CHAPTER - VIII

CONCLUSION
The focus of the study is the way public policies are formulated and the influences that operate. For this purpose the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 is selected as a case study. (Study is confined only to the formulation of NPE 1986, not the Programme of Action which was subsequently released). Studying the way the NPE 1986 is formulated is important on three counts. (1) For the first time the Union Government released a document ‘Challenge of Education A Policy Perspective 1985’, on the status of the present Indian education to initiate a debate involving academicians, public, press, political parties, organizations and State Governments in the formulation of a new policy based on the debate; (ii) the NPE 1986 is formulated after the enactment of the 42nd Constitutional amendment by which education was transferred from the state list to the concurrent list; (iii) for the first time the Union Government through its Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD) shouldered the responsibility of formulating a policy without constituting a commission.

Within the liberal paradigm, the most widely shared view of the Indian State is that of a liberal democratic state with parliamentary model and federal structure of government. Thus the parliamentary democracy, federal framework of polity and the welfare state constitute the political ecology of the Indian State. As a part of its welfare commitments, the Indian State has been formulating various policies for national development. The welfare state originated in advanced industrialized nations as a response to the contemporary socio-economic and political requirements. The welfare state is a liberal democratic capitalist state with a human face. The Indian State too has some welfare features, though its welfare role is constrained by many factors like less surplus at its disposal and more people dependent on its services. The welfare ideals of the Indian State are mentioned in the directive principles of the state policy of the Indian Constitution.

As part of its welfare functions, the Indian State provides education to the people. It is mentioned in the Constitution that universalization of elementary education (free and compulsory education to all the children below the age of 14 years.) is the responsibility of the state. However, it has remained a distant goal. There is also a gradual decline in the allocation of financial resources to the field of education over a period of time. It is hoped that with effective allocation of resources, proper planning, improvements in bureaucracy, the Indian State can ensure welfare and strive to extend education to the people as a matter of their right.
In developing countries like India, state should take an active role in providing education to break the rigidities of social stratification, to equalize opportunities and to ensure development. This calls for the formulation of a realistic public policy involving the State Governments, concerned public and agencies. The Education policy in India at present is a continuum of the past with certain changes. [Policies are incremental in nature.] Education in India in ancient period was confined to a few. It was highly in egalitarian in nature. Education in the ancient period was provided either by enlightened private individuals or by the religious institutions. Sometimes the kings themselves took upon this responsibility. The content was religious in character. This situation continued till the end of the 18th century.

With the advent of the British, the educational situation in India changed as the state assumed greater responsibility. The principal positive contribution of the British administration was giving open access to educational institutions maintained from or, supported by, public funds. The Christian missionaries and reformers also had put in some effort. In spite of the open access and the state support the educational system did not change drastically. In fact, the formal system of education of the period was traditional in character and covered only a small proportion of the upper and middle classes of the society. The masses (in large number) were educated only in the non-formal sector. The positive contribution of the British administration was more than counter balanced by their emphasis on the education of the upper classes, downward filtration theory, the neglect of education of poor people, the policy of neutrality in social reform, and by the establishment of private independent schools for the well-to-do. Colonial interests governed the limited education they provided. The British administration did not accept the principle of compulsory elementary education but stressed its voluntary expansion only. Later they intended to curb the growth of education because they realized that there is a direct link between the rise of nationalism and the spread of the education among the Indians. They also suggested curbs on the expansion of the secondary and higher education and favoured admission to the educational institutions on a selective basis.

With the advent of Independence, the CABE decided to set up two commissions one to deal with the university education under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radha Krishnan and, the other, to deal with the Secondary education under the chairmanship of L.S. Mudiliar. These commissions were constituted in response to the promises made to the people by the nationalist leaders during the freedom struggle. The policy initiatives of the
government based on the recommendations of these two Commissions are meant to promote the economic independence and political stability of a newly independent nation state. However significant, the recommendations of the above said Commissions may have been they were not all comprehensive. Hence the Union Government constituted the Indian Education Commission (1964-65) under the chairmanship of D.S. Kothari.

