

4th Semester Major (FYUGP)
Subject: Education
Course Name: DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN INDIA
Unit 4: Development of Indian Education: the post-independence period

National Policy on Education – 1968

Introduction

The National Policy on Education (NPE) - 1968 was India's first comprehensive education policy, formulated based on the recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964-66). The policy aimed at national integration, economic progress, and cultural development through a well-structured education system. It laid down principles for ensuring quality education, equal opportunities, and modernization of curricula while promoting moral values and scientific temper.

Key Features of NPE-1968

1. Free and Compulsory Education

- The policy emphasized universal primary education and aimed to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to 14 years as mandated by Article 45 of the Indian Constitution.
- Special attention was given to educating underprivileged children, particularly from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and other disadvantaged groups.

2. Three-Language Formula

- To promote national integration and linguistic harmony, the policy recommended:
 - Regional language as the medium of instruction in schools.
 - Hindi as the official language for national communication.
 - English for higher education and international communication.
- However, its implementation faced resistance in non-Hindi-speaking states, especially in South India.

3. Equal Educational Opportunities

- The policy called for removing disparities in access to education based on gender, caste, and socio-economic background.
- Special scholarships, hostels, and other support mechanisms were proposed for weaker sections.

4. Emphasis on Science, Technology, and Research

- Recognizing the role of science and technology in national development, the policy promoted:
 - Strengthening of science education at all levels.
 - Establishment of technical institutions and research centers.
 - Integration of work experience and vocational training in the school curriculum.

5. Strengthening of Teacher Training and Status of Teachers

- Improvement of teacher training programs to enhance quality teaching.
- Better service conditions, salary structures, and career progression for teachers.
- Special focus on recruiting qualified teachers in rural and backward areas.

6. Curriculum Reforms and Moral Education

- Introduction of work experience, social service, and moral education in school curricula.
- Stress on character building, national consciousness, and ethical values.
- Integration of physical education and arts in school programs.

7. Adult and Non-Formal Education

- Promotion of adult literacy programs to improve literacy rates.
- Development of non-formal education centers for working children and adults who could not access formal schooling.

8. Expansion of Higher Education

- Strengthening of universities and research institutions to ensure quality higher education.

- Increased focus on technical and vocational education to meet industrial and economic needs.
- Promotion of correspondence courses and distance education to widen access.

Evaluation of NPE-1968

Achievements

- Increased literacy rates: The policy contributed to higher literacy levels, especially in urban areas.
- Expansion of schools and higher education institutions: More schools, colleges, and technical institutes were established.
- Promotion of scientific and technical education: Enhanced focus on STEM subjects led to the growth of industries and research sectors.
- Greater emphasis on teachers' training: Improved teacher qualifications and training programs.

Challenges and Shortcomings

- Limited success in achieving universal primary education: The goal of free and compulsory education up to 14 years remained unfulfilled due to financial and infrastructural constraints.
- Regional disparities: Rural areas lagged behind urban centers in terms of quality education and infrastructure.
- Resistance to the three-language formula: Non-Hindi-speaking states, particularly Tamil Nadu, opposed the mandatory inclusion of Hindi.
- Slow progress in vocational education: Lack of proper infrastructure and awareness led to limited adoption of vocational courses.
- Gap between policy and implementation: The ambitious goals of NPE-1968 were not fully realized due to budgetary limitations and administrative inefficiencies.

Implementation of NPE-1968

Government Initiatives

- The Central and State Governments took steps to implement policy recommendations, focusing on expanding educational facilities.
- A National Curriculum Framework (NCF) was revised to align with the policy.
- State Education Boards were encouraged to adapt reforms based on local requirements.

Expansion of Schools and Teacher Training

- Efforts were made to establish more primary and secondary schools, particularly in rural areas.
- Teacher training programs were introduced to improve teaching quality.

Adult Education and Literacy Programs

- The government launched adult literacy programs to improve literacy rates.
- Establishment of non-formal education centers for school dropouts and working children.

Higher Education and Research

- Strengthening of universities, IITs, and research institutions.
- Expansion of technical education and skill-based training programs.

Impact and Legacy

- The NPE-1968 laid the foundation for future educational reforms.
- Many of its goals, such as universal education, teacher training, and vocational education, were further refined in the National Policy on Education-1986.
- It also influenced later reforms, including the Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009 and the New Education Policy (NEP) 2020.

Conclusion

The National Policy on Education-1968 was a landmark initiative in India's educational history, aiming to modernize and democratize education. However, challenges in implementation prevented full realization of its objectives. While it succeeded in increasing literacy rates and expanding educational infrastructure, universal primary education, vocational training, and regional balance remained areas of concern. The policy served as a stepping stone for subsequent education policies, shaping India's long-term educational development.