

Elementary Education After Independent India : A Survey

Dr. Subhash Singh

*Asso. Prof., Deptt. of Education
RRPG College, Amethi, U.P., India.
Email : ss18799@gmail.com*

Abstract

We have know the evolution of education in pre-independent India. After independence, the first priority of the free nation was to design education system suitable for the needs of the free country. The constitution of India came into force w. e. f. 26th January, 1950. The constitutional provisions in like Article 45, provided "It shall be the responsibility of the State (Govt.) to provide free and compulsory education to all the children till they attain 14 years of age within 10 years of coming into force of the constitution." In this paper We will come across various commissions and committees, appointed by the Government of India to consider different aspects of education and make recommendations for improving educational facilities and to establish effective education system in the country.

Keywords: *Elementary Education, Commission, National Curriculum Framework (NCF), National Committee on Women's Education , National Policy of Education (NPE) 1968.*

Reference to this paper
should be made as follows:

Dr. Subhash Singh,

*Elementary Education
After Independent India :
A Survey*

RJPSSs 2018, Vol. 44,
No.2, pp.182-192,
Article No. 27,

Online available at :
[http://anubooks.com/
?page_id=2012](http://anubooks.com/?page_id=2012)

Introduction

We will come across various commissions and committees, appointed by the Government of India after independence to consider different aspects of education and make recommendations for improving educational facilities and to establish effective education system in the country. The main of them are as shown in Figure given below.

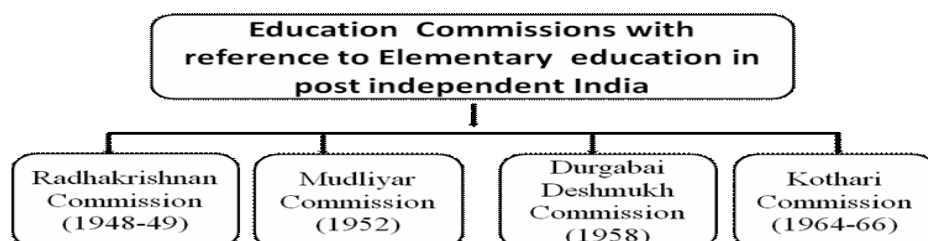


Figure - Education Commissions with reference to Elementary Education in post-independent India.

You will find that the recommendations of these commissions and committees have direct bearing on the policies, structure and development of Indian education system in the modern period. This evolution of Indian education, particularly elementary education is reviewed in this Paper. From time to time, Government of India reviewed the position of Education, particularly elementary education (viz. in 1968, 1986 and in 1992-the latest is NCF 2005) and formulated policies regarding education. These policies had salutary effect on the process of propagating elementary education. We will review these policies also.

Recommendations

There are a number of commissions and committees which addressed themselves to the development of education at different stages, in this country. Some of them which had a bearing on elementary education are the following:

Radhakrishnan Commission (1948-1949)

University Education Commission was appointed by Government of India in 1948 under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, to look into the problems of university education. This was done, considering the need of young leadership in different fields for the national development, and it was expected that this leadership will come from the educated youngsters. The Radhakrishnan Commission made significant recommendations regarding the necessary and desirable changes in the aims and objectives of university education and research; in the constitution, control, functions and jurisdiction of universities; their relations with Central and State Govts ; Finance; maintenance of standards of admissions, teaching, examinations, courses

of study, duration of courses, unfair discriminations; the medium of instruction, the provision for advanced study in Indian culture, history, literatures, languages, philosophy, fine arts etc.

Mudaliar Commission (1952-53):

The Secondary Education Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1952 under the chairmanship of Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, to examine the prevailing system of secondary education in the country and to suggest measures for its reorganization and improvement with reference to the aims, organization and content of secondary education, its relationship to primary and higher education and the interrelation of secondary schools of different types, etc. Mudaliar Commission analyzed the problems of teachers and teacher training programs also, and recommended that there should be two types of institutions for teacher-training:

- ü Primary Teacher Training Institutions under the control of a separate board - to train those who have passed the School Leaving Certificate or Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate for the period of two years.

