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# UNIT 12 DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL EDUCATION IN 1986 AND AFTER

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## 12.1 INTRODUCTION

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In the earlier unit we traced the developmental changes that took place between 1964 and 1985 in the Indian educational scene. There was one Education Commission during this period in 1964-66, which was appointed by the Government of India to make a comprehensive review of the educational system in order to reconstruct education. The outcome of this Commission was a National Policy on Education in 1968. There were also three five-year plans during this period in India which also looked into the development aspects of education. We noticed that some of the recommendations of the Education Commission which had far reaching implications for bringing about structural and qualitative changes in the Indian educational system generated heated debates and controversies across the country. We discussed how, finally, when the National Policy on Education, 1968 was evolved, most of the important recommendations were either rejected or diluted in terms of non-committal and non-specific statements with a view to avoiding all types of controversies that ensued consequent to the Commission's recommendations. We also examine how the National Policy on Education was finally shaped by the contemporary political, social, economic forces which had greater stakes in education and hence did not want to bring in any radical reform that the Commission had genuinely visualised. In this unit we would take you along the further journey of educational development after the Education Commission and lead you to the discussions centering around school education in independent India in the 1970s and 1980s.

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## 12.2 OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you would be able to:

- identify the limitations of educational system in achieving the goals of education as envisaged in the Constitution;
- discuss the salient features of NPE 1986;

- analyse the POA of the Central Government in relation to the quality of school education;
- identify the significant institutional changes in relation to the expansion of quality in school education;
- appreciate the importance of programmes to improve primary education in relation to the improvement of secondary education;
- identify the priorities of the Seventh Five-Year Plan in education in general and school education in particular.

## 12.3 REASSESSMENT OF EDUCATION DURING THE NINETEEN EIGHTIES

Education is considered as one of the major instruments to bring about socio-economic transformation in any society. This point is further substantiated by the Education Commission which categorically emphasized the role of education as a powerful tool to usher in a new social and economic order in the Indian sub-continent. One of the Constitutional obligations of independent India which has continued to be elusive is the non-fulfilment of the directive principles of providing universal primary education. This has further augmented the problem of accomplishing the task of equity and social justice which are the hallmarks of the democratic and socialistic Indian republic.

Ever since the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1968, there have been efforts to review and assess the achievements and shortfalls in education. This exercise has been carried out routinely in the five-year plans and corrective measures suggested therein. However during the nineteen eighties, the need for reassessment of education arose mainly due to the following reasons:

1. The literacy gains during the Post-Independence period were unimpressive with only 20% increase. The literacy level in the country increased from 16.67% in 1951 to 36.23% in 1981. Paradoxically, the ill-literate population in the country also increased fourfold from 6 crores in 1951 to 24.8 crores in 1981. This was further compounded by the glaring disparities between urban-rural, male-female literacy levels. While the male literacy rate rose from 27.16% in 1951 to 56.50% in 1981, that of the female increased from 8.86% in 1951 to 29.85 in 1981. In fact, male-female disparities widened from 16.30% in 1951 to 26.65%. Similarly, the urban-rural disparities persisted with a gap of 22.49% in 1951 to 31.25% in 1981. Added to this phenomenon was the regional disparities in literacy attainments with Kerala registering the highest level of literacy achievements while the backward States like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh continued to register low literacy gains. In fact, these backward States also registered lowest female rates. Rajasthan showed a female literacy of only 5.46 % during 1981. The poor literacy gains obviously reflected the poor performance of primary education.
2. The country was not able to universalize elementary education even after four decades of Independence in spite of the constitutional declaration to achieve the same within a ten year period. Even the Plan efforts to accomplish this task met with failure. Though the nation registered an impressive enrolment ratio of 93.4 per cent (in 1980-81) at the primary level, it was noticed that these national aggregates hide several disparities between States, regions (rural-urban), sexes (boys-girls) and social segments of population (SC/ST-Non-SC/ST). Moreover you should note that these gross enrolment ratios include over and under aged children as well. Hence when only the age-specific enrolment is considered, a clear picture emerges. During the nineteen eighties, 76.0 per cent of the relevant age group were in the elementary stage suggesting the inefficiency of the school system in absorbing the relevant age group. Similarly even though the girls enrolment showed impressive gains in the nineteen-eighties across the States, their enrolment did not reach the level of male enrolment ratio.
3. The growth of educational institutions had increased from 2.3 lakh in the 1950s to 6.9 lakh in the nineteen eighties. A large number of these institutions (5.04 lakh), constituting 73 per cent were primary schools. However, the growth rate of these institutions were not commensurate with the population growth rates which were to be tapped by the school system. Another feature of the institutional growth rate was its uneven spread across the States and in terms of management composition. In fact, you would have noticed in the

earlier unit that the growth of government schools as compared to private schools, especially at the secondary stage was marginal during the Plan periods suggesting that this growth was unfavourable to the poorer sections of society who could not afford to obtain education by paying fees. Another notable feature of this institutional growth was that even though the number of primary schools with two teachers increased during the Plan periods, still the number of single teacher schools persisted and the primary schools with three, four and five and above teachers did not register any growth during the Plan periods which clearly suggest that the primary schools continued to suffer from lack of basic facilities making it not viable for the rural masses. The increase in expansion of school facilities was done with an intention to serve the educational needs of that social strata which hitherto was denied access to education. However, it was noticed that the expansion of educational opportunities failed to ensure the additional enrolment of this target group suggesting the incapacity of the educational structure to accommodate this section of society.