The Indian Education Commission aimed at the radical reconstruction of the educational system. This reconstruction included three aspects (a) internal transformation (b) qualitative improvement (c) expansion of educational facilities.

Based on the Commission’s report the National Policy On Education 1968 was formulated. This was a response to the socio-political and economic requirements of the nation. But the policy makers felt that the recommendations of the Kothari Commission were not satisfactory with respect to the administration of higher educational institutions. Later the government appointed the Gajendragadkar Commission (1969) to deal with the various administrative aspects of education. The recommendations of this Commission aimed at greater administrative control of higher educational institutions. Subsequently during the Janata Party regime, at the union level, a draft National Policy on Education (1979) was formulated with a major emphasis on adult education. Since the Janata Party government was in power for a very short period, it could not push through the policy. After the draft National Policy 1979, no major policy exercise was undertaken upto 1985. In 1985, the Union Government released a confessional document (status paper) on education ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective 1985' to initiate a public debate meant for the formulation of a New National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986.

The document deals with certain facts, views and issues relevant to the formulation of the educational policies. The document felt that reshaping the educational system was necessary for all individual as well as national endeavors. It stated that education is an investment in human resources development. The document presented the progress made in the field of education. It also noticed many dysfunctions like lack of quality, lack of national identity, values and accountability. It called for a new approach for providing quality education to all in order to develop an individual’s full potential and of simultaneously transferring the content and process of education to meet the emerging needs of tomorrow. The document admitted that the change in the educational system with all its ramifications is not possible unless the overall socio-political system requires
such alterations for its survival. It suggested effective steps for the universalization of elementary education, vocationalisation of higher secondary education, modernization of higher education, changes in curricula, basic changes in teachers training, de-linking degrees from jobs, depoliticisation of educational institutions, linkages between higher educational institutions with industry etc. The document objectively stated that the NPE has to be formulated with the active participation of the State Governments, local bodies, parliamentarians, political parties, non-governmental organizations, academicians, teachers, parents, students and the fourth estate (press).

The debate on the 'Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective' took place during August 1985 to August 1986. Later the parliament approved the policy document in the month of May and in the month of August 1986 it approved the Programme of Action to give shape to the new thrusts of the policy. It became evident that there is opposition to the some of the aspects mentioned in the document like the excessive emphasis on non-formal education and distance education to achieve the goal of the universalization of elementary education. There was opposition for the establishment of model schools, restrictions on higher education, depoliticisation of educational institutions, presence of education in the Concurrent list, etc. Without taking into account the opposition and divergence of views expressed during 1985-86 debate, the MHRD formulated the NPE 1986. This policy clearly advocated a uniform national system of education with common core curricula, universalization of elementary education with the support of non-formal education and distance education, establishment of pace setting schools, curtailment of growth of higher education. It further called for the de-linking of degrees from jobs, depoliticisation of educational institutions, concurrency in the field of education etc. The comparative analysis of the 'Challenge Of Education A Policy Perspective 1985 and the NPE 1986* revealed that there is nothing new in the NPE 1986. The decisions at the highest political level were already taken on certain aspects like the establishment of model schools, creation of a national Open University, Constitution of national testing service etc., while the document was still being debated. This suggests that the policy was pre conceived and the debate was a mere ritualistic exercise for the sake of legitimacy rather than the real basis for policy making.

Public policy making is the principal function of the state. Public policies cover substantive areas like employment, health, housing, education etc. In developing countries, like India, provision of various public services is important because many people depend
on these services. The government and its various agencies primarily formulate public policies with the peripheral participation of the public and other non-governmental agencies. Public policies are invariably state centered.

