CHAPTER IV
THE DAWN OF FREEDOM AND THE CLAMOUR FOR REFORM
IN THE SPHERE OF EDUCATION

Education Commissions for Reform

When India became independent in 1947, it was expected to have had far-reaching changes in the sphere of education in the country. Educational imbalances were very evident, especially between one region and another, between urban and rural areas, between men and women, and between the advanced and intermediate castes on the one hand and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the other. The rapidly expanding population and the necessity of raising the standards of living made the economic development of the nation an urgent agenda and this was closely connected with the need to make many a reform in the educational system.¹ The standards of education were generally unsatisfactory, the literacy rate was very low and the total educational expenditure was less than that of the national income. It needed a complete overhaul, a

rapid expansion and a substantial qualitative improvement in tune with a modern, independent developing nation. So the transfer of power helped India to enter into a new phase in the area of education. This chapter analyses the educational developments in post independence India.

Shaping of educational policy is one of the paramount concerns of all developing countries. "Education is the key that unlocks the door to modernisation".\(^2\) Statements of this type helps the nation builders and policy planners to take interest in the modernisation process and the educational system is viewed as the master determinant of all aspects of change. As far as India is concerned it took a couple of years for the Government of India to stabilize the general economic, political and social situation in the country after the travails and tribulations it had to pass through before and after the partition.\(^3\) In the immediate years following independence, the centre created the Ministry of Education and the states adopted various schemes. Educational planning being an essential element of economic and social


planning, the Government of India and the state governments had to work together in preparing and implementing the national plans for the reconstruction of the educational edifice of the country.

It will be seen that the constitution of independent India made new demands on the educational system of the country. Thus a major task before the country was to reorient the system of education so as to adjust it to the changing needs and aspirations of the people. Consequently, the post-independence period was marked by the examination of the education system by several commissions and committees.\(^4\)

One of the first significant educational developments was the appointment of the University Education Commission in 1948 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.\(^5\) The main aim for constituting this commission was for the reconstruction of university education for a national cultural resurgence as well as for meeting the requirements of scientific, technical and other manpower needed for the socio-economic development of the country.

The report was submitted in 1949 and this has guided the development of university education in India in the post independence period.

Summary of the Recommendations made by the Commission

1. The Commission suggested to have a twelve year school course which includes the intermediate stage followed by a three year University course. This recommendation was the same as that made by the Calcutta University Commission in 1917-'19.

2. The Commission laid stress on the introduction of general education throughout school and college stages and the syllabus should be worked out for each field keeping in mind the general interests of the student as a person and as a citizen and his special occupational interests.

3. Development of universities, particularly at the postgraduate stage, as centers of research, that is, the advancement of knowledge and provision of adequate resources in men (scholars) and matters (funds) for this purpose.6

6. Ibid., p.122.
4. The commission gave detailed attention to the role of universities in professional education. It suggested that a broad contact should be maintained with practical work and new branches should be developed within each professional study bearing in mind the new needs of the country and the latest developments in other countries.

5. The commission wanted that all universities be constituted as autonomous bodies and the university education should be placed in the concurrent list. The central government must ensure necessary funds for its effective functioning and for allotting grants to the Universities and a central University Grants Commission should be established.

6. The commission recommended that the salary scales and service conditions of the teachers should not be inferior to those in central and provincial service in order not to oblige the competent academic type of persons to choose these in preference to teaching.

7. The commission was of the view that, reforms must be made in the examination system and in the mode of teaching also. They suggested the introduction of objective tests. It also recognised the role played by the students' unions in developing character and qualities of leadership.
8. The commission while discussing about the religious education -- though opposed to denominational or partisan instruction -- it gave an important place to religion in education as part of the common heritage of humanity.

9. Replacement of English as the medium of instruction by Indian languages and development of Hindi as federal language, while retaining the connection with English as a library language and also for contact with the growing knowledge in the world.

10. The commission suggested that, in order to meet the need of rural reconstruction in industry, agriculture, and various walks of social life, rural universities surrounded by a ring of rural colleges doing under graduate work should be set up.

