



REVISITING THE HISTORY OF INDIAN EDUCATION POLICIES

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Abstract: Education is fundamental to achieve national development. A better education system develops good human resources which bring prosperity, equity and transform society by utilizing their potential. Before the British came to India, there was a network of indigenous schools in the name of Ashrams, Gurukuls, Madrasa/Maktabas, Pathshalas, etc. The Education Policy of the British Raj developed to consolidate and expand British Power which eventually led to the foundation of an education system in India that contributes greatly to the emergence of modern India. Even after independence, the government framed various education commissions to address education challenges and upgrade the education system. Post-Independence education policies were majorly focused to remove disparities and equalize education for all unlike the pre independence policies that followed 'The Downward Filtration Theory' where education would percolate to the lower sections from the so called upper class natives. Post Independent policies were framed keeping in mind the right to education for all (i.e., mass literacy program) and thus increase the literacy rate in the country. This article thus reviews on various educational policies in pre and post independent era and how the outlook towards education changed from simple ruling strategy to a cause for overall prosperity and glory of the country.

Key Words: Education Policy, Pre-independence, Post-independence, Commission, Literacy.

1. INTRODUCTION :

The quotation "Swadesh Pujyate Raja, Vidwan Sarvatra Pujyate"- illustrate the significance of education in India which has been considered as the most ancient and largest system among the world. Education is an important foundation of society which brings the economic wealth, social prosperity and political stability [Keay, 1972]. It also provides an opportunity to build the harmony and democracy in the society. The ultimate objective of the education is not only educate individuals within the society but also qualify them for their professional endeavour, integrate people into society and teach social values [Mukherjee, 1976]. In India, the education system was evolved during ancient age (Vedic Education System) which was mainly based on the recitation process by the students followed by the explanation of teachers (Guru) at ashrams, gurukuls, temples, residence of teachers, etc. No formal classroom teaching was reported. The ancient education period was mainly classified into Vedic time, Buddhist time and Mughal time with their specific language medium [Singh, 2005]. The medium of Vedic system of education was Sanskrit and the Buddhist system were Pali. "Takshashila" or "Taxila" was the famous higher education centre for teaching and learning on Buddhism. Takshashila (an ancient Indian city) has been declared as an archeological site and world heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1980 [Aggarwal, 1993]. Another famous higher learning centre was "Nalanda" where different subjects were taught, including the Vedas, fine arts, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. It is currently situated at Rajgir, Bihar, India and also declared as world heritage site by UNESCO in the year 2015. The other famous institutions in ancient times were "Vallabhi", "Vikramshila", "Ujjain" and "Benaras" (Kashi). At the medieval age, education pattern was primarily focused on the Islamic and Mughal System. During this period, a large number of schools and libraries were established and brought new education system with the introduction of new cultures and traditions. The educational institutions at that time was divided into two categories: a) Maktabas (for Primary education of the children) and b) Madrasas (as higher education centre). A remarkable development in education system were noted at medieval era during the time of Mughal Emperor Akbar. Along with religious and practical education, Akbar initiated the teaching on Hinduism and philosophy along with Islamic religious in many Madrasas. The subjects like medicine, history, geography, economics, political science,



astrology, philosophy, and mathematics were also taught in Madarsas. Akbar also implemented few compulsory subjects like Vedanta, Jurisprudence, and Patanjali for Sanskrit students [Dutta Chowdhury, 2021].

From the middle of medieval age, British invaded India and introduce modern education system during British Raj. Lord Thomas Babington Macaulay (1830s) introduce English language as medium of education [Bansal, 2017]. This article thus makes an attempt to review on the various education policies that were adopted during pre- and post-independence era in India with special reference to the impact on literacy rate as a result of changing policies.

2. History of Modern Education :

Before the British time, there was no recorded form of official education policy in India. The modern education system was developed by adopting various education policies at different time of British Rule *i.e.*, before 1857 (under the East India Company) and after 1857 (under the British Crown). The History of Indian Education policies were generally classified into Pre-independent and post- independent period respectively. The philosophical objectives of policies on education system in India were quite different from the British era to present independent India.

