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Dr. Pallvi Pandit
Assistant Professor,
Dronacharya P. G. College of
Education, Rait, Kangra, H.
P., H. P. U. Summerhill,
Shimla, H. P. India.

Education in India: National policies and regulations

Dr. Pallvi Pandit

Abstract

Everyone has a right for education and according to Indian Education Policies; it is free and compulsory for every child at least for the elementary and fundamental stages of schooling. The significance of universal literacy is that it is an instrument for mobilizing the people, arousing community consciousness and participation for bringing social change. Mahatma Gandhi emphasized the need for universal basic education for children and advocated adult education with a moral component for social and cultural regeneration and a political component for strengthening the national struggle for freedom. The Article 45 (1949-50) and the State Directive Policies for the primary education showed that still there was not an effective participation of the people of India for the universalization of basic education. The present paper includes the present system of education; the recognitions are given in the light of contemporary Indian realities and requirements to the subject to the nationally agreed basic concepts of freedom, equality and justice. This paper highlights the National Policy of Education (NPE), 1968 and Primary Education, NPE, 1979 and Universal Elementary Education (UEE), NPE, 1986 and Elementary Education, Revised NPE, 1992 and its formulations and District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), 1994.

Keywords: NPE-1968, 1986, 1992, UEE, POA- 1992 & DPEP-1994.

Introduction

India got independence in 1947; the Indian government sponsored a variety of programmes to address the problems of illiteracy in both rural and urban areas of India. India's first Minister of Education, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad envisaged strong central government control over education throughout the country, with a uniform educational system. The Union government established the University Education Commission (1948–1949) and the Secondary Education Commission (1952–1953) to develop proposals to modernize India's education system. The Resolution on Scientific Policy was adopted by the government of Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime Minister and his government also sponsored the development of high-quality scientific education institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology. In 1961, the Union government formed the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as an autonomous organization that would advise both the Union and State governments on formulating and implementing education policies. After this, the first National Policy on Education (NPE) was promulgated in 1968 by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It was set up for reviewing the structure of national education system (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Policy_on_Education on dated 11/08/2014).

National Policy on Education (1968)

Education is a powerful tool for national, social, economic and cultural development. NPE, 1968 was based on the needs of the nation. It is a policy formulated by the Government of India (GoI) to promote education among India's people. The policy covered elementary education in both rural and urban areas of India was headed by the then UGC chairman, Dr. D. S. Kothari. The NPE, 1968 called for a “radical restructuring” and equalizes educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration and greater cultural and economic development. The policy called for fulfilling compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14 yrs as stipulated by the Constitution of India and the better training and qualification of teachers.

Correspondence
Dr. Pallvi Pandit
Assistant Professor,
Dronacharya P. G. College of
Education, Rait, Kangra, H.
P., H. P. U. Summerhill,
Shimla, H. P. India.

The policy focused on learning of regional languages, outlining the “three language formula” to be implemented in secondary education i.e., (I) the instruction of the English language, (II) the official language of the state and (III) Hindi, the national language. Language education was seen as essential to reduce the gulf between the ‘intelligentsia’ and the ‘masses’. Although, the decision to adopt Hindi as the national language had proven controversial, the policy called for use and learning of Hindi to be encouraged uniformly to promote a common language for all Indians. The policy also encouraged the teaching of the ancient Sanskrit language, which was considered an essential part of India's culture and heritage. The NPE of 1968 called for education spending to increase to six percent of the national income (http://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/NPE-1968.pdf on dated 11/09/14).

National Policy on Education, 1968 and Primary Education

The NPE, 1968 also launched with focus on primary education. The provision of good and effective primary education on a free and compulsory education is considered as the foundation of democracy and national development. It is taken at the highest priority and implementation in two stages. In the first stage, universal education provided for all children till they reach the age of eleven years and at the second stage, the age limit has been raised to fourteen years. It had been made immediately free in all parts of the country. It provided universalized within five years i.e., a primary school is available within a working distance from the home of every child. Many advantages and disadvantages were found in Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE). Thus, the higher authority in Government of India (GOI) decided to frame a new education policy and it was NPE, 1979 (Saxena & Swaroop, N. R. 2003).