The University Education Commission of 1948 -- first of this type in Independent India -- made certain important suggestions in improving the University education. While discussing about the University education it had to review the position of secondary education as well. The commission in its last part

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remarked that "our secondary education remains the weakest link in our educational machinery and needs urgent reforms". 8

Soon after the report of the University Education Commission, the Government of India decided to appoint a commission to revamp the secondary education. Even before this, a number of commissions had been appointed to survey the Indian Education. Incidentally all these commissions dealt only with certain aspects of the secondary education. The commission for secondary education was appointed to look after and survey the problems of secondary education as a whole. Secondary education is acceptably a vital link between primary education and higher education. The secondary system of education was extremely unsatisfactory in independent India. On the recommendations of the Tarachand Committee and the CABE, the government of India appointed a commission on 23rd September 1952 under the chairmanship of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, then vice-chancellor of the University of Madras.

The commission was directed to examine the prevailing system of secondary education in the country and to

suggest suitable measures for its reorganisation and improvement. The commission submitted its report in June 1953 and made detailed recommendations on various aspects of educational reconstruction. The three important reforms suggested were:

1. the reorganised pattern of education;

2. the diversification of secondary curriculum through the conversion of selected high schools into multi-purpose schools; and

3. a reform in the examination system to suit the new objectives of education.

The commission's recommendations were integrated in the successive Five Year Plans and began to be implemented both at the centre and in states since 1954. But many of the recommendations made by the commission were not satisfactorily implemented.

A very important development of the post-independence period was the creation of the University Grants Commission (UGC) by an Act of Parliament, to promote and coordinate higher education and to develop its standards.

of teaching, examination and research. But much before this, on the recommendations of the Sergent Report, University Grants Committee had been set up in 1945 by the government of India.\textsuperscript{10} Originally it had the power to look after only the central universities, but the constitution of the committee was amended and its scope was enlarged.\textsuperscript{11}

Soon after the independence, the first University Education Commission headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan recommended the institution of a University Grants Commission on the lines of UGC in Great Britain to advise the central government on grants from public revenues to universities.\textsuperscript{12} On the recommendations of the University Education Commission, the central government in 1953 established University Grants Commission as a non-statutory body and it became a statutory body in 1956 by relevant resolution by the Parliament.

Since its inception, it has been trying to coordinate higher education in all levels particularly in universities to fulfil the centre's role of determining

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\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., p.199.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
and maintaining standards in education. It has considerably expanded its promotional and innovative activities during the last three to four decades.

Later on, the Scientific Policy Resolution (1958) was issued and important educational bodies -- such as the All India Council of Secondary Education (1955), the National Institute of Basic Education (1956), the National Council for the Education of Women (1959), the National Council of Educational Research and Training otherwise known as NCERT (1961) and the National Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) -- were established.

In 1964, the Government of India clearly recognised that "qualitative improvements in education have not kept pace with quantitative expansions". It therefore appointed an Education Commission to help evolve a national system of education. The Education Commission 1964-'66 was the first of this kind to be entrusted with


14. Resolution appointing Kothari Commission, 1964. This resolution highlights the problems of universal elementary education, mass illiteracy, standards and diversification of curricula in secondary and higher education, remuneration and service conditions of teachers, etc.
the responsibility for suggesting how a national system of education should be created.15

Education commission of 1964-'66, popularly known as Kothari Commission after the name of its chairman Prof. D.S. Kothari, was appointed by the Government Resolution in July 1964. The commission began its work in October 1964 and submitted its report in June 1966. Shri. J.P. Naik was the member secretary of the commission. The publication of the report was an epoch-making event in the history of Education in India. The report is entitled, "Education and National Development".16

The most comprehensive thinking on education during the post-independence period was that of the Education commission of 1964-'66.17

The Kothari Report emphasised the need for an educational revolution and emphasised that the right type of education provided on adequate scale can lead to national development. If these conditions are not

17. Panchamukhi, n.3, p.124.
satisfied the result may be the opposite, noted the Commission. Viewed from this point of view the present system of education will need radical changes if it is to meet the purposes of a democratic and socialistic society. The changes must take place in objectives, in content, in teaching methods, in programmes, in the size and composition of the student body, in the selection and professional preparation of teachers and in organisation. As mentioned by the chief architect of the Education Commission Report (ECR), Shri. J.P. Naik, it was an attempt to prepare a blueprint of national system of education in India and a programme of action over the next twenty years (1966-1986).

The title of ECR "Education and National Development" in fact indicates its underlying approach which is to link education as the key factor to the desired goals of rapid economic, social and cultural development of India. The commission identified three important facets of the big programme that would bring about the desired 'educational


revolution. The recommendations of the ECR were directed towards:

(1) Internal transformation so as to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the nation.