4. The low retention rates and dropout phenomenon at primary stage and its magnitude among the rural schools, the girls and the socially disadvantaged sections was a cause for serious concern. It was realised that the magnitude of wastage was affecting adversely the educational development in the country. Hence there was a need to take a fresh look at primary education.
5. A little more than three percent of the Gross National Product of the country was being spent on education as against the recommendation of the Education Commission to increase it to six per cent. The share of primary education in the Plans was varying between the successive Plans. In fact, the share on primary education declined from 55 per cent in the First Plan to 36 per cent in the Sixth Plan suggesting the low priority accorded to primary education. There was a corresponding growth of educational expenditure along with the educational expansion at all stages of education.

### 12.3.1 Limitations of the System with Reference to Equity and Social Justice

The educational system failed to respond adequately to the felt needs of different social groups with the result that these people continued to be left out or pushed out of the system. Empirical evidences indicate that the formal educational system suffers from a myriad of limitations which make it impossible for the masses to take advantage of it. Let us now examine these limitations one by one. Our discussions are pointed towards the limitations within the educational system per se and not other factors outside the system.

#### Organisation of the School System

The existing educational system which is based on only one channel of formal education imposes certain rigidities in terms of single-point entry, sequential annual promotions and full-time teaching-learning. This arrangement suits only certain sections of the population while the others who cannot comply with these restrictions are left to fend for themselves. In fact, the school system at the very basic stage is organised in such a rigid way that unless one can afford to spend time and resources for at least a minimum period of four to five years, one cannot possibly think of acquiring the basic functional skills which are very essential for a successful living in society which is undergoing constant changes.

The school education especially at the elementary stage is aimed at imparting certain functional skills to children in terms of reading, writing and arithmetic. However, if one has to acquire these skills it is necessary that he/she has to attend a formal school regularly on a continuous basis and participate in a full-time teaching-learning activities in an organised classroom situation and pass some examination at the end of the academic year.

In a country like India which is predominantly rural and depends upon agriculture and other allied activities, children are looked at as assets in terms of the assistance they can provide either on farm or at home. This is more so in the case of farmers with either small land holdings or landless labourers who cannot buy labour from outside. Their absence from home and farm for nearly six hours a day to attend classroom instruction is a great handicap for such parents. Further, this problem gets compounded when families with poor economic status have to depend upon their children's earnings for their own survival. Such child labourers who participate in different kind of economic activities miss their chances of obtaining education when there is no other alternative arrangement available for them to acquire basic education.

The State Governments have almost universalised schooling facilities, especially in rural areas. As per the latest All-India survey data almost 95 per cent of the rural population in the country is served by a primary school within one kilometer. This expansion, however does not seem to have facilitated universal retention and learning. The causes for this phenomenon are rooted in the very schools which the Governments have provided. These schools do not have adequate buildings, classrooms, teachers and other teaching-learning equipments with the result these schools fail to make any impression on the rural masses who feel disillusioned with the very idea of sending their children to such schools which cannot efficiently handle the responsibility of educating their children. The latest survey data reveal that the percentage of primary schools with only one teacher (for five standards) in the country is 28.91 per cent, and the same with two teachers (for five standards) is 31.85 per cent. The survey data reveal that in rural areas only 54.49 per cent of the primary schools are housed in pucca building, 61.01 per cent have usable blackboards, 54.50 per cent do not have seating facility for children, 44.5 per cent of the schools have drinking water facility, only 11.07 per cent have urinal facility, only 3.19 per cent have lavatories, and 37.01 per cent have library. These inadequate facilities provide a deprived learning environment to the already impoverished children who feel nothing but demotivated. On the contrary, the schools in urban areas are well equipped and attractive and hence are more efficient in terms of their retention capacities.

### **Curriculum**

School education, which is still the major responsibility of the State has its curriculum prescribed by the State. In such a centralised curriculum, the local specific conditions get down played and the content and the learning experiences provided by and large reflect the dominant ideologies and the dominant culture. Such a curriculum fails to respond to the felt needs of certain sections of population who are placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy. Besides, a hidden curriculum which transmits negative messages for the underprivileged also thwarts their effective participation in the curricular activities. The net result is a biased curriculum which cannot provide relevant and appropriate content and learning experiences to these groups. Further, a curriculum which places heavy emphasis on the language of the dominant groups can further demotivate the children who are socially and culturally handicapped in terms of their spoken language abilities. Added to this, the patriarchal ideologies and the negative socialization of girls in the families get reinforced by the school curriculum through its content and actions. Girls continue to reveal poor participatory rate and low achievement because of the gender biases built into the school curriculum and teacher personalities.