Durgabai Deshmukh Committee (1958) :

The problems of education of girls and women, almost half of the population in the country, became a priority after independence. But as you know, traditionally, low priority is given to girl education in Indian society. The Educational Panel of the Planning Commission, in July 1957, recommended that “a suitable Committee should be appointed to go into the various aspects of the question relating to the nature of education for girls at the elementary, secondary and adult stages and to examine whether the present system was helping them to lead a happier and more useful life”. The Conference of the State Education Ministers in 1957 also suggested that a special committee should be appointed to examine the whole question of women’s education.

Accordingly, the National Committee on Women’s Education was set up by the Government in May 1958, with Shrimati Durgabai Deshmukh as its Chairperson. The Committee, in its report published in 1959, recommended that the highest priority should be given to establishing parity between the education of boys and girls, and a bold and determined effort should be made by the Centre and the States to face the difficulties and magnitude of the problem. It recommended coeducation up to the middle school stage but separate institutions for girls at the high school stage, where more diversified curriculum suited to girls, should be introduced. The Committee desired that adequate provision be made for mothers, crèches, training of women teachers and employment facilities be made for adultwomen. Accordingly, many provisions in the policies and practices were made to encourage the education of girl child and the women teachers, particularly at the elementary stage.

Kothari Commission (1964-66) :

Despite the recommendations of numerous committees and commissions, and the continuous efforts being made to bring about the changes in education, Govt. of India was not very happy with the progress of education in the country. It was felt necessary to have a comprehensive policy of education covering all the sectors of education. Hence, the Education Commission was set up by the Government of India in 1964 under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari, to advise the Government on the national pattern of education and on the general principles and policies for the development of education at all stages and in all aspects.

The Commission set twelve Task Forces for different educational sectors like School Education; Higher Education; Technical Education; Agricultural Education etc. and seven Working Groups to study, in detail, many of specific problems and to report. The Reports of the Task Forces and the Working Groups enabled the Commission to examine some of the important issues in depth and in detail. The Commission perceived education as the major tool of social reconstruction and making people aware about their partnership with government in nation building and development. The Commission wanted people to participate in national development.

@

Yashpal Committee (1992) :

Much later, in 1992, National Advisory Committee was set up by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Prof. Yashpal to suggest ways and means to reduce academic burden on school children. After studying the problem of curriculum load in detail, Yashpal Committee came to the conclusion that the problem of the load on school children does not arise only from faulty curriculum design, or poorly equipped teachers, or school administrators or text books but from our valuing qualifications more than real competence for doing useful things. It is connected with the notions of 'knowledge explosion' and the 'catching up' syndrome.

The Yashpal Committee wanted stringent norms for granting recognition to private schools for improving the quality of learning. The committee appreciated the idea of setting up education committees at village, block and district level to undertake planning and supervision of schools under their jurisdiction. Yashpal Committee suggested the following quality criteria for Primary Education–

- 1) Rank attained in school grading,
- 2) Participation of the society,
- 3) Percentage of attendance
- 4) Quality standard of education could be determined on the basis of the criteria which include:

National Policies on Education(NPE) :

You will see that after independence, problem of educational reconstruction was reviewed by several commissions and committees, to promote education amongst Indian populace. Based on the reports and recommendations of these commissions and committees, the National Policies of Education (NPE) were formulated from time to time, and implemented. These policies considered education at all levels, particularly at elementary level, in both rural and urban India, as it was a major concern of the country.