National Policy on Education (1979)

An ideal system of education enable an individual to develop fullest their physical and intellectual potentialities and promote their awareness of social and human values so that they can develop a strong character, live better lives and function as responsible members of the society.

National Policy of Education, 1979 and Universal Elementary Education

The highest priority was given to the free education for all children up to the age of 14 years as laid down in the directive principles of the constitution. It has been decided that the education up to this stage should be general and not specialized. It provided pupils a confident command of language to tool subjects and includes a scientific attitude. The thrust in elementary education was on the development of personality and character. The content of elementary education is based on the view not only on the traditions and values that make up the countries composite culture but also on the present realities and vision of a common future. The content of education at this state includes Language, Arithmetic and History, simple Elementary Sciences with special reference to environmental and cultural values and physical education. Formal instructions were reduced to the minimum and were not exceed three hours a day. No rigid academic year needs to be prescribed. Incentives like Mid-Day Meals (MDMs), free text books, stationary and uniforms decided to provide to poorer pupils and special attention should be given to the education of girls and children of

Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) ([https://www.Youth for equality.com/education/educational % 20 commission.doc](https://www.Youth for equality.com/education/educational%20commission.doc) on dated 10/08/2014).

After the revised results and considerations taken up by the higher authorities of the Government of India, the next new policy on education emerged in 1986.

National Policy of Education (1986)

“Education in India stands at the cross roads today. Neither normal linear expansion nor the existing pace and nature of improvement can meet the needs of situation”.

National Policy of Education, 1986 and Elementary Education

The National Policy on Education, 1986 was introduced by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1986. It had the following recommendations:

1. The new thrust in elementary education emphasized on two aspects- (a) Universal enrolment and retention of children up to the age of 14 years and (b) A substantial improvement in the quality of education.
2. A child centred and activity based process of learning adopted at the primary stage.
3. Corporal punishment firmly excluded from the educational system and school timings as well as vacation adjusted to the convenience of children.
4. Provision made for essential facilities in primary schools, including at least two reasonable large rooms that are usable in all weather and the necessary toys, blackboards, maps, charts and other learning materials.
5. A large and systematic programme of non- formal education launched for school drop outs, for children from habitations without schools, working children and girls who cannot attend the whole day schools.
6. Modern technological aids used to improve the learning environment of non- formal educational centres (https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/document-reports/NPE86-mod92.pdf on dated 11/11/14 and [http:// www. The hindu. com/ news/ national/new-national-policy-on-education-coming/article2366743.ece](http://www.hindu.com/news/national/new-national-policy-on-education-coming/article2366743.ece) on dated 14/11/14.

After the implementation of NPE 1986, the revised formulations for NPE, 1992 were framed.

Revised National Policy of Education (1992) and Its Formulations

The NPE, 1986 is a land mark in educational development of the country. A review of the NPE, 1986 was conducted in the year of 1990-92. It considered the report of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee while broadly endorsing the policy. It recommended certain modifications in the light of the developments during the first few years. The revised policy formulations containing these modifications recommended by CABE were tabled in the Parliament on 7th May, 1992.

The revised Programme of Action (POA) in the year of 1992 of NPE, 1986 resolved to ensure free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children up to age of fourteen years before to enter the 21st century. The various centrally sponsored schemes in the elementary education sector have been initiated to supplement the effort of states for achieving this target. Operation Blackboard (OB) started in the year of 1987-88 to provide physical facilities in primary schools all over the country. The revised POA, 1992 of NPE, 1986 enlarged the scope of OB Programme to provide three

teachers in every primary school and to cover the primary schools.

In order to operationalize the revised policy of government, the following three schemes were proposed under the Operation Blackboard during Eighth Five Year Plan:

1. Continuation of the on- going scheme to cover all the remaining schools identified in Seventh Five Year plan.
2. Expanding the scope of scheme to provide three rooms and three teachers in primary schools.
3. Expanding the scope of scheme to upper primary schools.