### **Teacher**

The teacher is the key person in the educational system upon whom the fate of school education hangs. Besides lack of adequate number of teachers in primary schools, especially in rural areas, there is the problem of poor quality of teachers that are available in such schools. Although the backlog of untrained teachers is cleared, still the quality of training that is provided to primary teachers is far from satisfactory. In such a context, the teaching-learning activities fail to motivate the children to effectively participate in school programmes. In addition, the teachers personality, behaviour, perceptions, assessment of students etc. is found to be biased when he himself/she herself is a product of the same system of education. Because of this, the teachers continue to discriminate against children from lower social strata, thereby preventing them from participating fully in educational activities.

### **Examination**

School examinations which are continued to be dominated by written language skills favour only those sections of population who have enriched language culture at home. Those who come from families having impoverished language culture find themselves in an unacceptable position in the school contexts which may terminate in their premature withdrawal from schools.

Thus, what we can infer from the above discussion is that, if equity and social justice are to be achieved coupled with quality, then there is a need to plan and develop context-specific educational programmes in decentralised contexts which can ensure universal participation of children. Simultaneously, upgrading the facilities in schools in terms of physical inputs and other resources assumes significance as well. More than all recurrent training for teachers to enhance their competencies and skills, improving curricular inputs are also very necessary.

### Check Your Progress

- Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.  
ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

1. In which groups is the problem of enrolment and retention the most visible in India?

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2. What is the defect in a centralized curriculum?

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3. Why do teachers discriminate against children from lower social-economic strats?

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## 12.4 THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON TEACHERS - SCHOOL STAGE

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Two National Commissions were set up by the Government of India in 1983, one to look into issues related to the teachers at the school stage and the second for the teachers of higher education. The Commission for the school stage had to address the following issues in its terms of reference:

- i) Measures to give to the teacher the status he needs and deserves to help him do his duties at the highest possible level of performance, which implies a suitable salary that, in the prevailing economic conditions, will not only meet his economic needs but be commensurate with his professional status and be powerful enough to attract and retain talent in the profession;
- ii) The evolution of a system of teacher preparation that would help the teacher develop skills and values so as to make his teaching and efforts at character development effective; and

- iii) To indicate the broad parameters of a code of conduct which would motivate and help the teacher give his best in the performance of his duties, and to point out other conditions that are necessary for such a code's effective enforcement.

The Commission had six working groups to deal with issues relating to different aspects of teachers. The Commission besides organising meetings and seminars also undertook field visits and sent questionnaires to collect views and opinions from the teachers, educational administrators, students, voluntary organisations, eminent educationists and other senior officials and members of Legislative Assemblies and Councils. The National Commission on Teachers for school stage submitted their report **The Teacher and Society** in 1985.

The Commission made several recommendations for the overall improvement of school education in the light of achieving national goals and aspirations. The Commission made several recommendations relating to working conditions and welfare of the teacher, supply and recruitment and training. The Commission suggested several measures to enlarge and upgrade the facilities for in-service education for both elementary and secondary stage. Salary scales were proposed as more or less uniform throughout the States. A National Council on Teacher Education along the lines of AICTE All India Council for Technical Education has been constituted as per the recommendation of the Commission to oversee the quality and standards in Teacher Education.

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## 12.5 CHALLENGE OF EDUCATION: A POLICY PERSPECTIVES

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India underwent many changes in the political and economic spheres during the nineteen eighties. Unstable Governments came to power at the Centre. The international Oil crisis sapped the country's foreign reserves. Industrialization the Public Sector pursued by successive Governments became suspect from the point of view of productivity and efficiency. Government budgetary deficits mounted. In other words, there was an economic crisis. New initiatives were already in process to set the economy right. As a part of this thinking, it was felt necessary to review the role of education and the developments in the past. The result was a status document called Challenge of Education - A Policy Perspective prepared by the Indian Government after a careful and in-depth review and analysis of the educational situation in the country. The basic objective of this exercise was to reshape the educational system to enable to meet the challenges of the future and also to improve its efficiency and quality in the wake of the restructuring of the Indian economy and social order. The document also suggested certain future initiatives based on the views and suggestions from educational planners, teachers, students, parents, intellectuals and citizens interested in education. This document provided a comprehensive framework to guide the development of Indian education. Hence it marked an important step in the development of education in India. This document ultimately resulted in the National Policy on Education 1986.

### 12.5.1 National Policy on Education 1986

The NPE 1986 contended that the role of education is essentially to transform a static society into a vibrant one with commitment and development and change. The policy recognised the need for creating not only access to education for all sections but also getting them involved in the process of continuing education so as to promote a learning society. Further, the Policy also laid special emphasis on the role of education in adequately equipping the new generation stepping into 21st Century with required skills and competencies.

Following the 42nd amendment of the Indian Constitution with the authority to legislate on education concurrently with the States so far as organisation and structure of education is concerned, the NPE operationally defined concurrence as a meaningful partnership between the Centre and States and placed clear responsibility on the Union Government regarding the national and integrative character of education, quality and standards, manpower planning, research and advanced study, culture, human resources development and the international aspects of education.

The NPE 1986 gave an unqualified priority for Universalisation of Elementary Education and indicated a vital shift from mere provision of schooling facilities to improvement of facilities, universal enrolment and participation and achievement of satisfactory levels of learning. The Policy advocated dual track approach with simultaneous attention on adult literacy and primary

education. While shifting its focus from enrolment per se to enrolment as well as retention and achievement, it also laid down conditionality for success.