National Policy of Education (NPE) 1968

The first NEP was based on the recommendations of the Education Commission (1964–1966). It was promulgated in 1968 and required a “radical restructuring” and equalizing educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration and greater cultural and economic development. The policy set the path of educational development and aimed at fulfilling the cherished goal of compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, as stipulated by the Constitution of India, and the better training and qualifications of the teachers. The basic tenets of the policy included:

- 1. Free and Compulsory Education:** Making serious efforts to provide free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, and to reduce the prevailing wastage and stagnation in schools, as well as, to ensure that every child who is enrolled in school successfully completes the prescribed course.
- 2. Status, Emoluments and Education of Teachers:** According teachers an honored place in society and protecting their academic freedom, ensuring adequate and satisfactory emoluments and satisfactory service conditions, and emphasizing teacher education, particularly in-service teacher education.
- 3. Development of languages:** Development of regional languages, to implement effectively, the three-language formula at the secondary stage.
- 4. Equalization of Educational Opportunity:** Equalizing educational opportunity, to promote social cohesion and national integration by correcting regional imbalances, by admitting students on the basis of merit in all schools like public schools, and by protecting interests of socially deprived sections.
- 5. Spread of Literacy and Adult Education:** Liquidating mass illiteracy and providing continuing education for functional literacy among employees in commercial and industrial establishments. Such linkage is necessary to make technical and vocational education at the secondary stage, effectively terminal.
- 6. Production of Books:** Producing high quality books for children – low cost textbooks for schools and universities.

7. Games and Sports: Developing games and sports at large scale, with the object of improving the physical fitness and sportsmanship of the students

8. Part-time Education and Correspondence Courses: Developing part time education and correspondence courses, of the same status as full-time courses, on a large scale for the university and school students, teachers and workers. Education in the country was dictated by this policy for almost two decades, making slow but steady progress and beginning of many innovative programs and practices. It was reviewed in the context of national integration.

National Policy of Education (NPE)—1986

This policy is characterized by emphasis on national integration and ten core elements of curriculum. National System of Education is visualized here, as based on a national curricular framework, which contains a common core, along with other components that are flexible. The common core include the history of India's freedom movement, the constitutional obligations and other content, essential to nurture national identity. These elements cut across subject areas and are designed to promote values such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of sexes, protection of environment, removal of social barriers, and observance of small family norms and inculcation of scientific temper. The salient features of this policy include:

1. Common educational structure
2. National curricular framework with ten common core elements
3. Equal educational opportunities for all
4. Promotion of adult education.
5. Use of scientific and technological developments in education
6. Operation Black Board for UEE.
7. Minimum levels of learning
8. Pace setting Navodaya Vidyalayas.
9. Vocationalisation of education.
10. Raising the status of the teacher.
11. Creating awareness about social, economic, cultural and environmental issues
12. Accountability in education.

These policies provided a strong base for UEE and many of the programs initiated which were of the national importance. This policy was further modified soon, in 1992, to reset the higher goals to achieve.

Concerns of Elementary Education

The various concerns regarding educational issues, particularly concerns about elementary education gleaned out from the recommendations of the commissions and the national policies include:

- Low enrollment- Overall enrollment in primary schools was found very low. Most of the 'out of the school children don't go to school because of distance and lack of physical facilities etc.
- High dropout rate - The children leave school for variety of reasons, mostly, to work and earn money. A large percent of the dropouts are girls, forced by their parents to leave school and tend the family at home.
- Children living in rural areas continue to be deprived of a quality education due to their under qualified, untrained teachers. In recent years the number of qualified teachers has increased because of efforts by the government and private groups to improve the professional training of rural teachers.
- Obtaining more teachers for rural schools is difficult because of state guidelines that approve of high student-teacher ratios.
- Poor quality of instruction resulting in unsatisfactory quality of 'successful' students. Lack of instructional facilities and practices that build a stronger school program.
- Strengthening of leadership and supervision in pre-primary and elementary schools by professional training and re-training of large number of personnel e.g. Teachers, Head Masters and Supervisors etc.
- Substituting current examination system by alternatives like CCE.
- Inequality - Gender disparity, Urban-Rural disparity, regional disparity.
- Building positive mindset of teachers towards ICT.