In the formulation of the educational policy, the **MHRD** plays a pioneering role. Various other ministries like the Ministry Of **Agriculture**, Ministry of Science and Technology also deal with educational planning and policy formulation of their respective areas. Various deliberative bodies like the CABE, Conferences of Chief Ministers and Education Ministers of the States and National Development Council are also involved in these deliberations. These deliberations provide the basis for policy formulation. The efforts of the above said ministries and other bodies are supported and strengthened by agencies like the **UGC**, **AICTE**, **CSIR**, **ICAR**, **ICSSR**, **ICMR**, **NIEPA**, **NCERT**, **AIU** etc. The efforts of the MHRD and other Ministries are coordinated with educational division of the Planning Commission. The policy formulation is done with in the overall framework approved by the Cabinet.

The role of the State Governments in policy formulation is being marginalised because of the increasing intrusion of the Union Government owing to the transfer of education from the state list to the concurrent list. Even in limited areas, the State Governments are not able to formulate the policies effectively because of lack of expertise and administrative apparatus.

It is recognized that there is a need to have an apex body to co ordinate the different agencies involved in the policy formulation at the national level and also a similar arrangement at the state level. It is also observed that the top down approach in policy formulation will be far from realistic. Meaningful participation of the State Governments in policy formulation is required if policies ought to be realistic and effective.

In a democratic polity, public policies should reflect the aspirations of the public in general and the concerned public in particular. But in many developing countries like India, because of the under developed nature of the political system, public policies are formulated by a small group of elite (i.e. political executive and its hand picked administrators and academicians) with the peripheral participation of the public and the concerned communities.
In the Indian context, because of the weak foundation of the various democratic representative institutions, policies are formulated increasingly by the Union Government. Another limitation of the policy formulation was the one party dominance both at the union and state levels. This resulted in the peripheral participation of the State Governments. The supremacy of the Union Government continued till the early 70's. Public Policies are seldom formulated based on a debate involving the concerned **communities, student's, organizations, teacher's organizations, political parties and State Governments.**

The ideal way of formulating a public policy in a federal polity like India, with parliamentary system of government, is by constituting a broad based commission consisting of academicians from all disciplines, educational planners and administrators. The commission should be entrusted with the responsibility of consulting the Union Government, State Governments, representatives of the union and state legislatures; representatives of local bodies, political parties, students and teachers organizations, academicians, educational administrators press and the **public:** Based on the recommendations of the commission, the political executive should formulate the policy and seek the legislature approval.

There are two departures in the formulation of the NPE 1986. One is the non-constititution of a commission for the formulation of the policy, and the other is the preparation of a confessional document the 'Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective 1985', a status paper meant for the debate.

In this context it is analyzed how the union and the State Governments perceive educational reforms and express their views on different aspects pertaining to the educational policy. For this purpose three states, namely Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh ruled by **Congress-I, CPI (M) led Left Front and the Telugu Desam respectively** were selected.

The healthy beginning of having a public debate on the formulation of the NPE was welcomed by one and all. The Union Government and the State Governments expressed their views on issues like the purpose of education; universalization of **elementary** education; non-formal education, open university, and distance learning, Nav odaya Vidyalayas (model
schools), common core curriculum; higher education; vocational education; teachers education and code of conduct; de-linking degrees from jobs; depoliticisation of educational institutions; resources; education being in the concurrent list etc.

The Union Government felt that the purpose of an educational system is primarily to develop human resources and to solve the socio-economic problems. The West Bengal government stated that the educational system should be linked with the socio-economic development. While the Andhra Pradesh government recognized the development of human resources as the important function in the educational process and development.

The universalization of elementary education is one of the goals mentioned in the directive principles of the state policy. To achieve the universalization of elementary education by 1995, it is resolved to adopt a child-centered approach and focus on the provision of minimum facilities which was symbolically called as "Operation Black Board", a coordinated effort with non-formal education. There was an overall consensus among all the State Governments. They differed only on certain details.

The Union Government and the State Governments ruled by the Congress suggested a child-centered approach supplemented by a non-formal education to achieve the universalization of elementary education.