The Policy conceives Universalisation of elementary education as contextual. Contextuality entails local area planning with dis-aggregated target setting and decentralised participation, planning and management. The focus shifts from educationally backward States to educationally backward Districts.

NPE 1986 envisaged free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality for all children up to 14 years of age before the commencement of the 21st century. It also addressed the more difficult aspect of access. Hence it advocates large scale and systematic programme of Non-Formal Education as an integral component of the strategy to achieve Universalisation of elementary education. The Policy, however, stresses the need for having a comparable quality of Non-Formal Education and providing enough flexibility to learners to proceed at their own pace.

The 'Policy' emphasises integration of gender perspective in all aspects of planning. Hence there is a pronounced shift from mere equalisation of opportunity to education for women's equality. The Policy further enjoins that the national educational system should play a positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women, foster the development of new values through redesigned curricula, textbooks, training and orientation of teachers, decision makers and administrators.

The Policy shifts its emphasis from sectoral to a multi-sectoral approach with convergence of all development inputs so as to improve the delivery of services and enhance the efficiency of resource utilization.

The National Policy on Education (NPE 1986) perceives education as an essential requirement for all as it is fundamental to the all-round development of society, both material and spiritual. The role of education is to sensitize the minds for furthering the goals of socialism, secularism and democracy. Another important role of education is to promote and sustain the economic development of the society through fostering research and development to ensure self-reliance in technology and develop the required manpower harness it. In a nutshell education is a unique investment in the present and the future.

There are some commonalities between the NPE 1968 and NPE 1986. They refer to the reiteration of the commitment towards a common school system and the common educational structure of 10+2+3. The NPE 1986 has gone a step further while re-emphasizing the place of common core curriculum in the National System of Education by specifying the underlying values. They are: India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers, small family norm and inculcation of the scientific temper.

The NPE 86 is much more specific in defining the role of education in promoting equality. While the earlier policies talked about access, the present policy goes further by stipulating the provision of the conditions of success to ensure equality of educational opportunity and also fostering the value of equality for all.

Another important milestone of the NPE 1986 is its commitment to laying down minimum levels of learning at each stage of education aimed to ensuring the quality of education and comparability across the nation.

The NPE 1986 declares that the entry into the higher education and technical education would be based on the requisite merit regardless of the origin of the aspirant.

Another important indication for the promotion of opportunity and creating learning society is found in the thrust given to open and distance learning in the Policy.

### **12.5.2 Salient Features of Policy in Relation to Universalisation of Elementary Education**

Hitherto, the earlier policy pronouncements regarding the universalization of primary education were confined to the access to and retention of all school aged children in primary schools. The NPE 1986 added another goal to the universalization of outcome in the form of attainment of essential levels of learning.

The Policy proposed a three-pronged strategy to realise the task of universalization of primary education.

- Firstly, to provide a motivating school environment through child-centered and activity-based learning process at the primary stage. In this context, the policy emphasized the need for providing supplementary remedial instruction to first generation learners and allowing them to progress at their own pace. The Policy reiterated its commitment to retain the non-detention policy as recommended by the earlier Commission. The Policy also took note of adjusting school timings and vacations according to the convenience of the children.
- Secondly, to improve the inputs for teaching-learning process by providing essential facilities in primary schools in terms of classrooms, teachers, and other teaching-learning equipments. The above facilities are to be delivered to all the primary schools in a phased manner under the scheme called Operation Black Board (OBB Scheme).
- Thirdly, by designing alternative stream of systematic non-formal programme to ensure the coverage of children who dropout from the habitation without schools, working children and girls who can not attend regular schools to ensure universalization. In order to ensure the quality of such non-formal education, efforts will be made to use modern technological aids and the services of talented local young men and women from local community with training.

In fact the Policy resolved to ensure five years of schooling or its equivalent through non-formal stream to all children attaining eleven years by 1990 and seven years of schooling or its equivalent to all children attaining fourteen years by 1995.

### 12.5.3 Salient Features of Policy in Relation to Secondary Education

Regarding secondary education, the Policy made a commitment to widen access by covering the areas unserved by schools.

With respect to the quality, the Policy proposed to formulate curriculum for inculcating values of healthy work ethos, humane and composite culture.

For the first time in independent India a nationwide programme of special schools under the name of pace setting schools have been proposed. Such schools are meant for talented children largely rural, selected with due care bestowed for equity and social justice consideration. These institutions are residential in nature and education is provided free of charge. Such schools have already come into existence as NAVODAYA SCHOOLS under the subsequent Five Year plans all over the country.

The Policy proposed that vocational courses cover ten per cent of higher secondary students by 1990 to increase to 25 per cent by 1995. The content and nature of vocationalization proposed differ drastically from the past stereotypes and make the courses responsive to emergent technological and economic developments. In addition to the traditional courses of preparing the skilled manpower for primary and secondary sectors of production, the Policy emphasises the courses to train people for tertiary service sectors like health, marketing and other social services.

Apart from the special courses at the +2 stage, the Policy envisages appropriate flexible non-formal vocational courses for the youth who leave the formal school at the primary stage, school droupouts and neo-literates with special preference to the needs of women. Provision of tertiary level vocational courses is made for those who complete their higher secondary education through academic stream and who require such courses.