Structure of Elementary Education of 8 Years

The Educational Structure

It was thought advantageous to have a broadly uniform educational structure in all parts of the country. The ultimate objective is to adopt the 10+2+3 pattern, the higher secondary stage of two years being located in schools, colleges or both according to local conditions. National System of Education envisages a common educational structure in the pattern of 10+2+3 as suggested by Kothari Commission. This uniform structure of school education has been adopted all over the country. However, within the states, there remained variations in the number of classes constituting the Primary, Upper Primary, High and Higher Secondary school stages, age for admission to class I, medium of instruction, public examinations, teaching of Hindi and English, number of working days in a year, academic session, vacation periods, fee structure, compulsory education etc. The primary and upper primary or middle stages together constitute the elementary stage. The further break-up of the first 10 years was, elementary system comprising 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary, followed by 2 years of High School. Following table shows the division of schooling in most of the states:

Table - 2
Structure of School Education System in India

Stages of Schooling	Pre-primary	Lower-primary	Upper-primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary
Grades	Nursery, LKG/UKG	1 to 5	6 to 8	9 and 10	11 and 12
Length of program	3 years	5 years	3 years	2 years	2 years
Age level	Entry at 3 to 6 years	6 to 11 Years	11 to 14 years	14 to 16 years	16 to 18 years

Pre-Primary:

In the broad structure of Indian education, Pre-primary education forms the basis of learning. It is divided into Nursery, Lower Kindergarten (LKG) and Upper Kindergarten (UKG). At this stage student is acquainted with formal school life and reading and writing skills. It consists of children of 3-5 years of age.

Lower Primary:

A child enters class one of primary school after finishing Upper Kindergarten or directly. In the lower primary level, students get an idea of the different subjects. The primary school curriculum emphasizes general education and covers basic subjects such as reading, writing and arithmetic, supplemented by History, Civics and Geography as well as Environmental Science. The children of the age group of 6-11 years study at this stage in the classes I- V in most of the states. However in some of the states this stage consists of classes of I-IV. The language of instruction at the lower primary level is generally the mother tongue, either Hindi or a regional language.

Upper Primary:

It consists of children studying in classes from sixth to eighth. From upper primary, other languages such as English and/or Hindi (if Hindi is not the mother tongue) are introduced. English is introduced in Standard V, onwards.

School Curriculum Framework :

Any National Education System is based on the common curriculum framework designed keeping in view the national needs and requirements. In India also, keeping different policies in mind, national curriculum framework was designed from time to time and implemented all over the country. Such frame work was then reviewed for its achievement in terms of national goals. We will review the latest National Curriculum Framework being implemented, currently.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF 2005):

NPE 1986,92 proposed a national framework for curriculum as a means of evolving a national system of education “The NPE – Programme of Action(PoA) envisaged a child-centered approach to promote universal enrolment and universal

retention of children up to 14 years of age and substantial improvement in the quality of education in the school” (PoA, P. 77). National Curriculum Framework was envisioned as a means of modernizing the system of education. National Curriculum Framework 2005 reviews and refers to the recommendations of the Mudaliar Commission and Kothari Commission and reviews development of Curriculum Framework of 1975, 1988 and 2000. It heavily draws from the report entitled Learning without Burden (1993) and National Policy on Education 1986, examining the problems of curriculum overload. After considering all these policies and the recommendations of Yashpal Committee, a new revised restructured national curriculum framework was prepared in 2005 and is being implemented at present in the entire country. The NCF 2005 examines the curriculum load on children in depth and provides a framework within which teachers are free to choose and provide the learning experiences that they think are useful for better learning. It envisages that in order to realize educational objectives, the curriculum functions as a structure that helps in providing required experiences. Media and educational technologies can provide effective modes for curriculum transaction. The children also must understand how to learn and construct their own knowledge so that learning becomes wholesome, creative and enjoyable. The salient features of the revised NCF are as follows:

- (a) connecting knowledge to life outside the school,
- (b) ensuring that learning shifts away from rote methods,
- (c) enriching the curriculum so that it goes beyond textbooks, and
- (d) making examinations more flexible.

