

## **NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION 1986 AND SUBSEQUENT PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The Indian education sector is marching ahead significantly with the changing times. It also been undergoing tremendous changes since its independence from British empire in 1947. The first national education policy was formulated by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1968 with Triguna Sen as the education Minister, and then the National education policy 1986 under the rule of Rajiv Gandhi as Prime Minister P.V Narasimha Rao as Minster of Human Resource Development. The latest report was the National education policy 2020 according to which Narendra Modi took the initiative with the goal of introducing real changes into the education system in our country.

The National education policy of 1986 brought about a radical change in the history of Indian education. This article attempts to provide a brief overview of the significant experimental projects and their outcomes during the crucial period from 1986 to 2020.The Minimum Level of Learning initiative implemented subsequent on the NPE of 1986, The DPEP of 1994,The SSA programme of 2001-2002 and the SSK project which replaced SSA in 2021 have played a pivotal role in strengthening Indian education sector. This article is intended to throw some light on the significance these programmes and their impact on Indian educational landscape.

**KEY CONCEPTS :** National Education Policy (NEP) National Policy On Education (NPE), District Primary Education Program (DPEP), Minimum Levels Of Learning (MLL), Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), Samagra Siksha Abhiyan, Village Education Committee (VEC), Rashtriya Madhyamic Siksha Abhiyan (RMSA), Non-Formal Education (NFE), Block Resource Centre (BRC), Cluster Resource Centre (CRC), Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe(ST), Universalization Of Elementary Education(UEE), Information And Communication Technology (ICT), Right To Education Act 2009 (RTE Act 2009), State Council Of Educational Research And Training (SCERT), District Institute For Education And Training (DIET), Early Childhood Education (ECE), Socially Useful Productive Work (SUPW)

### **NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION – 1986**

The National policy on education developed in 1986, whose main agenda was to counter the inequalities and securing equal opportunities in education among all with special reference made to the marginalised groups that formed a milestone in the history of education in the Independent India.

The primary aim of NPE 1986 was to ensure that all children below 14 years of age have access to education. For achieving this, the school infrastructure and premises were made attractive. Innovative learning techniques and appropriate teaching methodologies were, adapted, designed and implemented. Apart from this, the policy aimed at preventing dropouts and ensured education for those children who were then 'out of school' through formal education. This policy also envisaged the establishment of the state-run Navodaya schools and ensured the setting up of a number of primary schools in rural areas. This policy also ensured that the children with limited mobility have access to public schools through inclusive education.

The 10+2+3 structure was required in schools as advocated by Kothari commission by letting schooling take the first 5 years in the Lower Primary level and the remaining three in the Upper Primary level. It was planned that by the year 1995, every child was to get free and compulsory primary schooling and there should be at least one primary school per kilometre.

With the major aim being able to ensure quality education for all, it strived hard to bring about holistic development in children, by giving due importance to non-formal and part time education. The education policy of 1986 was marked with salient features, one of which was that it guaranteed measures of universal enrolment and retention of children in schools. Campaigns to conduct door to door surveys which ensured maximum enrolment and retention were under taken in an earnest manner. Non-formal education centres were set up for those who couldn't ensure their participation throughout the year. Education of females was a major concern given socio-cultural scenarios at the time two sets of school uniform, Text books, learning materials and transportation facilities were provided free of cost to give further boost to female empowerment.

Operation Blackboard was set up as a part of NPE 1986 implementation. The project was envisaged to improve the basic infrastructure and other amenities of public schools, could not only make it attractive in appearance but could ensure the retention of children in schools. As part of the project large classrooms were set up in schools. Toys, charts, maps, black boards and other learning materials were made available to children. These efforts paved way for maximum enrolment in public schools. Two committees were appointed to assess the progress of NPE 1986 namely

#### **ACHARYA RAMAMURTHY COMMITTEE (1990) and JANARDHANA COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION (1991)**

The Acharya Ramamurthy committee assessed the policy document, report was submitted January 9<sup>th</sup> 1991

#### **MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- In order to improve the quality of education, we need to ensure the availability of human and non-human resources more.
- Early Childhood Education (ECE) should become an integrated part of primary education.
- Efforts should be initiated to establish common school system to ensure educational equality and social justice
- All disparities must be eliminated to ensure access to quality education. Serious efforts for this should continue.
- Value based education should be integrated at all levels of education.
- Socially useful productive work (SUPW) programme should be embedded in educational activities.