### 12.5.4 Salient Features of Policy in Relation to Teacher Education

The NPE 1986 was very clear in its proposals for improving the quality of teachers at the school level. It recognised the need for continuous teacher education process which can be ensured only through in-service programmes. In order to ensure this, the Policy proposed District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) in each of the districts all over the country for the training of teachers in formal primary schools and personnel working in non-formal and adult education. A similar institution to provide for the continuous in-service training for secondary school teachers is proposed through upgrading selected secondary teacher training colleges. These centres would complement the State Council of Educational Research and Training.

### 12.5.5 Programme of Action 1986

For the first time an educational policy was immediately followed by a Programme of Action to implement the policy declarations. Thus the POA of 1986 had formulated the following action:

1. In order to achieve the policy shift regarding UEE from universal enrolment only to universal enrolment and retention, the programme envisaged micro planning in a participative mode at the grass root level involving parents and teachers by familywise and childwise design of action. This action replaced the earlier practice of enrolment drives.
2. The Policy wanted the school environment to be attractive through improvement of primary schools and provision of support services. The POA conceived Operation Blackboard (OB Scheme) to translate the policy intention. This scheme intended to provide a minimum two teachers and two classrooms in every primary schools and also provide minimum essential teaching-learning equipments and materials. All these formed a package. The Union Government was to share the financial responsibility with the States as education was put on the concurrent list of the Constitution.
3. The Policy's intention of increasing access to girls and working children from poor socio-economic background through a large-scale and systematic programme of non-formal education was conceived by POA as an integral strategy to achieve UEE.
4. One of the thrust area of the NPE 1986 was to ensure universal attainment of essential levels of learning. Based on the recommendations of the Committee appointed by the Ministry which were endorsed by the CABE, MLL have been laid down for the primary stage. This is intended to reduce the curriculum load and to make it more functional and relevant.
5. The Policy focused on the upgradation of the functioning of teacher. Immediately a centrally sponsored drive to orient all teachers was taken up to improve their professional competence. This was called as Mass Orientation of School Teachers (MOST).
6. The MOST was followed by the programme in the form of setting up of the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) as a centrally-sponsored scheme. The main objectives of DIET are to provide quality pre-service and in-service training of teachers and functionaries of the formal, non-formal and adult education.
7. Similarly, at the secondary level, centres for in-service teachers training were established by upgrading secondary teacher education institutions to make them institutes of Advanced Study in Education (IASE) and strengthening colleges of teacher education (CTE).
8. The POA also proposed, and action was subsequently taken to implement a scheme of strengthening of SCERTs by providing one time matching grant of Rs. 15 lakh to each SCERT. The intention was to confer autonomous status to them to oversee DIETs, District Resource Units and Elementary Teacher Training Institutions.
9. The POA envisaged the establishment of Navodaya Vidyalayas in each district for children who are potentially high achievers irrespective of their socio-economic background. These institutions are intended to provide good quality education especially for talented rural children with due reservation for SCs and STs.
10. The NPE of 1986 advocated vocational education as a distinct stream to prepare students for specified occupations. A substantially funded, centrally sponsored scheme of vocationalization of secondary education and also at the higher secondary level was launched in 1987-88.

### 12.5.6 Highlights of the Report of Acharya Ramamurthy Committee

The need for revision of NPE 1986 was felt by the new Government which was elected in 1989 as it felt that the developments following the policy tended towards elitism. Hence the Government constituted a Committee under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurthy to review the policy. Let us examine the highlights of the Committee's recommendations which led to the revision of the educational policy in 1992.

#### **Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society**

The Committee had three terms of reference: (i) to review the National Policy on Education, 1986 and its implementation; (ii) to make recommendations regarding revision of the policy; and (iii) to recommend action necessary for implementation of the revised policy within a time frame. The Committee, even though it endorsed most of the recommendations of the NPE 1986 had some major observations and recommendations. It wanted that education should be viewed in

the overall context of social, economic, regional and gender based disparities for achieving equality and social justice. It wanted even the private schools to be transformed into common school system. It wanted concrete programmes for SCs, Tribes, Women and educationally backward minorities and appropriate budget for the same. However subsequent to change of government, this report was not acted upon as the new Government constituted another Committee to look into the implementation of NPE 1986. This resulted in what is now called modified NPE 1992.

### 12.5.7 Modified National Policy of Education and Revised Programme of Action 1992 (POA 1992)

The change of Government with the return of the Congress in the Parliamentary Elections of 1991 saw a review of the policy changes under the previous Government. The Committee appointed to take up this task under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Mr. Janardana Reddy came to the conclusion that the National Policy of 1986 did not require any drastic alteration. However, the Committee felt that the Programme of Action may be reviewed in the light of subsequent developments. Accordingly, the POA of 1986 was reviewed and revised by the CABE. This revised POA of 1992 reaffirmed most of the action plan. In the case of the OB scheme, the POA 1982 amended the programme by specifying a minimum of three teachers and three classrooms in all schools and extended the scheme to upper primary schools. In the field of adult education, the POA 1992 came up with a novel programme in the form of district literacy campaigns which had specific targets and participation of the people in carrying out the activities of adult education in each district. The revised POA envisages introducing MLL in non-formal education and lay down MLL at the upper primary level as well.

