elite. Changes in public policy will be incremental rather than revolutionary. There is a consensus only among the elite on the issues like curtailment of higher education, establishment of model schools, framing of a national core curricula, de-linking degrees from jobs and depoliticization of educational institutions. Some of the political parties, students, Teachers organizations academicians, state governments ruled by the opposition parties opposed issues like education to be in the concurrent list, establishing of model schools, undue stress on non formal education, infringing of democratic rights of citizens, non-teaching and students community and paucity of resources (inadequate allocation of resources). They advocated equality, quality and quantity in education and proper setting of priorities and financial allocation. They further favoured introduction of vocational education with proper link with economic and employment planning.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study i.e., National Educational Policy aims at centralization, depoliticisation, ideological hegemony, privileges to the already privileged and aimed at creating a managerial elite equipped with latest technological skills and techniques of crisis management, asking a minuscule minority to a promised paradise, leaving a large populace to slog in the bullock cart age. It is further observed that the New Education Policy was not formulated in isolation but largely influenced by the New Economic policy of the government. The policy is preconceived and the government is not sincere in sticking to its own objective of initiating a debate for providing the basis for the formulation of a policy. Public opinion is fobbed off which is only for legitimacy. Though the attentive public responded, their impact on the final policy is marginal. It is observed that though the attentive public sensitively responded the representative government did not receive it with the same sensitivity and honesty. Though initiating a public debate is a democratic exercise the government should have the political will to take hard political decisions.
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