The scheme of operation blackboard was launched in the year of 1987-1988 with the aim of improving human and physical resources available in primary schools of the country. Provisions were framed of at least two reasonably large rooms, at least two teachers and essential teaching- learning material for exiting primary school. During the year 1993-94, the scheme was extended to cover upper primary schools. It provided for three rooms for primary schools, an additional teacher for upper primary schools and a third teacher for primary school with enrolment of more than 100 students. The scheme is implemented through State Government. The scheme assured for cent percent central assistance for teaching- learning equipment for the teacher in the schools. Provision of school building construction has been made under the programmes of Rural Employment and Development scheme (Pathania, A. 2009) [5].

To achieve the goals of UEE, the Non- Formal Education Programme was put into operation in the years of 1979-80 to provide quality education comparable to formal system to children who do not/ cannot attend whole day schools, school dropouts and working children. This covered ten educationally backward states viz. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Utter Pradesh, West Bengal and area of slums, hilly desert and tribal areas of concentration of working children in all other states and Union Territories (UTs) in India. In elementary education, the focus was on a students' enrolment to retention and their achievements in the school system. The three schemes mightily achieved its success. Thus, a new educational programme named District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) was launched in November, 1994 (Soundarapandian, M., 2000) [9].

District Primary Education Programme, 1994

In 1986, the Government of India (GoI) launched the landmark NPE, 1986 and revised it NPE, 1992 which resulted in a series of pilot projects on a large scale following the world conference on 'Education for all' (EFA) in the year of 1990 in India. It opened up for assisting the primary education. The most extensive external partnership involving the World Bank, The United Kingdom, The European Commission (EC) and (UNICEF) funded the District Primary Education Programme in eighteen states covering about half of India's 600 districts with low female literacy rates. The programme created active partnership between the Government and Civil Society Organization and strengthened co-operation in the areas of planning, teaching and research. Financial management and procurement systems, procedures and checks and balances put in place, making it possible to scale up in the next phase, DPEP was launched in the year of 1994 as a major initiative to achieve the objectives of UEE. The programme takes a historic view of primary education development and seeks to operationalize the strategy of UEE through district specific planning with emphasis on

decentralized management, participatory process, empowerment and capacity building at all levels. The programme is implemented through state level registered societies. The programme aims at providing access to primary education for all children reducing primary dropout's rates to less than 10 percent increasing learning achievement of primary school students by 25 percent and reducing the gender and social gap to less than 5 percent.

The programme is structured to provide additional input over and above the Central/ State sector schemes for elementary education. The programme fills the existing gaps in the development of primary education and seeks to revitalize the existing system DPEP, is contextual and has focus on gender gap. The programme components include the construction of classrooms and new schools, opening of non- formal / alternative school centres, appointment of new teachers, setting up Early Childhood Education Centres (ECEC), strengthening of State Councils of Educational Research (SCERTs), District Institutes of Educational Training (DIETs) setting up of Block Resource Centre (BRCs) / Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs), Teacher training development of Teaching- Learning Material (TLM), research based intervention, special intervention for integrated to disabled children, education of girls, working children, SCs /STs etc. 85 percent of project cost has been shared by Government of India and rest 15 percent by the concerned State Government. At present external assistance of about Rs. 6938 crores has been tie up for DPEP, since it was initiated in November, 1994 when the DPEP covered 42 districts in 7 states of India. Its reach has spread to 248 districts in 18 states namely Assam, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerla, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Utter Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Bihar, Haryana and Rajasthan.

The various Districts have been selected for DPEP on the basis of following criteria:-

1. Educationally backward districts with female literacy below the national average.
2. Districts where Total Literacy Campaigns (TLCs) is successful, leading to enhanced demand for elementary education (Rao, D. B. 2003) [6].

The different policies and programmes has been framed for the development of education in India. Thus, the present system of education must be reorganized in the light of contemporary Indian realities and requirements. Subject to the nationally agreed basic concepts of freedom, equality and justice, the system should be flexible and responsive to varying circumstances. Every effort should be made to pursue excellence, without losing, sight of the ideal of equality. The system must endeavor 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. The educational institutions and the community should help each other, the teachers and parents cooperating in providing knowledge and skills and a better future for the children. The school should be closely associated with the development activities of the area.

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