Journey through the India's National Education Policy – Previous and the Present

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Abstract: Education in India has seen a frequent change from the history to the present. Education is not just learning the subjects like history, economics, mathematics, science, et cetera, but gaining relevant skills. Education helps to utilize resources successfully. Through the enhancement of education, individuals can gain knowledge and skills related to each subject. Through the development of education, a country can foster resources, and development can be achieved. India has now come up with new policies related to the education sector. Journey through the national education policy provides an overall view of all the policies which were introduced in India. At the same time, it showcases various committees and commissions set up to provide a better educational facility. In this particular research article, an outlook is provided over the meaning and the need of education policy. It also focuses on three major national education policies introduced by the Government of India in the previous years of 1968, 1986, and 2020. This article compares the objectives and other important factors of the three national education policies that have succeeded in bringing changes in the education sector from time to time.

Keywords: education, structure, NEP-1968, NEP-1986, NEP-2020,

INTRODUCTION
"An investment in knowledge pays the best interest."
-        Benjamin Franklin
The role of education is to foster and develop knowledge in all fields, making an individual gain the required skills in all the fields. The investment made in education will always pay the best of the result not only to the individual but also to the society and the country. A knowledgeable individual is an asset to the country.
Good education is a tool that tries to reduce various problems and provide solutions to acute problems like poverty that hampers society's growth. It enables to uplift the weaker sections of the society who are constantly deprived of their rights.
Education brings in moral virtues with better moral values and encourages the individual to think, innovate and invent ideas that guide economic progress in the right path. The development in the field of education can progress the country into a path of development.
The Gurukul System was the oldest form of the education system followed in India, where Guru, who is considered a teacher, uses to teach the students he has accepted (Adam, William, 1983). The present education system, which is considered to be one of the modern education systems, was brought to India at the time of British rule. This was also an exclusive contribution of Christian Missionaries (Kanika B, 2017). The British rulers wanted the help of Indians in their administration, which showed the emergence of offering education to Indians. Sir Charles Wood was the pioneer who brought English Education System to India. The development of the Indian Education System is represented in the following figure.
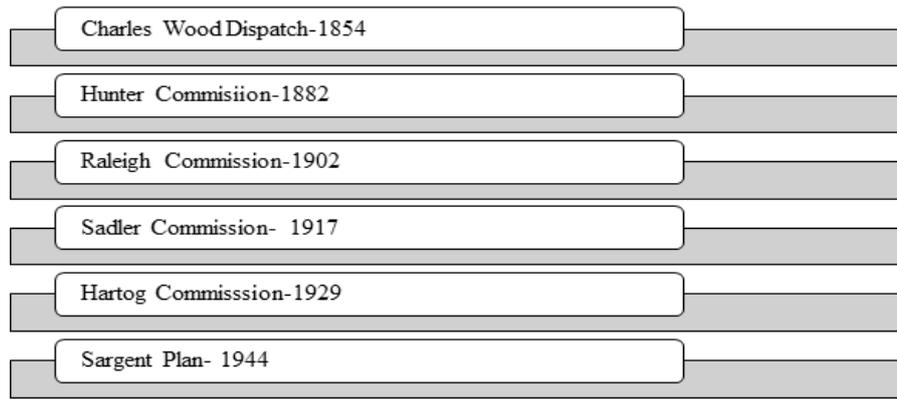
Fig.1: Commissions related to education before independence under British rule

Source: Shakeel A, 2018

The above figure represents the commissions related to education in India before independence. The British formed these commissions for administrative purposes.

Fig.2: Education Commissions in India after independence

Source: MHRD, GOI 2009

"University Education Commission" was the first education commission established by the Government of India after independence. Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan headed this commission. So, this commission was also known as the Radhakrishna Commission of University Education. This commission gave importance to university education and differentiated between the school education system and the university education system. According to the recommendation given by this commission, University Grants Commission, the apex body for Higher Education System, was created.

Under the chairmanship of Dr. Lakshanaswami Mudaliyar, Secondary Education Commission was formulated. The commission gave importance to all the fields of education, considering the three-language formula, diversified courses, and improvement in schools' infrastructure.