(2) Qualitative improvement so that standards achieved are adequate, keep continually rising and at least in a few sectors become internationally comparable; and

(3) Expansion of educational facilities broadly on the basis of manpower needs and with an accent on equalization of educational opportunities.

The ECR therefore concludes:

All this calls for a determined and large scale action. Tinkering with the existing situation and moving forward with faltering steps and lack of faith can make things worse than before. We must either build a sound, balanced effective and imaginative educational system to meet our developing needs and respond to our challenging aspirations or be content to be swept aside by the strong currents of history.[22]


21. For details on these types of programmes, See Naik, n.15, pp.12-22. Quoting ECR Naik points out that these "three aspects" are given here in order of priority.

The ECR is a synoptic survey of the entire educational situation in all its complexities. It reveals an imagination sweep not found in the excellent reports of the past. The Education commission naturally hoped that the nation would be willing to pay for the reforms leading to the transformation of education so that fullest possible development of human resources might be possible. The commission boldly assigns to education the task of transforming and modernising existing social order.

Follow-up on the Education Commission Report

It is interesting to review the follow-up of the Education Commission Report (ECR). The release of the report evoked a nation-wide intensive debate on the subject. Although the report was submitted in 1966 it was only after the general elections in 1967, a committee\textsuperscript{23} of members of Parliament was set up to frame the national policy on education in order to help widen the path of national development.\textsuperscript{24} The committee identified 16 programmes for immediate implementation. The ECR and the parliamentary committee's report were placed before the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) and a special

\textsuperscript{23} The committee was set up on 5th April 1967.

\textsuperscript{24} Suresh Bhatnagar, n.18, p.151.
conference of the vice-chancellors. It was the second occasion for the Board to discuss a comprehensive statement on educational policy. The first occasion was in 1944, when the Board approved the post-war plan of educational development which suggested a blueprint for overall educational programmes spread over '40' years. This was further discussed in both houses of Parliament and finally the cabinet issued a Statement on the National Policy on Education (SNPE) in 1968. Since then the resolution has become the basis of educational reconstruction in India.

The National policy of 1968 marked a significant step in the history of education in the post independence period of India. It aimed to promote national progress, a sense of common citizenship and culture and to strengthen national integration. It laid stress on the need for a radical reconstruction of the education system as such to improve its quality at all stages and gave much greater


27. Panchamukhi, n.3, p.126.
attention to science and technology. As a document of educational development, it is strikingly comprehensive and seeks to give a sense of direction for future policy formulations.

Recommendations of NPE 1968

1. Efforts must be made for the free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14.

2. Teachers must be accorded an honoured place in society. Teacher education particularly in-service education should receive due emphasis.

3. Development of languages: Efforts must be taken to use regional languages as the medium of instruction at the university stage. At the secondary stage, the state governments should adopt and vigorously implement the three language formula: Hindi along with the regional languages and English in the non-Hindi speaking states. Steps must be taken to promote the development of Hindi.

4. Strenuous efforts should be made to equalise educational opportunity.

5. With a view to accelerating the growth of the national economy, science education and research should receive high priority.

6. Special emphasis should be placed on the development of education for agriculture and industry.

7. Spread of literacy and adult education: Special emphasis should be given to the education of young practising farmers and to the training of youth for self-employment.

8. Facilities for technical and vocational education at the secondary stage should be increased.

9. Attention must be made to reform the examination system. The introduction of reforms which would make them more valid and realistic measures of educational achievement and the adoption of good system of education.

10. Every effort should be made not only to protect the rights of the minorities but to promote their educational interests.

11. The most notable development has been the acceptance of a common structure of education throughout the
country and the introduction of the $10 + 2 + 3$ pattern. The higher secondary stage of two years being located in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions.  

The Statement of National Policy of Education (SNPE) was significant as it was the first statement on National Educational Policy by the Government of India. But it had conveniently side-stepped almost everything of importance in the education commission report for revamping Indian Educational system including even setting up a time limit to universalisation of elementary education. The SNPE is full of innocuous platitudes based on the ECR recommendations without much will or determination to implement them. It was clear that the balance of general socio-political and socio-economic climate in the country was not ready to accept the major changes suggested by the Education Commission Report. It may be remembered here that only a few recommendations bolstering the actual situation were implemented; for instance, regional language as medium in some branches of higher education, the $10 + 2 + 3$ pattern and improvement in teachers salaries. The rest were either rejected, ignored or

29. Suresh Bhatnagar, n.18, pp.152-186.
nominally accepted, that is, with specious good intentions without any vigorous effort to pursue them.  