The AP government suggested opening of new primary schools and mid-day meals to achieve the universalization of elementary education. The West Bengal government suggested allocation of adequate finances and the sharing of cost by the union and the State Governments and the complementary role of non-formal education to achieve universalization of elementary education. The recommendations of the State Governments regarding universalization of elementary education lie within the educational system. They did not focus on other linkages like poverty and illiteracy.

Realization of universalization of elementary education and ensuring equity in education acquired a center stage in the formulation of the NPE 1986. The Union Government favored various instrumentalities like non-formal education, adult education, distance education etc. to achieve this goal. The Uttar Pradesh government considered non-formal education as an independent system. The Andhra Pradesh government also favoured greater role for non-formal education. The West Bengal government stated that
non-formal education should be treated as a complementary to elementary education and not as a cheap substitute to the formal educational system. The recommendations of the State Governments (ruled by both the Congress and the Opposition parties) and the emphasis given by the Central Government indicates the fact that there is a general realization regarding the urgency of having a learning society. Though the concern is genuine, the recommendations suggested by them are less adequate. The Union Government as well as the State Governments favoured setting up of open universities. Neither the Union Government nor the State Governments made any concrete recommendations regarding the proposed role of the Open University in developing countries like India.

The major thrust of the NPE 1986 is on the establishment of Navodaya Vidyalayas (model schools). The broad objectives of these institutions were to serve the objective of excellence coupled with equity and social justice in order to promote national integration. The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi supported the idea of Navodaya Vidyalayas and the same was endorsed by the Congress ruled states. The State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Tamil Nadu wanted the regional language to be ultimately the medium of instruction from the Kindergarten level in accordance with the declared policy of the Government of India. The West Bengal government was opposed to the idea of Navodaya Vidyalayas since they are the centers of excellence which further perpetuate the cultural and economic domination of a privileged few.

There is a realization on the part of policy makers that education will act as an integrating force to check the divisive tendencies. The Union Government favoured a national system of education to ensure uniformity along with a national core curriculum with certain amount of flexibility. It is reported in the minutes of the CABE, State Education Ministers Conferences etc. that there was a consensus among all the State Governments in favour of a national system of education and a national core curriculum with the exception of the Education Ministers of West Bengal and Tripura. The State Governments ruled by the Congress supported the national system of education and a common core curriculum.

The West Bengal government opined that the concept of a core curriculum should never be a mechanical concept but should act as a model to be adopted to the peculiar socio-economic, geographical and regional characteristics of our country. The West Bengal
and Tripura governments recommended that curriculum and syllabus should be framed with an eye on national integration and comparability as well as meeting the specific regional requirements.

Consolidation of facilities within the existing institutions instead of opening new institutions in the field of higher education is the emerging trend of the NPE 1986. The Prime Minister observed that subsidizing higher and professional education, (the scale at which we now do it) is disproportionate compared with primary education and secondary education. It was reported in the minutes of the Conference of State Education Ministers, that there should be a regulation of admission to higher education, a view that was contested by the Education Ministers of West Bengal and Tripura, The CABE minutes also indicate the thrust and direction of the NPE 1986.

The Uttar Pradesh government felt that selective admission into colleges and universities should be based on an entrance examination. It favoured a freeze on further opening of general educational institutions. It also favoured developing facilities within the existing colleges and universities.

The opposition of the West Bengal government to the New Educational Policy is relatively substantial while the opposition of other non-congress governments is only peripheral. The Chief Minister of West Bengal felt that the proposed policy of discouraging higher education in the name of protecting quality is counter productive. The number of persons receiving higher education is not as high as to warrant restriction. In fact these restrictions may be due to the fear of increasing the number of educated unemployed.