Education Commission of 1964 was formulated under the able leadership of Dr. Daulat Singh Kothari. This commission was formed to form a general pattern of education in the Indian Education System. This commission's recommendation became the basis for the National Education Policy of 1968.

National Knowledge Commission of 2009 gave importance to improvement in the quality education in the higher education system. It gave a few recommendations related to maintaining a standard of education quality in the primary school, reforms in English language teaching, regional languages, Teachers' accessibility to information and communication technology, et cetera.

Along with the reforms related to the education sector, the Government of India allotted a certain amount of funds significantly to improve the education sector in the five-year plans. To improve the standard of education, the Government implemented three crucial policies related to education: the National Education Policy of 1968, the National Education Policy of 1986, and the recent National Education Policy of 2020.

EDUCATION POLICY

Education policy is nothing but the plans, rules, and regulations, policy framed by the Government related to the educational sector so that there is uniformity in this sector. Now the question arises whether there a need for

educational policy? Before adopting the particular educational policy, there was cross verification of the fundamental questions that the Government should have answered. There were few important questions related to an educational policy put forward by Taylor and others in the year 1997. The questions were related to education and values relating to the assessment, curriculum, and pedagogy. Simultaneously, the reason behind policy adoption (Why, what), selection of policy justification should be made. What are the consequences of a particular policy? Should be considered before implementing the education policy (Taylor et.all, 1997).

Kogan recognized four important core values that motivate the educational policy. It includes educational, social, economic, and institutional values. These values were divided into two broad categories as basic and secondary values. The basic values include educational, social, and economic values. The secondary value includes the institutional values (Kogan, M, 1975). Whenever the education policy is implemented, it is essential to consider these values; so, the one who implements the policy can positively shape society's future.

NEED OF EDUCATION POLICY IN INDIA:

Is there a need for an Education policy in India? The answer is YES! India is a most populous country where many individuals just dream of attending schools. The individuals might have dropped out of schools for various reasons like economic problems, poverty, and their requirement to assist the family in economic activities. It is also noted that in India, males get the opportunity to go to schools, and girls are not encouraged to attend school. There is a gender gap in literacy levels in India.

The following table gives a clear picture of the gap in literacy level among the genders.

Table 1: Literacy Rate of India from 1981 to 2011

Year	Male (%)	Female (%)	Total (%)	Gap in Literacy Rate (%)
1981	56.4	29.8	43.6	26.6
1991	64.1	39.3	52.2	24.8
2001	75.3	53.7	64.8	21.6
2011	82.1	65.5	74.0	16.6

Source: Census of India 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011[6]

According to the Census of India 2011, 77, 84, 54, 120 persons have been listed as literates. Out of them, 33, 42, 50, 358 are females, and remaining 44, 42, 03, 762 are males. This shows that females need to be given more importance. The gender gap between literacy rates has been reduced, which is a good sign, but the gap is more than 15 percent. To cover this gap, there is a need for strong educational policies.

Table 2: Literacy Rate Trends as Area Wise, SC, and ST

Year	Rural	Urban	SC	ST
1981	36.01	67.23	21.38	16.35
1991	44.69	73.08	37.41	29.60
2001	58.74	79.92	54.69	47.10
2011	68.91	84.98	56.49	49.52

Source: Indian Policy Report, 2014

According to table 2, it can be seen that there is regional-wise disparity related to literacy level also SC, ST literacy rate is also low. This is an indicator that there is a need for a robust educational policy that reduces the regional disparity while considering every citizen of India as equal.

Many graduates come out of the university holding bachelor's and master's degrees in the respective field, but there are no employability skills among them. It is the need of an hour to give importance for education which provides the academic knowledge and at the same time various skills so that they are capable of competing in the job market. The National Employability Report of 2019 shows that more than 80 percent of engineers are unemployable, and only 3.4 percent of engineers are employable in software-related jobs.

These are the few reasons why there is a need for education policy that gives importance to equality, employability, and most importantly, for the economic development of the country.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY OF 1968:

This is one of the very important education policies of the Government of India which was introduced by then Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. This was the first education policy that was introduced after independence. Before implementing the policy, various commissions and committees had already given their views on the educational sector.