## JANARDHANA COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION (1991)

- The second committee formed to implement National Education Policy 1986 is the Janardhana committee whose findings were referred to as THE PROGRAMme of Action 1992.

## MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Collaboration between the central and state governments are essential to ensure universalization of elementary education.
- Each state, district, and block should prepare a programme of action to determine their priorities in order to achieve the educational goals.
- Schools should be ensured with in walkable distance for ensuring the access of all students.
- Scientific teacher training, implementation of Minimum Levels of Learning, establishment of Village Education Committee (VEC) are to be ensured for quality education.
- Time to time curriculum revision and development of instructional materials are essential to ensure quality education.

Social mobilization, Universalize literacy and basic education, Provision of universal access are also the prioritised areas of Programme of Action 1992. After NPE 1986, various schemes, programmes and projects were introduced in the field of Indian school education. The ultimate goal of all of them was the holistic development of the children. All these projects had many important objectives such as ensuring quality education for children in the pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher secondary sections, ensuring access to and retention of education for disadvantaged sections of the society and providing an opportunity for everyone to identify their career interest and prepare training accordingly during the school education period.

Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), (RMSA), Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, are some of the important centralised projects and programmes implemented during the period from 1986 to 2020 in Indian school education sector.

### 1) MINIMUM LEVELS OF LEARNING

MLL programme aims to ensure access to schools for all children regardless of caste, religion, class, gender, region. MLL aimed at strengthening elementary education by its ensuring quality and equity and has given more importance to the concepts of competency based education and learning outcomes at elementary level. Academic achievements students in formal schools and students in non-formal education centres was a focus area for MLL and its basic features include

- **Achievability:-** One simple attribute that MLL needs to fulfill is: they should match with the learning outcomes that are attainable by every learner.
- **Communicability:-** MLLs must be realistic and attainable. It is also necessary to establish them in an easy understandable language and form that most of the teachers, most of whom are in remote rural locations and are working in an isolated setting with no external assistance or direction. Besides the primary school teachers, it should also be decipherable to the NFE (Non Formal Education) instructor, the parent and the community.
- **Evaluability:-** The statements made by MLLs must be the one that acts as a blue print of constant and holistic assessment of learners and consequently simplify the process in question.

**Learning continuum:-** The attempt has been to establish MLLs in as simple and understandable a way as is possible, namely, specifying the competencies that are to be mastered under each learning unit, building as directly as possible upon the competencies of the previous unit.

MLL focussed on the development of competency based teaching and learning. Major steps introduced by the project in schools include Assessment at primary level in current achievement Modification of the project according to the local requirements, consistent training of teachers, preparation of handbooks and training in accordance to MLL based method of teaching preparation and use of other evaluation materials use of norms during the time of curriculum revision and use competency based teaching learning materials to ensure that the educational process is an activity oriented joyful process. DPEP was another project that was aimed at improving Indian education system.

### **DPEP**

Implemented in 1994. starting out on 42 districts later spreading to 285 districts. DPEP was intended to improve access, retention and achievement among the primary school going age group with a focus on female students, socially deprived and economically backward sections of the society. The major objectives were to ensure primary education for all children through both formal and non-formal, reduce in gender and social disparities in enrolment, learning etc., reducing the prevailing dropout rate by 10 per cent, rise the average achievement rate by 25 percentage and ensuring the achievement basic literacy and numeracy competencies of primary school children, ensuring of alternative accessibility to primary education for children through non-formal education system. Its major characteristics include Decentralised planning with District being the basic unit for planning and implementation the key strategies being conceptual clarity and sensitivity to local condition another salient feature is that Participatory process in which the teachers, parents and community had a key role during the process, with equity being a centre characteristic SC, ST, females, other minorities and disabled sections are given major consideration. Planning and the implementation of all DPEP programmes and projects organizing through community enabled and innovative ways. DPEP emphasized a decentralized management system with the help of Panchayati Raj Institution, Village Education Committee and the community. DPEP was able to ensure the progress of primary education through the formation of BRC, CRC, and through the conduction of teacher training, curriculum revision and monitoring and evaluation. DPEP has been successful in improving access and retention of of children through formal and alternative modes of education.