The policy statement favoured vocationalisation of secondary education to provide valuable manpower for economic growth. The CABE favoured vocational education as a distinct stream intended to prepare students for identified occupations spanning several areas of activities. The conference also endorsed the proposal to cover 10% of higher secondary students under vocational courses by 1990 and 25% by 1995. No State Governments whether ruled by the Congress or the opposition parties had any difference of opinion regarding the role of the vocational education. They only differed slightly on finer details and the emphasis. For example, the Uttar Pradesh government favoured diversification and vocationalisation of general and secondary education for making education responsive to regional and national development needs. The Andhra Pradesh
government opined that the present system of education is not in a position to throw open employment avenues to the students coming from colleges. With a view to link employment source with studies, the Andhra Pradesh government desired to introduce vocationalisation of education not only at the secondary stage but also at the intermediate stage. The West Bengal government suggested that vocationalisation of education should consider the linkages between vocational education and self-employment.

The ‘Challenge of Education-A Policy Perspective’ observed that the teacher's performance is the most crucial input in the field of education. It found fault with the nature of selection, promotion, training etc. The NPE 1986 insisted on recruitment of competent teachers and in-service training. All the State Governments endorsed more or less the same views.

The policy makers stressed the need for depoliticisation to revamp the functioning of educational system in order to secure greater efficiency, equity and objectivity. The document recognized that political education is essential for preparing future citizens. Political issues might be debated within the precincts of a university at the intellectual level, but the administrative system of university should not be subverted for the ends of any political party. The State Governments ruled by the Congress party supported depoliticisation. For example, the Uttar Pradesh government favoured Constitution of advisory councils in the place of elected councils. The Andhra Pradesh government did not suggest the depoliticization of teachers and lecturers directly. It stated that restraint, code of conduct, accountability and professional ethics are to be formulated and followed by them. But the West Bengal government dubbed this move as one which smacks of authoritarianism.

The ‘Challenge of Education- A Policy Perspective’ and ‘the NPE 1986’ visualized de-linking of university degrees for the requirement of recruitment to services. The Prime Minister, Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, favoured de-linking degrees from jobs. The CABE endorsed the proposal to de-link degrees from jobs and desired the constitution of a National Testing Service. The Congress-ruled governments voiced no opposition. But the West Bengal and Tripura governments opposed the move to de-link degrees from jobs.

The NPE 1986 advocates the Constitution of the Indian Education Service. The Union Government justified the constitution of Indian Education Service for modernizing
educational administration, promotion of national integrity and for securing uniformity in educational standards. Some state governments ruled by the Congress party like Punjab and Gujarat opposed the Constitution of the Indian Education Service. While the State Governments ruled by the opposition parties opined that the Constitution of the Indian Education Service further perpetuates the process of centralization of educational administration and dilutes the responsibility of the state governments.

The NPE 1986 supported the three-language formula as recommended by the Educational Policy of 1968. Most of the State Governments, except Tamil Nadu, supported the three-language formula. The Tamil Nadu government supported the two-language formula. The West Bengal government opposed imparting of education through the medium of Hindi in model schools since this would violate the three-language formula and imparting education through their mother tongue.

There was a general realization that finances play a more formidable role in the context of educational planning to achieve the objectives like equity or coverage, quality or diversification etc. The NPE 1986 affirms that from the 8th plan onwards six percent of national income will be spent on education.

The Uttar Pradesh government felt that the entire expenditure for universalization of elementary education should be borne by the center. The Andhra Pradesh government complained that the governments in southern states are getting a raw deal in terms of financial allocation. The two State Governments of West Bengal and Tripura favoured ten percent allocation for education in the Union Budget.

Educational planning and administration has acquired a center stage. Education was transferred from the state list to the concurrent list through a Constitutional amendment. The Union Government justified this transfer on the grounds that it ensures a meaningful partnership between the union and the state governments. The State Governments ruled by the Congress party supported education being in the concurrent list whereas the State Governments ruled by the opposition parties like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, West Bengal, Tripura and Punjab opposed education to be in the concurrent list. They wanted education to be transferred back to the state list and the role of Union Government to be that of a coordinator.
The Uttar Pradesh government supported all the initiatives of the Union Government regarding the New Educational Policy. It approved not only the New Educational policy in toto but also favoured a lead role for the Union Government.

The Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh did not put forward any concrete alternatives to the NPE 1986. It only demanded more resources from the center apart from implementation of three-language formula and reversion of education to the state list.