The suggestions given by the education commission were considered in the National Education Policy of 1968. The critical objectives of this policy were

➢ Free and compulsory education to fulfill the directive principles of India
➢ To improve the quality of education and provide good salary for the teachers.

➢ Regional languages should be given more importance. Three language formulas should be introduced in the education system, considering English as an international language, Hindi as a national language, and one local language.
➢ Common Educational System to reduce inequality.
➢ Identification of talents.
➢ Science, research, agricultural education should be given more importance.
➢ Secondary education has to be given more importance
➢ Improvement in the university-level education
➢ Development in the field of Sports and Games
➢ Part-time and correspondence education should be provided on a large scale.
➢ 10+2+3 system should be followed.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY OF 1986:

This national education policy of 1986 which has given a solid foundation to the Indian education system was introduced by then Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. This policy was modified in the year 1992. The objectives were:

➢ The education system was as same as of 1968, i.e., 10+2+3. However, 10 years was further divided into 5 years of primary education, 3 years of upper primary, and 2 years of high school education.
➢ Promotion of equality
➢ Emphasis on women empowerment.
➢ Education for SC's, ST's, minorities, and disabled individuals
➢ Early Childhood Care and Education: It includes Integrated Child Development Services, Balwadis, Anganwadis, Pre-primary school run by the Government.
➢ Elementary education: Importance is for universalization of education system
➢ Non-formal education for dropouts.
➢ Vocational education for the students from class VIII.
➢ Expansion of the facilities for existing institutions.
➢ Importance for Open University
➢ Value education and culture education should be given importance in the education field.
➢ A Statutory body for higher education to be established.

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020:

India has seen a tremendous challenge in all the spheres because of COVID 19 pandemic. All individuals' lives were very much disturbed by the pandemic, which challenged all of us to opt for the new normal. In this period of crisis, the Government of India came up with various policies. One among these was the National Education Policy. The draft national education policy was circulated in the year 2019, and it was approved for implemented in the year 2020 by Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi. This policy was the fruit of recommendations given by Dr. Kasturirangan and shows the vision of the present Government. It also lays strong foundation for the introduction of modern and more robust education system. The central vision of the policy is to create a global standard education system in India. The crucial pillars of the policy include:

➢ Access
➢ Equity
➢ Quality
➢ Affordability
➢ Accountability.

This is a policy which gives importance for a child to choose his path according to the skills and knowledge and interest of the society.

Features of this policy include:

➢ 5+3+3+4 education system is followed.
➢ At the secondary level of education, the freedom of choice of subjects is given to the students
➢ Mother tongue or local language will be used to teach the students till 5th standard or preferably till 8th standard
➢ Multilingualism is given importance.
➢ Introduction of classical languages
➢ Teachers will be recruited based on the required qualification.
➢ Establishment of school complexes
➢ Higher education institutions should be converted into multi-disciplinary institutions.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NEP 2020
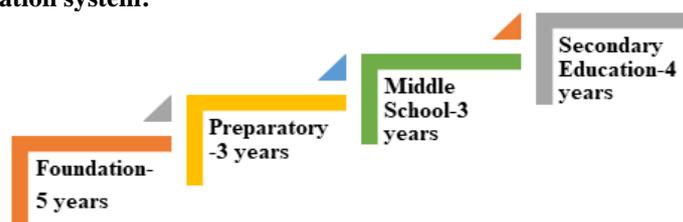**Stages of School Education system:**

Fig.1: Four Stages of School Education System

Source: NEP 2020

The School education system (5+3+3+4):
According to the report, school education starts at 3 years and goes up to 18 years.
1.   Foundation Stage (Early Childhood Care and Education):
Here the child will start its education at the age of 3 years, which includes a total of 5 years of schooling. The child will learn through two methods, i.e., play and learn and activity-based learning. The first three years of study are considered pre-school, and the remaining two years are for 1st grade and 2nd-grade classes. To strengthen this learning facility, Anganawadis will be provided with high infrastructure facilities. Anganwadi teachers will be given the training to promote this stage.
2.   Preparatory Stage:
In this 3rd grade, 4th Grade and 5th Grade are considered. When the child finishes 3rd grade, he or she should attain foundational literacy and numeracy. This follows the interactive classroom sessions.
3.   Middle School Stage:
6th grade, 7th grade, and 8th grade are included in this particular stage. Here, vocational training is introduced for the students to improve their skills in the particular field. Here the introduction of subject teachers will be done.
4.   Secondary Stage:
9th grade, 10th grade, and I PU and II PU are included in the same category. However, there are two phases 9th grade and 10th-grade fall in the first phase, and I PU and II PU falls in the second phase.