In general, each government and the commission takes pride that they have done something here and there and all these incomplete and unplanned reformations have put the system itself in such an irreperable state.

Education as a Concurrent Subject

Under the Constitution as originally enacted, education was primarily a state subject. By the 42nd constitutional amendment in 1976, education became the joint responsibility of the central and state governments. In practice, however, the states kept the primary responsibility especially at the lower levels of education. The Union Government continued to promote the education of the weaker sections, particularly the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, to coordinate and determine standards in technical and higher education and to administer certain institutions of national importance. Apart from this concurrent sphere, the Constitution places certain educational matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the union.

The 1979 Draft Policy

The year 1977 was a landmark in the history of the country. For the first time a non-congress government took over in New Delhi. With the formation of the Janata Government in March 1977, it appeared that there might be modification in the new pattern of education and the future implementation of the scheme might be on different lines. There have been some mistakes in implementation which were the target of attack rather than the policy itself.31

The new government declared that it would like to revise NPE 1968 and make all changes necessary regarding the introduction and the implementation of the new pattern of education. Dr. P.C. Chunder, the then Union Minister of Education, desired to have a review of the new pattern.32 In his convocation address at the Nagpur University in 1977, he made the government's position clear:

... The Janata Party is committed to review all the policies of the earlier government. I have received hundreds of representations on the subject.


32. Aggarwal, n.16, p.149.
What is equally important, the national policy resolution itself provides for a quinquennial review which is long overdue. I, therefore, feel that it is our duty to review the policy comprehensively and objectively and to make such modifications therein as are justified.[33]

The Kothari Commission had not recommended that education should be placed in the concurrent list, but with the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution, education was placed in the concurrent list. The Janata Government wanted to consider both the legal and educational aspect of the issue. The then Prime Minister Morarji Desai was reported to have suggested an alternative pattern, namely $8 + 4 + 3$. While we propose to introduce revolutionary changes in Indian education, we only tinker with the structure of education or the scheme of school classes.[35]

It was then felt that the proposed policy might even go beyond the report of the education commission. The government, however, did not feel the need of appointing another commission but it did appoint two committees to review the educational programmes.

34. Ashok Kumar, n.20, p.46.
35. Shukla, n.31, pp.10-11.
In 1977 the Government of India appointed the Ishwar Bhai Patel Committee to review the educational programmes in classes I to X. The committee made certain recommendations on formal and non-formal arrangement for education: flexibility of curriculum, Socially Useful Productive Work, educational structure, on rigid academic year, freedom to develop text books and experimentation on creative work, remedial instruction, etc.

In October 1977, the then Union Education Minister, in his capacity as President of the NCERT, appointed a National Review Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Malcolm S. Adiseshiah to review the curriculum of the +2 stage of school education with special reference of vocationalisation of education. The committee submitted its report in February 1978. The UGC was also requested to review all its programmes.

The draft of the revised NPE which the government had promised to the people was released in 1979. Unfortunately the Janata Government collapsed before finalising its educational policy. A brief quotation of the 1979 draft will suffice to unveil its nature:

Education should strengthen values of democracy, secularism and socialism. Education should promote national unity, pride in our cultural heritage and faith in the country's future. The effort must be to inculcate scientific and moral values and to facilitate knowledge .... Gandhiji's ideas and experiments in the matter of education, his introspective approach to all learning, his insistence on the correlation of hand and heart leading to complementarity of intellectual and manual work and on the social responsibilities of education have enduring relevance and are therefore vitally necessary and useful .... The present system of education must be reorganised in the light of contemporary Indian realities and requirements.... The system must endeavour to narrow the gulf between the educated classes and the masses and overcome feelings of superiority, inferiority and alienation .... With flexibility in the choice, content and duration of courses, the student can choose his own time and channel of study and progress at his own pace ...."[37]

After the mid-term poll in 1980, the Congress Government again came to the saddle. They reiterated its stand, as far as educational policies were concerned that it was resolved to promote the development of education according to the National Policy of Education declared in 1968.38


Towards a New National Policy on Education

Much water has flown in the River Ganges and many changes have taken place in political field too. After the VIII general elections in January 1985, India was at a historic moment in her evolution as a free nation. A new government with an unprecedented mandate from the people assumed the office under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi. The youthful and forward-looking Prime Minister has given education high priority in his agenda of nation building. In the first policy statement to the nation, Rajiv Gandhi emphasised the need of preparing the country to face challenges of the 21st century by giving an important role to education. So the atmosphere was surcharged with great expectations of strong political will and support for educational reconstruction.

