

Policy Analysis: An Analysis of National Education Policy 2020

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Abstract. This paper analyses the National Education Policy 2020 (pages 1-32), the official policy document issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (India). This paper is written in light of five pedagogical theories: a). Human Capital; b). Traditional Academic; c). Learner Centred; d). Social Efficiency; e). Social Reconstruction. By identifying the presence of the five theories in the policy and analysing the dominant ideologies of education across the whole text, the paper aims to explore the influence of pedagogical philosophies and the relevant factors on educational policy formation and upgrading in India. It discovers that although all five theories exist in the policy, Learner Centred theory is the most dominant. In addition, it also discusses political and socio-economic factors that impact the formation of the Indian educational policy.

1 Introduction

This paper analyses the National Education Policy 2020 released by the Republic of India's Ministry of Human Resource Development. The policy (hereafter referred to as NEP) covers four parts of education: a). school education; b). higher education; c). critical areas of focus, such as adult education, promoting Indian languages and online education; d). the implementation of the policy. The complete analysis of NEP focuses on school education. It is based on five theories in pedagogy, including, in that order: the theories of Human Capital, Traditional Academic, Learner Centred, Social Efficiency, as well as Social Reconstruction. Next, this paper will discuss some theories dominating this policy. Finally, it will review various factors that contributed to NEP's existence.

2 Five theories of education

2.1 Human Capital

A way to think about education is through the lens of human capital, a concept that has its roots in the area of Economics. Human Capital theory in education is about investment and return. It claims that skills are a type of human capital that people develop via conscious investment in education and that these talents will eventually contribute to economic activity. At the same time, people's income in the labour market is regarded as a reward for their productivity (Schultz, 1961, quoted in Little, 2003). It is a fundamental principle of endogenous growth theory that human capital investments, innovation, and knowledge have a sizeable positive impact on economic growth, implicating policymaking's significant role in boosting the economy. Seeing people as only capital products seems

overly reductionism and leave out the meaning of being a human (Gillies, 2015).

2.2 Traditional Academic

Traditional Academic education, also known as Liberal education, has a rich history that can be traced back thousands of years, with valuable knowledge accumulated throughout human history and has been classified and organised into different academic disciplines. John Henry Newman (1996) states that liberal education is good for developing people's intellect but also makes people who have received a helpful education. Traditional education is a kind of education that equips students with the confidence to handle intricacy, variety, and change through learning curriculum. It aids students in developing a high level of social responsibility and powerful intellectual abilities and fostering their problem-solving capacity in practical situations (Robbins, 2014, quoted in Scott, 2014).

2.3 Learner Centred

Learner-centred education is an instructional paradigm that places learners at the centre of the teaching process (Mahendra et al., 2005). It can be interpreted as opposing the traditional academic concept of education. Instead of focusing on the disciplines, Learner Centred education emphasizes the needs and interests of children and individuals, requiring schools to create an inspiring and enjoyable environment for pupils to grow at their own pace. Despite the importance of learner-centred education in today's classrooms, some academics have criticised it for being overly general. For instance, Schweisfurth (2015) argues that phrases such as learner-centeredness and related words are frequently employed indiscriminately and encompass a wide range of ideas and behaviours to the point

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where people may refer to anything as learner-centred to explain policy or practice.

2.4 Social Efficiency

It is possible to think of Social Efficiency as representing a particular aspect of the enlightenment and its rationality, scientific method, paving the way for modernity's industrialization and technical advancement. Mass education is a typical example of social efficiency applied in education, referring to an educational session mandated for all children and regulated by the government. During the first half of 20th century, Social Efficiency was such a widespread concept in US educational theory that educators considered it to be the primary goal of education (Knoll, 2009). Proponents of this view believed education must provide the next generation with the knowledge necessary to contribute to society. Nevertheless, opponents criticize the concept of social efficiency for undermining democratic ideals and teacher autonomy in education (Kim, 2018).

2.5 Social Reconstruction

The Social Reconstruction theory of education, also called Critical Pedagogy, places a series of requirements on educators. Educators need to play a leading role in the fight for the fairness of society and the economy. The realities of public life and issues with democracy must be included in educators' teaching and writing (Giroux, 2006). One main point of the Social Reconstruction ideologies is that it calls for learning for sustainability and developing children into global citizens. Another basic theme of this theory is an enterprise in education, which means carrying on the curriculum from the enterprise perspective. Contrarily, some sceptics said these ideas were internally inconsistent and could not be combined into a coherent theory of schooling and education.

3 Analysis of NEP

3.1 Human Capital

In the statements of school education, the authority claims that pupils' nutrition and health is one of the important and essential conditions for learning:

Children are unable to learn when they are undernourished. Hence, children's nutrition and health (including mental health) will be addressed through the introduction of well-trained social workers, counsellors in the schooling system. Furthermore, research shows that the morning hours after a nutritious breakfast can be particularly productive for the study of cognitively more demanding subjects, and hence these hours may be leveraged by providing a simple but energizing breakfast in addition to midday meals (NEP:9). Human Capital theory emphasizes investment and return. The Government attaches great importance to children's physical and mental health and invests in meals to ensure nutrition.