Consequent to the policy modification in 1992, a concerted effort was made to translate the policy declaration into a concrete programme which is commonly known as Revised Programme of Action 1992 (POA 1992).

#### Check Your Progress

- Note: i) Write your answers in the space given below.  
ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

4. What is the concept of Navodaya Vidyalayas?

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5. Why was Acharya Ramamurthi Committee set up?

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6. What are the objectives of DIET?

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7. What was the OB scheme meant for?

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## 12.6 NATIONAL OPEN SCHOOL

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The National Open School was started in India by the Central Board of School Education in 1979. The objective of establishing this School was to provide alternative opportunity through distance education mode to a heterogeneous clientele comprising the rural people, urban poor, women, SC/STs, working adults and school dropouts who are unable to attend the formal school system. The unique features of this NOS is that it takes education to the doorsteps of motivated learners and does not impose limitations of time and place. Further, it makes provision for studying at one's pace and convenience. Various types of support services are provided to the clientele including Personal Contact Programmes through a number of Accredited Institutions which are located across the length and breadth of the country. The Government of India had conferred autonomous status to NOS with administrative control vested with the Department of Education, MHRD in 1989 which was subsequently amalgamated with it 1990. The NOS has the authority to conduct its own Secondary/Senior Secondary examinations and issue certificates.

There were over two lakh students enrolled in NOS in 1991-92 from across different States and Union Territories. During 1992-93, 57.14% of students were from educationally and socially disadvantaged categories. Women's participation in this school accounted for 37.29% and that of SC/ST 18.78%.

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## 12.7 EDUCATION IN THE SEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN

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The commencement of the Seventh Plan coincided with a comprehensive review of the policy. Accordingly, the Plan provided for reorientation of the education system so as to prepare the country to meet the challenges of the next century. The main thrust areas in the seventh plan were: (1) achievement of universal elementary education; (2) eradication of illiteracy in the age group 15-35 years; (3) vocationalisation and skill training programmes at different levels of education; (4) upgradation of standards and modernisation at all stages of education with effective links with the world of work and with special emphasis on science and environment and on value orientation; (5) provision of facilities for education of high quality and excellence in every district of the country; and (6) removal of obsolescence and modernisation of technical education.

The Plan also delineated effective decentralised planning and organisation reforms, promotion of non-formal and open learning systems, adoption of low cost alternatives and optimum use of resources as strategies for achieving the plan objectives.

Let us see what were the plan priorities for elementary education:

- Overriding priority to universalising elementary education with a shift in emphasis from mere enrolment to retention of pupils in schools and achievement of basic elements of learning by them;
- Formal and non-formal methods to effectively cover girls and children of weaker sections;
- Provision of in-service training for teachers and developing and strengthening teacher training institutions;
- Promotion of girl's education through the appointment of women teachers, attachment of pre-school centres, provision of free uniforms and other incentives; and
- Specific funds to enhance the quality and efficiency of elementary education through school buildings and curricular materials;
- Also, the open school systems and distance learning techniques to meet the additional demand for secondary education arising out of expansion in primary education; expansion

of facilities were linked with serving the needs of girls and other backward children; and

- Free education for girls up to higher secondary stages.

At the secondary stage the priorities were as follows:

- Strengthening and universalising science education through upgrading the curricula, laboratory facilities and large scale in-service training programmes for teachers.
- Strengthening vocationalisation of educational programmes of Socially Useful Productive Work.
- Vocationalisation for higher secondary education through diversification to cover a large number of fields in agriculture, industry, trade, commerce and services. The introduction of the vocational courses was linked with emerging work opportunities, in a flexible manner.
- Extending computer literacy programme initiated during Sixth Plan and augmenting audio and video programmes at secondary stage.
- In-service training of teachers for developing software and effective use of modern communication technologies and computers in education.
- Revision of text-books and strengthening libraries for imparting value oriented education with a national perspective.

You should note that the strategy of the Seventh Plan underwent a change in the middle of the Plan period following the adoption of the National Policy on Education in 1986. As a result of this the following new thrust in education was taken up (i) universal enrolment and universal retention and (ii) substantial improvement in the quality of education. OB was launched as a part of implementation of the National Education Policy, 1986. The scheme of non-formal education was revised and a number of schemes for teacher education were also taken up.

In order to recognise the shift in the policies of overall planned development in general and educational development in particular, one has to compare the Seventh Plan total outlay and the share of education sector with the same in the earlier Plans. The following table presents the comparative picture:

Table 12.1 : Showing Proportion of Outlay on Education Sector in Five Year Plans (in Crores).