Earlier in August 1985, while inaugurating the conference of state education ministers, the Prime Minister said, "The world is progressing tremendously and rapidly. The only thing that can keep India abreast with this progress is a solid grouping in education for all our

The focus of the new policy was the man who had really been neglected under the pressure to develop industry, agriculture and other material aspects of life. In keeping with this objective, Prime Minister changed the name of the Union Ministry of education as the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development. It is fortunate that the Government of India which had been inept for education reform in spite of its appointment of several commissions suddenly emphasised the significant role of education in our country's development through the new education policy.

Need for a New Policy

As mentioned earlier, The National Policy of 1968 marked a significant step in the history of education in post-independence India. It dealt with several important aspects of education which had been examined in depth by commissions and committees over a long period both before and after independence. The 1968 policy stipulated that there would be a review of the progress made in its


43. The Hindu, 25th May 1993.
implementation with a view to recommending guidelines for future development at every five years. Three such reviews became due since 1968.44

The need for a new policy arose from the fact that implementation of 1968 policy was incomplete and uneven. Even though the achievements were impressive, the general formulations incorporated in the 1968 policy did not, however, get translated into a detailed strategy of implementation. As a result, problems of access, quality, quantity, utility and financial outlay accumulated over the years have now assumed such massive proportions that they must be tackled with the utmost urgency.

Education in India stands at crossroads today. Neither normal linear expansion nor the existing pace and nature of improvement can meet the requirements of the situation. Life in the coming decades is likely to bring in new tensions together with unprecedented opportunities. To enable the people to benefit in the new environment will require new designs of human resource development. The coming generations should have the ability to internalise new ideas constantly and creatively.

They have to be imbued with a strong commitment to human values and social justice. All this naturally implies better education.\footnote{Ibid., pp.3-4.}

Besides, a variety of new challenges and social needs make it imperative for the government to formulate and implement a new Education Policy for the country. Nothing short of this will meet the pressures of situation.\footnote{Ibid., p.4.} So every country develops its system of education to express and promote its unique socio-cultural identity and also to meet the challenges of the times. There are moments in history when a new direction has to be given to an age-old process. That moment seems to have come today in the sphere of education in India.

While formulating the contours of the new policy, it gives several reasons why a New Education Policy is needed:

1. Education is a unique investment in the present and for the future. It is a crucial area of investment
for national development and survival. The cardinal principle is the key to the National Policy on Education (NPE).

2. Education is essentially for all and must lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities.

3. The education must counteract the erosion of long accepted values and promote a relevant value system. Education has an acculturating role. It refines sensitivity and perception that contribute to national cohesion, a scientific temper and independence of mind and spirit -- thus furthering the goals of socialism, secularism, and democracy enshrined in our constitution. Education is thus a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values and should even create environmental consciousness.

4. The growth of our population needs to be brought down significantly over the coming decades. The largest single factor that could help achieve this is the spread of literacy and education among women.47

47. Points 1 to 4 are the observations of CED. For details, see John Desrochers, n.13, pp.50-51.
Evolution of the Document

The Parliament mapped out the New Educational Policy in an unprecedented manner. The foremost aim was to winnow the chaff out of the system and provide the individual with what he needed. So a number of exercises to formulate a new education policy was undertaken in the Ministry of Human Resources Development which culminated in the production of a document entitled, "Challenges of Education - A Policy Perspective, in August 1985". The document published in different Indian languages sought the opinions of the different governmental and non-governmental organisations. As a result of the nationwide debate, a draft policy resolution on National Policy of Education was prepared by the Ministry of Human Resources Development which was placed for the consideration before the CABE, NDC and finally both the Houses of Parliament in May 1986.