Critical Pedagogy

The children are critical observers of their own conditions and needs, and should be participants in discussions and problem solving related to their education and future opportunities. Hence, children need to be aware that their experiences and perceptions are important and should be encouraged to develop the mental skills needed to think and reason independently and have the courage to dissent. Participatory learning and teaching, emotion and experience, need to have a definite and valued place in the classroom. True participation starts from the experiences of both students and teachers. Critical pedagogy provides an opportunity to reflect critically on issues in terms of their political, social, economic and moral aspects. It entails the acceptance of multiple views on social issues and a commitment to democratic forms of interaction. This is important in view of the multiple contexts in which our schools function. A critical framework helps children to see social issues from different perspectives and understand how such issues are connected to their lives. Critical pedagogy facilitates collective decision making through open discussion and by encouraging and recognizing multiple views, and in designing a curriculum sensitive to these circumstances.

Implications for Elementary School Curriculum

As a result of these developments on the educational scenario and the latest decision of implementing the RTE Act in all the states, the immediate action is taken up at all the levels all over the country. The new curriculum is designed and implemented in most of the states following the NCF guide lines and NCERT has developed the new text books for all the subjects based on these reforms and philosophy and practice of education. Examinations are abolished and CCE is introduced at the elementary stage, participatory management is inducted making beneficiaries and community at large, partners to school complex in educating the young generations. Due emphasis on ICT involvement in teaching-learning process is also being given. The total number of days for the curriculum transaction is decided to be 200 days. The school annual calendar could be decentralized to the district level and decided in consultation with the Zilla panchayats. Total homework time prescribed in there is (i) No homework up to Class II and two hours a week from Class III of primary schools, (ii) One hour a day (about five to six hours a week) Middle school, and (iii) Two hours a day (about 10 to 12 hours a week) in Secondary and Higher Secondary.

Conclusion

After having a critical review and discussion on the recommendations of the various Education Commissions and Committees in post independence era, we have learnt from this unit the genesis of the present education system and how it developed. We have seen how the recommendations of Radhakrishnan Commission and Kothari commission influenced the development of education in general and Yashpal Committee specifically elementary education in this country. We have seen how they are reflected in subsequent national policies on education revised from time to time.

Educational policies and progress have been reviewed in the light of the goals of national development and priorities set from time to time. In its resolution on the NPE 1968, an emphasis on quality improvement and a planned, more equitable expansion of educational facilities and the need to focus on the education of girls was stressed. NPE-1986 was formulated which was further updated in 1992. The NPE 1986 provided for a comprehensive policy framework for the development of education up to the end of the century and a Plan of Action (POA) was prepared in 1992, assigning specific responsibilities for organizing, implementing and financing its proposals. After considering all these policy decisions from time to time and the recommendations of Yashpal Committee the entire school structure was modified and a new National Curriculum framework has been developed in 2005, and is being implemented at present in the entire country.

References

- 1 Aggarwal, J.C. (1985): *Development and Planning of Modern Education*, Vani Educational Books, New Delhi (Pp **109- 110**)
- 2 Aggarwal, J.C. (1993): *Landmarks in the History of Modern Indian Education*. Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi (Pp **171-175**)
- 3 Chaube, S.P. (1988): *History and Problems of Indian Education*, (Second Edition) Vinod Pustak Mandir, Agra, UP. (Pp **65-69**)
- 4 Rawat, P.L. (1988): *History of Indian Education* , Ram Prasad and Sons, Agra, U.P. (Pp **210-215**)
- 5 Safaya, R.N., (1983), *Current Problems in Indian Education* , 9th Edition, Dhanpat Rai & Sons, Delhi (Pp **179-192**)
- 6 Sharma, R.N. (1988): *History and Problems of Education in India*, Surjeet Publications, Delhi (Pp **79-92**)
- 7 Mukherji, S. N. (1966): *History of Education in India* (Pp. **167-168.**)
- 8 Deshmukh Ashima & Dr. Nair Anju(2010): *Educational Management*, Himalaya Publishing House New Delhi (Pp **479-492**)