Five Year Plans	Total Outlay	Outlay on Education	Per cent Outlay on Education
I Plan Centre	899	44	4.9
I Plan States	1457	126	8.7
<b>I Plan Total</b>	<b>2356</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>7.2</b>
II Plan Centre	2559	70	2.7
II Plan States	2241	207	9.2
<b>II Plan Total</b>	<b>4800</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>5.8</b>
III Plan Centre	3600	148	4.1
III Plan States	3900	412	10.6
<b>III Plan Total</b>	<b>7500</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>7.5</b>
IV Plan Centre	8871	271	3.1
IV Plan States	7031	551	7.8
<b>IV Plan Total</b>	<b>15902</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>5.2</b>
V Plan Centre	20437	405	2.0
V Plan States	18866	880	4.5
<b>V Plan Total</b>	<b>39303</b>	<b>1285</b>	<b>3.3</b>
VI Plan Centre	47250	735	1.55
VI Plan States	50150	1624	3.24
<b>VI Plan Total</b>	<b>97500</b>	<b>2359</b>	<b>2.42</b>
VII Plan Centre	95534	2389	2.50
VII Plan States	84466	3994	4.73
<b>VII Plan Total</b>	<b>180000</b>	<b>6383</b>	<b>3.55</b>

It can be seen from the table that :

Among all the Five-Year Plans it was the Third Plan which shows a higher share for education followed by the Seventh Plan. The total outlay of Seventh Plan being substantially huge, the financial resources, available for education were considerable.

The State's share of outlay is always higher than that of Centre's suggesting that the States have had to bear the heavier burden of educational development.

The Centre's share on education over the Plan periods has decreased in spite of increase in the total outlay from First Plan to Seventh Plan.

Initially, the State Plan's share increased from 8.7% in the First Plan to 10.6% in the Third Plan.

**Check Your Progress**

- Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.  
ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

8. What is the administrative status of the NOS?

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9. What was the strategy adopted in the Seventh Plan after adoption of NPE 1986?

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10. What is the variation in State outlay on education from First to Seventh Five Year Plan?

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## 12.8 STATUS OF EDUCATION IN INDIA BY THE END OF THE NINETEEN EIGHTIES

We have reviewed the developments in the field of education in India at different points of history till the end of the nineteen eighties. We shall attempt to get the overall status of school education by using some important indicators below. These indicators will help you to draw inferences regarding the issues of equality of educational opportunity and effectiveness of school system. The following tables presents the status of education in terms of a few significant indicators.

Table 12.2: Position of Literacy in 1991

Population Categories	Persons	Urban		Rural	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
General Population	52.21	81.09	64.05	57.87	30.62
SC	37.41	66.60	42.95	45.95	19.46
ST	29.60	66.56	45.66	38.45	16.02

Table 12.3: Per cent Increase in Number of Schools

Schools	In 1978	In 1986	Per cent Change
Primary Total	474636	528730	11.4
Primary Rural	431602	475823	10.25
Upper Primary Total	112404	139016	23.68
Upper Primary Rural	94180	113087	20.08
Sec. Total	36675	52560	43.31
Sec. Rural	26506	38862	46.62
Hr. Sec. Total	10429	15465	48.29
Hr. Sec. Rural	4585	7136	55.64

Table 12.4: Rural Population Served by Primary Schools

Within Habitation	80.38%
Within 1 Km	14.06%
Beyond 1 Km	5.56%

Table 12.5: Increase in Teachers

Teachers	1978	1986	Per cent Change
Primary	1287499	1492721	15.94
Upper Primary	814559	1002136	23.03
Secondary	550097	723625	31.54
Hr. Secondary	288182	426199	47.89

Table 12.6 : Showing Increase in Enrolment (in millions)

	Classes I to V			Classes VI to VIII		
	1978	1986	%Change	1978	1986	%Change
Total	68.6	85.9	25.23	18	27.3	51.86
Rural	51.9	65.8	26.71	11	17.7	61.76
SC	10.1	14.7	45.49	2	4	99.1
ST	4.3	6.7	56.30	.6	1.4	129.33
Girls	26.3	35.1	33.55	5.9	9.6	64.03

Table 12.7: Showing Increase in Enrolment (in millions)

	Classes IX to X			Classes XI-XII		
	1978	1986	%Change	1978	1986	%Change
Total	7	11.5	63.67	1.8	3.5	91.41
Rural	3.6	6.5	80.26	0.6	1.3	124.64
SC	0.7	1.5	117.04	0.2	0.4	130.27
ST	0.2	0.5	127.51	0.03	0.1	197.30
Girls	2.1	3.7	74.75	0.5	1.1	137.48

**Check Your Progress**

**Note:** i) Write your answers in the space given below.

ii) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

11. Which category of teachers shows the maximum increase from 1976 to 1986?

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12. Which category of the population shows the maximum increase in enrolment from 1976 to 1986?

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## 12.9 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we began our discussion by taking stock of the progress made in the field of school education during the nineteen eighties and discussed how educational disparities have persisted across different social groups in spite of quantitative expansion. We also discussed how various limitations that are inherent in the education system determined the participation and performance of the children, particularly those from the disadvantaged sections of the society.

We also discussed how the political and economic situations in the country during the nineteen-eighties renewed thinking on evolving a New Education Policy in 1985. This was done in order to reshape the education system to meet the emerging challenges in the spheres of Indian economy, especially for the 21st century. The result was a status document on **Challenges of Education: A Policy Perspective** in 1985 which reviewed in-depth the past performance of the education system and suggested directives and guidelines for future development of education. Following a nation-wide debate on this document, the **National Education Policy 1986** emerged. This was immediately followed by a Programme of Action 1986 which suggested strategies for implementation of the Policy recommendations. However, we noted that owing to change of Government, the implementation of the Policy was put off and the new Government which came into power appointed another Committee under the Chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurthy in 1990 to review the NPE 1986 which resulted in yet another report - **Towards an Enlightened and Humane Society** during 1991.