It is worthy to mention here the words of Shri Narasimha Rao, the then Minister of HRD in his Broadcast to the Nation on 27th June 1986:

Much time and effort have been spent before the government recognised the New Educational Policy. People from different walks of life, along with educational experts and political leaders, sat together and chalked out the plans for the new policy.[48]

After this the Ministry undertook an intensive exercise to prepare the promised programme of action. For this 23 task forces were constituted and each was assigned a specific subject covered by the NPE. Eminent educationists and senior representatives of central and state governments were associated with this endeavour. The central government gave education its due place in the 20 point programme by promoting it to the 10th place from its earlier 16th rank.\(^{49}\)

National Policy on Education 1986

There was nothing very unorthodox, unusual or refreshing about the new policy. This was not the first formulation of an education policy in our country. The British rule had also adopted several policy statements from time to time. After independence, the first policy document was adopted in 1948 which was revised several times till the latest -- the 1986 policy -- was formulated.\(^{50}\) It was, indeed, really a review of the policy announced 18 years back. What is special about the


present situation, however, is that initiative for the policy has emanated from the Prime Minister himself and it, therefore, carries with it the needed political support.51 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in his address to the nation on 5th January 1985 touched upon this subject and said:

Education must promote national cohesion and the work ethics. The grandeur of our freedom struggle and its significance for national integration have to be brought home to every student. Our schools and colleges should acquaint the younger generation with India's ancient heritage and culture. The curricula and text book should curb parochial and communal interpretations of our composite culture. We are formulating programmes to use on a large scale the new communication technology in our school system. Delinking of degrees from jobs under government is under active consideration. Steps are being taken to establish an open university to bring higher education within easy reach of all. The central schools organisation will be expanded. These schools will function as centres of excellence in every district of our country. I would strongly emphasise education's organic link with the productive forces of society. We shall organise vocational education to align with industry, agriculture, communication and other productive sectors of our country.[52]

51. Shukla, n.31, p.10.
52. PIB, Prime Minister's Broadcast to the Nation (New Delhi: 5th January 1985) pp.1-3.
National Policy on Education 1986: A Brief Summary

1. National system of education

The concept of a national system of education implies that up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex would have access to education of a comparable quality. To achieve this, Government will initiate appropriately funded programmes. Effective measures will be taken in the direction of the common school system recommended in 1968 policy.

The national system of education envisages a common educational structure and will be based on a national curricular framework which contains a common core along with other components that are flexible. The common core will include the history of India's freedom movement, the constitutional obligations and other contents essential to nurture national identity. All educational programmes must be carried on in strict conformity with secular values.

The nation as a whole will assume the responsibility of providing resource support for implementing programmes of educational transformation, reducing disparities, universalisation of elementary education, adult literacy,
scientific and technological research, etc. Life-long education is the cherished goal of the educational process. This presupposes the universal literacy. The future thrust will be in the direction of open and distance learning.

2. Education for equality

The new policy will lay emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalise educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far.

Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. The National Education System will play a positive, interventionist role in the empowerment of women. The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to elementary education will receive overriding priority.

The central focus in the Scheduled Caste's educational development is their equalisation with non-Scheduled Caste population at all stages and levels of education in all areas and in all the four dimensions -- rural male, rural female, urban male and urban female. Measures will be taken urgently to bring the Scheduled Tribes on a par with others.
Some minority groups are educationally deprived or backward. Greater attention will be paid to the education of these groups in the interests of equality and social justice. The objective should be to integrate the physically and mentally handicapped with the general community as equal partners to prepare them for normal growth and to enable them to face life with courage and confidence. The central and state governments, political parties and their mass organisations, the mass media and educational institutions should commit themselves to mass literacy programmes of diverse nature. Hence the crucial importance of adult education, including adult literacy.

3. Reorganisation of education at different stages

Education is a life long process. In terms of the time devoted, formal, systematic education comprises only of a small part of an individual's education. While it is essential to plan for the careful interlinking of various stages of education, it is also crucial that each stage is differentiated and viewed with reference to its objectives and priorities.
(a) Early Childhood Care and Education: The National Policy on children emphasises investment in the development of the young child, particularly children from sections of the population in which first generation learners predominate.

(b) Elementary education: The new thrust in elementary education will comprise two interrelated and interdependent aspects. (i) Universal enrollment and universal retention of children upto 14 years of age. (ii) A substantial improvement in the quality of education.

(c) School facilities: Provision will be made for essential facilities in primary schools. A phased drive, symbolically called 'OPERATION BLACK BOARD' will be undertaken with immediate effect to improve facilities in primary schools all over the country. Government local bodies, voluntary agencies and individuals will be fully involved in this process.