### **SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyayan is also a project conducted by the central government with an aim of realizing Universalisation of Elementary education by the year 2010. The SSA was started with the aim of giving the children between 6 and 14 years old with effective and helpful elementary education. SSA is the initiative that caters to community involvement in the management activities of schools by removing social, regional and gender disparities. 60 % of the total out lay of SSA projects and programmes are borne by the central government and 40 per cent by the state governments.

### **FEATURES OF SSA**

- Global basic education with clear planning.
- Quality education across the country.
- Ensuring social justice through basic education.
- Joint action of central and state governments in the matter of education.

- An opportunity to foster basic educational policies and objectives of the state administration.

### **GOALS OF THE PROGRAMME**

- Reach 100% of children in schools by 2003 with back-to-school campaign.
- Ensure that all children finish five years of primary education by 2007.
- Attention to elementary education of high quality with the accent on life education.
- Eradicate the disparities between the genders and social levels at the primary school level by 2007 and elementary by 2010.
- Construct new schools in areas that do not have schools.
- Provision Infrastructural facilities in schools.
- Universal retention by 2010.

SSA goes a step further to DPEP and envisages habitation, as a unit of planning. Habitation form the basis for the preparation of district plans. Each district is required to formulate a perspective plan and an annual plan and budget indicating the required resources needed for achieving the goal of UEE by 2010. Innovation under SSA has, according to different studies, resulted in significant expansion both quantitatively and qualitatively. Although quality is yet to be improved as a concern, the SSA has had the capacity to expand the schooling facilities, enrolment and retention as well as achievement disparities among the genders and social groups.

### **RASHTRIYA MADHYAMIC SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**

Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan is a big project that was initiated by the central government in march 2009 to enhance the access of quality of secondary education. It attempts to increase the enrolment rate by ensuring that all households have a secondary school within the reasonable distance. It is expected to improve the quality in secondary school by ensuring that all the secondary schools provide the standards that are given, the gender discrimination is eliminated, and socio economic barriers are eliminated by offering access to secondary level education to all.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME**

- RMSA envisages to increase secondary enrolment from 52.26 percentage in 2005-06 to 75 percentage.
- Establish secondary schools at reasonable distance within five years of the implementation of RMSA.
- Improve the standard of education in all the secondary schools as per the set standards.
- Eradicate gender inequality and do away with socio-economic and disability issues.
- Make secondary level education universal.
- Enhance and universalize secondary education by 2020.
- Increased physical infrastructural facilities of secondary schools through building of additional classrooms, labs, libraries, art and craft rooms, toilet block, drinking water and residential hostels to the teachers.
- Enhance the quality of secondary education by recruiting more teachers to reduce teacher student ratios to 1:30, focus on teaching science, mathematics and English, provide in-service education to teachers, add science laboratories, ICT based education, and add new teaching learning reforms through curriculum revision.
- Ensure equity interventions in secondary schools by setting up new schools in SC, ST, minority areas, establishing special enrolment drive for weaker sections, increasing recruitment of women teachers and providing special extra- curricular facilities for girls.



## **SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN**

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan is one of the initiatives that are going to be used to treat school education (pre-primary up to 12th standard) as a whole and not a divided part of the education sector since it has three prior projects such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), and Teacher education.

### **MAIN OBJECTIVES**

- Enhance learning among the children through quality education.
- Reducing the disparities in social and gender education.
- Promote equity and inclusion in every stage of schooling.
- Secure minimum requirements in school education system.
- Harness vocationalisation of education.
- Support states in the enactment of the right of children to free and compulsory education.(RTE Act 2009).
- Enhance and revamp the SCERT and DIET as the hubs of education training.
- Empower teacher education institutions.

### **CONCLUSION**

An attempt has been made in this article to mention some of the programmes and projects implemented in the field of Indian school education in connection with the National Policy of Education 1986. The impact of the functioning of Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL), District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamic Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan on Indian education sector is not insignificant. These programmes and projects have significant impact in the areas of school access, equity, quality education, academic and non-academic facilities and technical education. The impact of such projects in transforming students from being the consumers of knowledge to producers of knowledge is immeasurable. This kind of more research projects, reforms and research studies are essential in the quality oriented Indian education sector. Therefore, we are looking at the National Education Policy 2020, to be implemented in near future, with great hope and expectation. Indian education will become globally recognized and accepted only when this type of innovative programmes and projects are devised and implemented thus easing the way for Indian society being a cosmopolitan one.

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