Features of Higher Education System:
- The newly proposed body called as *Higher Education Commission of India* will be the regulator of Higher Education.
- The National Accreditation Council (NAC) will be formulated for accreditation of the institutions.
- *National Research Foundation (NRF)* will be established to fund the research.
- Multi-disciplinary Universities include research-intensive Universities (RU), Teaching-intensive Universities (TU), and Autonomous Degree-Granting Colleges.
- Research-intensive Universities will give higher importance to research activities than teaching. Teaching intensive Universities give importance to teaching. At the same time, research will also be carried out in this type of university. Autonomous Degree-Granting Colleges focus on teaching for undergraduates. It is considered to be a multi-disciplinary institution.
- To increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio in Higher and University Education at least 50% by 2035.
- Four years of Bachelor's degree were exit options are given for the students.
- One to two years Master's degree dependent on the Bachelor degree and option to do Ph.D. for four years.
- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) will be revised by a flexible and an innovative Competency Based Credit System.
- Institutions should have professional career and academic counseling centers with trained counsellors.
- Encouragement for conducting course through Online Distance Learning (ODL) for higher reach and flexibility.
- The quality of Higher Education will be improved to a global quality level so as to attract more international/foreign students towards Indian education.
- National Scholarship Portal will further be strengthened.

Stages of Higher Education System
- **Under graduation either of 3 years or 4 years:**
This includes multiple exit options. If the student completes the first year of the undergraduate program, he/ she can get a certificate. If the student completes two years, they can get a diploma certificate and a bachelor's

degree after completing 3 years of study. After 4 years Bachelor's degree along with a research degree will be given.

- **Master Programme with different structures:**

(a)2-year program: The second year of this course is dedicated to research for those who have completed the 3-year of Bachelor's degree

(b) 1-year Programme: This is for those students who have completed 4-year Bachelor's program with research.

(c) integrated 5-year Bachelor's/Master's program.

- **Research Programme:**

To enroll for Ph.D., either 4 years of Bachelor's degree or Master's degree is required.

COMPARISON OF EDUCATION POLICY OF 2020 AND 1986:

The 1986 and 2020 National Educational Policies are different because of the specific objectives. 1986's educational policy was not implemented correctly. To provide good quality education for the present generation with employability skills and technological knowledge, the present Government came up with the New Education Policy of 2020.

The following table gives the comparison of education policy in India.

Table 3: Comparison of National Education Policies

Description	NEP 1986	NEP 2020
Role	The role of the education system was the overall development of the individual.	Importance is for the multi-disciplinary education system
Education System	• 10+2+3+2 system	• 5+3+3+4+4+1 system
Age for formal education	The child attains the age of 6 years and can enroll in formal education	The child attains the age of 3 years and can enroll in formal education
School Education System	The stages of the School Education System included primary education, secondary and higher secondary education.	The school education system stages include the Foundation Stage, the Preparatory stage, Middle School, and Secondary school education system.
Pre-University System	11th and 12th standards were considered as Pre-University Education.	The Pre-University Education system was removed, and it came under the category of school education system.
Vocational Education	This was given when the student reaches to 8th standard	In the new system, it is applicable for 6th standard students.
Choice of subjects	The students chose the streams like arts, commerce, and science.	Here the subjects of student's choice will be given prominence.
Student-faculty Ratio	• In the higher education institutes, the student-faculty ratio is 20:1. • Faculty is considered to be facilitators.	• In the higher education institutes, the student-faculty ratio is 30:1. • Faculty are considered to be collaborators.
B. Ed	Two years of B. Ed. degree	Four years of integrated B.Ed. degree
Qualification for Assistant Professor	NET/ SLET with a Master's degree is compulsory	NET/ SLET, along with the Master's degree, should have a Ph. D degree.
Credit System	Choice Based Credit System	Competency Based Credit System
M.Phil	Given the importance of one year Master's in Philosophy	This policy removed the M. Phil program.
Ph D	To enroll for Ph.D. the person had to complete Master's degree education	To enroll for the Ph.D. person should have 4 years of Bachelor's degree or Master's degree.
Research Fund	University Grants Commission funded the research	In the present policy, the fund for research projects will be given by National Research Foundation.
Entrance Exam	Entrance Exams/tests for under-graduation and post-graduation courses were conducted by respective colleges or universities. Some of the exams were conducted at the state and national levels.	In this, the entrance exam for under-graduation and post-graduation levels will be conducted by National Testing Agency.
Degree holder	Only on completion of either of 3 or 4years of education, the student can get Bachelor's degree. If the person drops out in between, no certificate will be issued.	Completion of 4 years of Bachelor's degree the person can get the degree. If the person exits the particular course in between, there is an option to get the certificate, diploma certificate after completion of specific years in that particular course.
Master's Degree	Master's degree was for two years in a	Master's degree for one or two years with research