(d) Non-formal education: A large and systematic programme of non-formal education will be launched for school drop-outs, for children from habitations without schools, working children and girls who cannot attend whole day schools.
(e) Secondary education: Secondary education begins to expose students to the differentiated roles of science, the humanities and social sciences. The NPE accorded special priority to vocationalisation of education. Vocationalisation through specialised institutions or through the refashioning of secondary education can at this stage provide valuable manpower for economic growth also.

(f) Pace setting schools: It is universally accepted that children with special talent or aptitude should be provided opportunities to proceed at a faster pace, by making quality education available to them, irrespective of their capacity to pay for it. It is intended to set up residential and free-of-charge schools under the New Education policy. These Navodaya Vidyalayas will be distinct from the Kendriya Vidyalayas.

(g) Vocationalisation: The introduction of systematic, well-planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education are meant to enhance employment opportunities, to reduce the imbalance between the demand and supply of skilled manpower, and to provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education without particular interest or purpose.
(h) **Higher education**: Higher education provides people with an opportunity to reflect on the critical, social, economic, cultural, moral and spiritual issues facing humanity. Being at the apex of the educational pyramid, it has also a key role in producing teachers for the education system.

(i) **Open university and distance learning**: The open university system has been initiated in order to augment opportunities for higher education and as an instrument of democratising education. The Indira Gandhi National Open University established in 1985 is fulfilment of these objectives.

(j) **Delinking degrees from jobs**: A beginning will be made in delinking degrees from jobs in selected areas. National Testing Service will be established, in appropriate phases, to conduct tests on a voluntary basis to determine the suitability of candidates for specified jobs and to pave way for the emergence of norms of comparable competence across the nation.

(k) **Rural university**: The new pattern of the rural university will be consolidated and developed. The
NEP will take further steps to consolidate this pattern on the times of Mahatma Gandhi's known ideas on education.

4. Technical and Management Education

The policy on technical and management education should take into account the anticipated scenario by the turn of the century, with a specific changes in the economy, social environment, production and management processes, the rapid expansion of knowledge and the great advances in science and technology.

5. Reorienting the Content and Process of Education

(a) The cultural perspective: The existing schism between the formal system of education and the country's rich and varied cultural tradition needs to be bridged. The preoccupation with modern technologies should not be allowed to sever the new generation's roots in India's history and culture. The aim of the NEP will be to bring about a fine synthesis between change oriented technologies and country's continuity of cultural traditions.
(b) Value education: The growing concern over the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society has brought to focus the need for readjustments in the curriculum in order to make education a forceful tool for the cultivation of social, ethical and moral values.

(c) Education and environment: There is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the environment. It must permeate all ages and all sections of society, beginning with the child. Environmental consciousness should be made part of teaching in schools and colleges. This aspect should be integrated in the entire educational process.

(d) Sports and physical education: Sports and physical education are an integral part of the learning process, and will be included in the evaluation of performance. A nation wide infrastructure for physical education, sports and games will be built into educational edifice.

(e) The evaluation process and examination reform: Assessment of performance is an integral part of any process of learning and teaching. The objective of reform ought to be to recast the examination system
as such so as to ensure its assessment values as a valid and reliable measure of pupils' growth and as a powerful instrument to improve teaching. The new educational policy will take up this long-awaited reform expeditiously and in right earnest.

6. The Management of Education

An overhaul of the system of planning and the management of education will receive high priority in New Educational Policy. Within a multi-level framework of educational development, central, state, district and local level agencies will participate in planning, coordination, monitoring and evaluation.

A proper management structure in education will entail the establishment of the Indian education service as an All India Service.

7. Review

The implementation of this New Policy must be reviewed every five years, appraisals at short intervals would also be made to ascertain the progress of implementation and the trends emerging from time to time.
8. Future

The last part of NEP speaks about the future. It is not easy to envisage the future shape of the education in India with precision. Yet, given India's tradition which has almost always put a high premium on intellectual and spiritual attainment, the nation is bound to succeed in achieving its objectives.

The main task is to strengthen the base of the pyramid, which might touch a billion people at the turn of the century. It is important to ensure that those at the top of the pyramid are among the best in the world.

Keeping the above points in view now it should be possible to intensify the nation wide effort in Human Resources Development with education playing its important multifaceted role.