The West Bengal government ruled by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and its allies favoured more role to the state governments. It opposed some substantial issues of the NPE 1986 like model schools, concept of a common core curriculum, depoliticisation of educational institutions, code of conduct for teachers, de-linking degrees from jobs, Constitution of National Testing Service, Constitution of Indian Education Service etc. It also demanded more resources and budgetary allocation from the Union Government and reversion of education to the state list.

It is clearly evident that the State Governments ruled by the opposition parties wanted their sphere of influence and operation not to be diluted by the initiatives of the Union Government. They wanted the Union Government to be the main agency for finances apart from coordinating the efforts of the State Governments.

But the Union Government wanted to extend its sphere of influence and operation to certain sectors, which hitherto belonged to the State Governments for political as well as administrative reasons. The Union Government primarily through the MHRD is playing a pivotal role in the field of education at the national level by spearheading the policy formulation and its implementation rather than merely extending central assistance and leaving implementation to the states. It is trying to integrate different levels and spheres of education (which were hitherto in the state sector) with conceptual, structural and financial linkages established among advisory bodies and national level institutions.

This direct role of the Union Government has eroded the initiatives of the State Governments to a certain extent. The Union Government shouldered the task of reorganizing the educational system so crucial for nation building as well as national development in a bid to establish its supremacy over the State Governments. This indicates
the political expediency of the Union Government’s penetration into certain vital sectors like education, which hitherto belonged to the State Governments.

The analysis of the opinion of the academic community, students, teacher’s organizations, political parties who responded to the public debate reveals very interesting trends.

The academic community, students, teacher's organizations and political parties welcomed the release of the status paper ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective' for public debate. But some of the academicians and organizations felt that the policy is preconceived and the debate is manipulative. They felt that the debate is conducted only for the sake of legitimacy.

The public opinion is in favour of achieving the goal of universalisation of elementary education. But the majority opined that the non-formal education should play only a complementary role in achieving this goal.

The establishment of model schools was favoured by the policy makers and some of the educationists and administrators. But the public favoured diverting the resources of the proposed model schools for the improvement of the existing schools to stem the further accentuation of rural divide. On the whole, while the advocates of model schools argued the necessity of model schools for promoting quality, its critics felt that the model schools promote elitism in education. The issue of introducing national core curriculum evoked mixed response. While a few favoured its introduction for strengthening national integration, others described it as move towards centralization.

There are two different sets of opinions on higher education. Some of the academicians and educational administrators favoured restrictions on the further expansion of higher education. They have put forward the argument that higher education has been producing the large number of unemployed and unemployable men and women. They also stated that the excellence is lost in the drive for mass education. Some organizations, political leaders and academicians contended this. They felt that higher education is not over crowded and products of higher education are becoming unemployed because of the lopsided economic policy and manpower planning. They stated that higher education is only an obstructionist and a dehumanized notion. Consensus prevailed
on the vocationalisation of education. Every one favoured vocationalisation with a few modifications. A majority of them felt that it should be properly linked with planning.

The academic community did not have much to cheer regarding the perception of teachers by the policy makers. However every one recognized the need for in-service and pre-service training of teachers. While contending the negative perception of teachers, many favoured formulation of code of conduct in a democratic way by consulting and involving teachers and their organizations.

De-linking degrees from jobs was favoured by the policy makers to reduce the pressure on higher education. But 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.

The place of education in the Constitutional division of powers between the Union Government and State Governments is one of the contentious issues in the educational planning. There are divergent opinions on educational management and planning. Neither is there any consensus regarding the State Government’s responsibility towards education nor is there any unanimity over the extent of center-state jurisdiction. The academic community and most of the students and teachers organizations supported a greater 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 and entrusting the states with the task of operationalising national policy with sufficient flexibility to adopt them to the local conditions and needs. A few organizations advocated concurrency in the field of education in the name of meaningful partnership and shouldering the additional responsibility by the Union Government in view of the national significance of education. But this viewpoint was refuted especially by many student, teachers’ organizations and political parties. They criticized that the concurrency in the field of education infringes the autonomy of the state governments and perpetuates centralization tendencies.