3.2 Traditional Academic

At the beginning of the policy, the government introduces the assumed outcomes of educated children:

Instilling knowledge of India and its varied social, cultural, and technological needs, young people are considered critical for purposes of national pride, self-confidence, cooperation, and integration (NEP:4). By instilling knowledge in different subjects and diverse cultures, children can grow intellectually to tackle the challenges of the modern world. The policy puts forwards a prerequisite requirement for pupils to study, that is to develop the capacity to do reading and writing, as well as carry on simple number operations. However, various governmental, as well as non-governmental surveys, indicate that a large proportion of students currently in elementary school - estimated to be over 5 cores in number - have not attained foundational literacy and numeracy (NEP:8).

3.3 Learner Centred

Regarding the evolvement of pedagogy, the policy mentions "learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable", which describes what learner-centred education should be. Learner-centred education pays attention to the discussions and interactions between teachers and students. It asks for a joyful environment where students can get inspired and realise their potential (NEP, 2020, p. 3). Besides, the curricular and pedagogical structure of school education will be reconfigured to make it responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development, corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively (NEP:11).

3.4 Social Efficiency

Modern world is full of rapid changes and the growing emergence of epidemics also call for collaborative research in infectious disease management and the development of vaccines, and the resultant social issues heighten the need for multidisciplinary learning (NEP:3). Environmental issues such as climate change, pollution of all kinds and energy shortages are placing new demands on the people of the new world. Social Efficiency thinking allows people to become innovative by making the most of "various dramatic scientific and technological advances". Once people combine the "skilled workforce" and "multidisciplinary abilities", chances are that they will develop the economy of the nation and change the world around them ultimately (NEP, 2020:3).

3.5 Social Reconstruction

The Indian Government hopes that implementing NEP can effectively promote learning. Education is the most excellent tool for achieving social justice and equality. Inclusive and equitable education - a fundamental goal in its own right - is also critical to achieving an inclusive and equitable society where citizens can thrive and contribute to the nation. The education system must aim to benefit India's

children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of circumstances of birth or background (NEP:24). Under the guidance of Critical Pedagogy, educators should try their best to help kids from vulnerable backgrounds access high-quality education, minimizing the negative impacts their original social and economic status have on them.

4 Balance of Ideologies

It is stated in the policy that higher education plays a vital role in promoting human and social well-being and in developing what is envisaged in the Indian Constitution. Therefore, the government states that quality higher education must aim to produce excellent, thoughtful, well-rounded and creative people. Enables individuals to delve into one or more professional areas of interest and develop character, moral and constitutional values, intellectual curiosity, scientific temperament, creativity, service and 21st-century competence in a range of disciplines, including the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages and professional, technical and vocational subjects. This policy suggests that the way education has been delivered before higher education prepares higher education to produce students who can solve social problems.

5 Factors influencing policy formation

5.1 Political factors

The unfavourable political environment for schooling in India fundamentally impacts how universities in other countries consider possible collaborations and engagements that could lead to a breakthrough to the next level of Indian education. The Hindu ideology of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party government, particularly its anti-Muslim rhetoric and radicalism, will hinder the cooperation promotion of the Indian higher education system in global competition. The radical ideology of the Indian people was deeply ingrained and affected the development of educational standards in India. The Indian government should enhance students' knowledge and understanding of cultures worldwide from primary education. Social factors should also be given greater attention.

5.2 Socio-economic factors

India will have the world's largest youth population over the next decade, and the ability to provide them with quality education will determine India's future. The adoption of NEP is conducive to achieving the grand goal of "becoming a developed country as well as among the three largest economies in the world", establishing an education system that adapts to India's economic and social development, and improving the poor implementation of previous education policies (NEP, 2020:3).

It is in response to several political and socio-economic challenges such as these that India has enacted new policies. Overall, this policy aligns with the future trend of

world education development, which makes it possible for India to position itself as a global knowledge superpower and achieve excellent results in international competition.

6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine how pedagogical philosophies and other pertinent aspects affect the development and improvement of educational policies in India by analysing the NEP (pages 1-32) in conjunction with five educational theories, namely the Human Capital theory, Traditional Academic theory, Learner Centred theory, Social Efficiency theory, as well as the Social Reconstruction theory. The formation of India's education policy is inseparable from the influence of educational philosophies. The analysis shows that all five ideologies are reflected in the policy. However, the weight of the ideologies is not even. Among them, Learner Centred theory is the most important one in the text that the author has analyzed, which discloses that it is the children and their development that the Indian government emphasizes.

In addition to the influence of educational philosophy on India's education policy, political and socio-economic factors also play a significant role. Politically, India's ruling party's anti-Muslim rhetoric and radicalism are unfavourable factors hindering education development in India. It is imperative to change education policy and implement education reform to reverse the negative education situation at that time. At the socio-economic level, the growth of India's youth population requires India to create a better educational environment for the next generation and establish an education system that adapts to the Indian economy. The NEP is expected to improve India's global competitiveness and help India become a global knowledge-based economy.

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