The NEP is to cut new grounds by setting new and modern trends in education through the action programmes evolved. It will make the educational system more relevant and functional in building up the developmental infrastructure of India and help lead it march towards the twentyfirst century with ease and also with a national smoothness.
National Policy on Education 1986 and New Reform Attempts in Kerala

The release of NPE 1986 aroused mixed responses from politicians, educationists and social workers. States like Kerala are picking out from the national policy what the education minister considers useful and convenient and going ahead with their implementation without taking into consideration the total perspective and policy.

The major programmes implementing in Kerala under NPE 1986 are the Operation Black Board, Improvement of Science Education, Establishment of DIET, Education Technology Cell, Integrated Education for the Handicapped, Navodaya Schools and Programme of Massive Orientation to School Teachers (P. MOST).

In pursuance of the NPE, the Operation Black Board Scheme was launched to provide basic and minimum facilities to schools all over the state. Government, local bodies, voluntary agencies and individuals will be fully involved. Construction of School buildings will be the first charge on NREP and RLEGF funds. The then Human Resources Development Minister, P.V. Narasimha Rao, said that "the new policy envisaged that whatever facilities a

school in Delhi had, schools in the remotest corner should also have". 54 It shows the importance given to the 'Operation Black Board' project.

The scheme is to be implemented in several phases. In the initial phase different schools were identified under the teaching material component. For this Government of India sanctioned Rs.151.11 lakhs. 55 In the block area the schools are being constructed under the RLEGP.

The NPE laid special emphasis on the universalisation of primary education through enhancement of the quality and launching a massive programme of non-formal education. To enhance the quality of primary education, District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET'S) with an aim to strengthen the teacher training and academic support to schools and adult and non-formal education system. These institutions should meet the entire need of pre-service education of teachers. 56

54. Indian Express, 9th May, 1986.


In the first phase three DIETs were sanctioned and started in Kasargod, Waynad, Trichur and later in 1989; four more were sanctioned in the districts of Cannanore, Calicut, Ernakulam and Pathanamthitta. All the teaching staff have been appointed by the DPI on the basis of selection list, prepared by a selection committee.

Navodaya schools were started in the 14 districts of the state, giving an opportunity to the intelligent children from the poor families. These Navodaya Schools will select them based on an objective entrance test.

From 1986-'87 there launched a Programme of Mass Orientation for School Teachers (P. MOST). Every year 33000 teachers are given training with full central assistance. Target is to cover all teachers in the state upto secondary levels. These are the major programmes that are being implemented in Kerala under NPE 1986.

There seems many inconsistencies in the NPE of 1986. The proposed plan to start pace setting schools and autonomous colleges caused very much criticism.

In view of the mixed experiences with the system of affiliation, autonomous colleges will be helped to develop in large numbers until the affiliating system is replaced.
by a freer and more creative association of universities with colleges. Autonomy and freedom will be accompanied by accountability.\(^5\) An autonomous college will take up the responsibility of the academic programmes, the content and quality of teaching and for the admission and assessment of students.

There is much opposition in Kerala against this concept. Because 80 per cent of the colleges in Kerala are in the hands of private agencies. The majority of the people are afraid of this and they think that it will enhance the power of the managements and lead to commercialisation and corruption in the field of education. No step has so far been taken in Kerala towards starting autonomous colleges.

By promising all kinds of educational benefits and opportunities for various sections of the society, the policy maintains profound silence on vital matters raised in the 'Challenge of Education'. On the other hand, promises like that modern educational technology would be taken into the remotest areas of the country and the latest communication technology would be brought to the aid of education, etc. are only vaguely mentioned.

The policy paper creates not only deep confusion, but in some areas a deliberate attempt is observed in avoiding vital issues of central importance of the stage of our educational development. The New Policy of Education is so formulated that it can hardly take any concrete shape as the programme of action is not fully linked to the policy frame.58

There are innumerable internal and external challenges in attaining these goals in an ever changing world of Science and Technology. The New Education Policy authored by the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, while stressing the vital role of education as a vehicle of socio-economic development and transformation raises the clarion call to the nation thus:

Education is the most effective instrument to meet these challenges. Only education can imbue people with knowledge, a sense of purpose and the confidence essential for building a dynamic, vibrant and cohesive nation, capable of providing its people with the wherewithal for creating better, fuller and more purposeful lives.[59]

Education has been recognised as the most crucial and significant factor in activising and optimising the welfare of the society through its ramifications in almost all spheres of life.

58. Krishna Iyer, n.50, p.22.