The document ‘Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective’ identified many internal constraints in cleansing the educational system. One of them is politicization. Hence the policy makers advocated strongly the need for depoliticization. But many
academicians and representatives of various organizations described it as an undemocratic move. They wondered how politicization, which is instrumental for societal excellence, is viewed as inimical to intellectual or academic excellence. Every one recognized the imperativeness of financial inputs, they also stressed the need to have a strong political will to achieve the desired educational targets.

Further analysis of public opinion reveals that concerned communities i.e., academicians and organizations responded to the debate on the educational policy in spite of their limited access and the feeble influence they wield in policy formulation. While the top elite shared the consensus on issues like establishment of model schools, de-linking of degrees from jobs, depoliticisation of educational institutions, education being in concurrent list and so on. While some other academicians, representatives of student's, teacher's organizations and political parties opposed the establishment of model schools, decline of financial resources to education, undue stress on non-formal education, lack of autonomy to education, restrictions on the expansion of higher education, infringing the rights of academic community, and presence of education in the concurrent list etc. Consensus prevailed among all the sections on issues like vocational education, common core curriculum and common educational structure etc.

Though the concerned community responded to the policy debate, the government did not respond with the same sensitivity in spite of its repeated pronouncements about its faith in public opinion. This suggests that the impact of public opinion in formulating educational policy is marginal. It only reflects the consensus among the top elite but not the general democratic public opinion.

The dominance of the Union Government in the formulation of the NPE 1986 is an emerging trend, which is likely to perpetuate the centralization tendencies in policy formulation. The Union Government owing to certain internal and external, political and economic compulsions has formulated the NPE 1986. The Prime Minister took the initiative and the policy was formulated by the MHRD and its hand picked academicians and administrators. Quite unorthodixically the Union Government initiated a public debate and sought the suggestions of the State Governments, political parties, student organizations, academicians, educational administrators and so on.

In a changed political context in Indian federal polity with the emergence of a
competitive multi-party political system, the State Governments ruled by the opposition parties demanded more autonomy and financial support from the Union Government without calling for drastic changes in the educational policy. In terms of goals the present policy is incremental in nature. But the Union Government wanted to extend its sphere of influence and retain its hold on as many subjects as possible. Hence it did not heed to the demands of the State Governments even in a limited sense.

There was no total consensus among the concerned public on various issues pertaining to the educational policy. The goals were set by the elite and these goals will be incremental in nature (the elite means few advisors and administrators chosen by the Prime Minister). The policy reflects the consensus of the elite. In a developing country like India a uniform public opinion is not possible because of the economic, cultural, linguistic and regional diversities. Hence, policy formulation ought to be initiated from below considering the federal dimension of the polity, and the heterogeneous and diverse nature of the public opinion. Therefore, it is established that the impact of public opinion and the views of the State Governments in the formulation of the NPE 1986 are marginal. The Union Government initiated the debate involving the State Governments and the concerned public and agencies only for the sake of obtaining legitimacy. Thus policy formulation is characterized by the predominant role and political expediency of the Union Government.

Effectiveness of the public policy depends on the creative involvement of the State Governments, educationists, concerned public and organizations. A pragmatic alternative for effective policy formulation is the constitution of a broad based commission (as in the case of the National Policy on Education 1968) to discuss and consult the State Governments, the concerned public and organizations. The role of the Union Government should be more in the realm of higher education and professional education. It should provide certain guidelines to the State Governments to ensure uniformity. The State Governments, concerned agencies and the public should be made to effectively participate in the policy formulation to meet their diverse needs. The Union Government should provide professional, technical guidance and resource support to the State Government. Instead of a linear and top down approach, a decentralized or bottom up approach in policy formulation and implementation ought to be followed to ensure effective policy formulation and efficient implementation.