This report suggested some revisions for the Policy recommendations. However, no action was taken on this report following the change in Government at the Centre once again. The new Government that took power at the Centre constituted another Committee under the Chairmanship of Janardan Reddy to look into the implementation of the National Education Policy 1986 and the POA 1986. Following the recommendations of this committee, a modified National Education Policy and POA emerged in 1992. We also discussed the salient features of the NPE 1986 and the unqualified priority given by it to universalise elementary education and the emphasis on universal retention and satisfactory levels of achievement. We also discussed some institutional and process innovations to bring about qualitative improvement in education like the DIET, SCERT, CTE and IASE.

Some significant changes that have occurred following the implementation of the NPE 1986 as regards school education are the OB scheme which aims at providing essential facilities in every primary school in terms of an additional classroom, teacher, and other teaching equipments. Further, laying down Minimum Levels of Learning at the primary stage is geared towards achieving qualitative improvement in school education. At the secondary stage, pace setting schools called Navodaya Vidyalayas have been established to provide quality education to rural and other backward class children. All these interventions aimed at achieving growth with equity. The launching of District Primary Education Projects has been a significant development in the field of primary education to reach the target of universalisation by 2001. The hallmark of these DPEP programmes is decentralised planning of primary education based on participatory approach in context-specific situation. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments have further strengthened the effective implementation of this programme.

We also discussed the Plan priorities during the Seventh Plan and how the plan strategies underwent changes in the middle following the adoption of the NPE 1986. And finally, we presented an overview of development of education with some selected educational indicators.

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## 12.10 UNIT-END ACTIVITIES

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1. As a teacher, what do you think are the implications of NPE (1986) on the present education system of India?
2. Analyse the role of DIETs in improving the quality of education in the country.
3. How do you conceive the role of teachers in achieving UEE in India?
4. Analyse the modifications made in POA (1992) from NPE (1986) and comment on them.

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## 12.11 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Nurullah, Syed & Naik, J.P. (Vth eds.), (1964); *Student History of Education in India*, Macmillan, Calcutta (1971, Reprint).

Dharampal : *Beautiful Tree*.

*Report of the Education Commission 1964-66*, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India, New Delhi.

Naik, J.P.; *Education Commission and After*.

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## 12.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Unit 9

1. Basic skills of reading, reckoning, and written communication using standardized textual materials.
2. By local communities, parents and philanthropic rulers.
3. Teachers were given high status in the community, paid 'gurudakshina' in cash or kind, received patronage from local rulers.
4. Self-directed, self-controlled and decentralized.
5. Religious texts and epics.
6. English education working as a tool for Westernization of Indian elites to influence the masses to consume European products and supply Europe with raw material.
7. Non-interference.
8. Government assumed a more active role, larger finances were available and supervision and inspection of private schools were also taking place.
9. Severe restriction on finances.
10. Self-supporting primary education.

### Unit 10

1. A long-term programme for educational reconstruction in India.
2. Setting up of the University Education Commission 1948-49.
3. Democracy, socialistic path and industrialization.
4. i) Article 45  
ii) Article 15
5. Secondary education.
6. Two types of teacher training institutions, affiliation of graduate teacher training institution to Universities.
7. 5 years.
8. Professional and educational background of teacher.
9. Male/Female enrolment, rural/urban population, regional and inter-state variations.

### Unit 11

1. i) It adopted a comprehensive approach to reconstruct education, and  
ii) Developed a blue-print for a national system of education.
2. Internal transformation, qualitative and quantitative empowerment.

3. – Developing critical and creative mental faculties
  - Changes in training of teachers
  - Keeping a fast pace but also inculcating traditional spiritual values
4. Improvement of educational standards.
5. Comprehensive curriculum for developing basic skills, specialized knowledge and language for preparing individuals for democratic existence.
6. Admission of students on the basis of merit and provide prescribed proportion of free studentships.
7. – Satisfactory emoluments and service conditions
  - Protection of academic freedom of teachers
  - In-service education of teachers
8. Emphasis on elementary education
9. Though the proposed outlay emphasized elementary education, the actual expenditure was mainly on higher education.
10. Growth of literacy among urban and male population much higher than rural and female counterparts. Worse off in fringe groups.

## Unit 12

1. SC, ST, rural populations.
2. Local specific conditions get down played.
3. Teachers get biased as they are the product of a system of education that fails to motivate participation.
4. Special or pace-setting schools for talented children, for equity and social justice.
5. Revision of NPE on the premise that it was elitist.
6. Provision of quality pre-service and in-service training for functionaries of formal, non-formal and adult education at elementary level.
7. Improvement of primary schools and provision of support services.
8. Autonomous status with administrative control vested with MHRD.
9. Thrust on elementary education.
10. From the first to the third plan it has increased, and then dropped drastically from the fourth to seventh plan.
11. Higher Secondary.
12. Scheduled Castes.