	specific stream	work.
College	Single and multiple discipline colleges were given importance in the education policy.	Only Multiple discipline higher education institutions are promoted in the present education policy.
Foreign University	No foreign Universities are permitted to start their education center in India.	Top 100 foreign universities are permitted to start their institutions in India to compete with Indian Universities.
Affiliation	Most of the colleges are affiliated with State Universities	All colleges either fall in the category of Research Universities, Teaching Universities or Autonomous Degree Granting Colleges

Source: NEP 1986 and 2020

The above is the table which considers some differences between the current and previous education policies. The present education policy tries to compensate the previous education policy where it has failed to bring changes in a specific category. The present educational policy gives importance to lifelong learning.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY 2020
NEP 2020 is considered to be a transformative change in the education field. When any policy is implemented in the country, there will be positives and adverse outcomes for the policies. In the same way, NEP 2020 also has advantages and disadvantages.

Positive Side of NEP 2020:
* NEP 2020 assures that education will be available for everyone.
* According to the need of an hour, pre-schooling is compulsory because at the age of 3 learning capacity of the child starts.
* Proposed *National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy* will be set up by the Government.
* National Book Promotion Policy is going to be framed under this policy.
* Gender Education Fund and Special Education Zone will be created for the sake of disadvantaged regions and gender.
* Online education is given importance.

Negative Side of NEP 2020:
* Increase in the gap between the students who are uncomfortable in speaking the English language as the policy emphasizes on the regional language.
* Teaching in the local language to make the student understand the concept is a good idea. However, if the student migrates from one state to another, it will be tough for a kid to understand the concept as the kid is not aware of the local language.
* As the certificates are issued before the completion of the course, there is a tendency for students to quit the course in between.

CHALLENGES
The challenges in front of the Government are numerous. Coming up with the unique and modern new education policy in the time of pandemic was widely appreciated by many because this policy has so many positive things. There are few things to be considered while implementing the policies.
1. Availability of funding and resources
2. Teaching the students in their local language is a good idea, but content in the local language or mother tongue is a hectic task.
3. Poor students will not get enough opportunities to study in foreign universities due to a lack of funds.
4. It is necessary to fill the vacant posts in the education field while many government schools and colleges are finding a shortage of teachers and lecturers. So, it is better to fill the vacancies.
5. When NEP considers quality education, it is necessary to consider the teaching fraternity where the payment for their service is significantly less. This has to be solved by the Government.
6. When online education is considered in NEP, it has to be noted that the students do not have access to devices and internet connectivity issues are more.
To implement the NEP 2020, the Government has to consider these fundamental challenges and act accordingly.

CONCLUSION
The Government introduced this New Education Policy after a long gap of 34 years which was considered to be very important for the growth of the economy. India saw a situation where many of the young students graduate in various fields. However, when they are out of the educational institutions, they cannot compete in the job

market. So, the Government came up with such a policy which creates the present generation with employability skills and knowledge. The National Education Policy 2020 has introduced various concepts intending to give importance to equity. The technology-based education system will be in higher demand. Implementation of this policy will take a longer duration. However, to give a better future for the present generation, it is necessary to implement the education policy soon.

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