EDUCATION POLICIES BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

The British East India Company visited India as Trader but became ruler. During the ruling period of British East India Company, Warren Hastings, Governor-General of Bengal (1781) established the first educational institute *viz.*, Calcutta Madarasa for Islamic law studies. In 1784, William Jones established Asiatic Society of Bengal to understand and study the history and culture of India [Sarin, 2011]. In 1791, Jonathan Duncan founded the Sanskrit college to study the Hindu laws and philosophies. Richard Wellesley, Governor General (1800) founded the Fort William College in Calcutta to train the civil servants in Indian languages and customs. Due to disapproval of the British administration in England, this college was closed in 1802 [Ghosh, 1987].

a) The Charter Act of 1813 (Also known as East India Company Act of 1813)

This act was regarded as a landmark in the educational history of British India. According to the section 43 of the said act, it contained the first legislative admission of the right of education in India in the public revenues. This act recommends to allot an annual budget of Rs.1.0 lakh to be used in educating the native Indians. The said section also defined the objectives of the educational policies *viz.*, ‘*the revival and improvement of literature*’, ‘*the encouragement of learned natives of India*’ and ‘*the introduction and promotion of a knowledge of sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories in India*’. During this time, the Christian missionaries were active in mass educating the people but they concentrated more on religious teachings and conversions. By 1820, the activities of Missionary Societies had expanded considerably as educational institutes [Webster, 1990].

b) Macaulay’s Minutes/ The English Education Act, 1835

Lord Macaulay (1823) formed the General Committee of Public Instruction to guide the East India Company on the matter of education. The Orientalist members advocated for the promotion of education in Oriental languages (*i.e.*, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, etc.) rather than the Anglican mode of learning system. As a result of the Orientalist-Anglicist controversy, the education policy for spreading education in India was halted until 1835. The Charter Act 1813 was eventually renewed in 1833 for another term of 20 years. Macaulay, the first Law Member was appointed in 1834. Macaulay’s Resolution provided a clear picture of the British education policy for India. Macaulay promoted that a knowledge of science could only be accomplished by the adoption of English as the medium of instruction and subsequently rejected the claims of oriental languages as against English. His Minute also specified that British government’s main objective was to spread European literature and science among Indians and so all the financial grants for education would spent for that purpose through English medium. The resolutions ultimately decided the policy, medium, means and aims of education in India as the then Governor-in General himself was admirer of English Language [Macaulay, 1835; Keay, 1972; Sarin, 2011].

i) Lord Bentinck’s Resolutions, 1835

Lord William Bentinck served as Governor-General of India from 1828 to 1835. He passed the Resolution in 1835 which was the first declaration of the British Government in the sphere of education in India with definite aim, content and medium of instructions.

ii) The Policy of Downward Filtration Theory:

In the beginning of 19th century the British believed to make the educated higher class, blind followers of the Government which would be essential for administrative purpose. According to this famous doctrine, “*Education was to permeate the masses from above. Drop by drop from the Himalayas of Indian life useful information was to trickle downwards, forming in time a broad and stately stream to irrigate the thirsty plains*”. Lord William Bentinck appointed William Adam (1789-1868) in 1835 to make a survey of the state of education in Bengal and Bihar and suggested reform



in education. W. Adam submitted three reports between 1835 to 1838. Before submission of third report, Macaulay proposed his decision as he believed in the superiority of western civilization [Bansal, 2017].

c) Wood's Despatch, 1854

The Charter Act of the East India Company was reviewed in 1853 by the British Parliament through the appointment of a Special Parliamentary Committee to suggest a suitable educational policy for India. The Committee under Charles Wood (President of the Board of Control for India) made a thorough evaluation of the educational policy followed by the Company in India and proposed a Despatch (a policy document on education) for the functioning of education system in India. The objective of the Despatch was “*not only to produce a higher degree of intellectual fitness but to raise the moral character and to supply with servants*”. English and other vernacular languages of India would be the media for the diffusion of European knowledge. An outcome of this Despatch was the passing of the three University Acts of 1857 establishing Universities at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. It led to the construction of an Education Department in each province of British India before the transfer of ruler ship from the East India Company to the Crown. Education under the East India Company was ended with the Wood's Despatch of 1854 and the centre of interest in education was shifted from London to Calcutta. During this period of about five decades between the Despatch of 1854 and the appointment of the Indian Universities Commission in 1902 was described as the Victorian Era in Indian Education [Moore, 1965].

d) The Indian Education Commission (1882)

Lord Ripon appointed the Indian Education Commission by the Resolution of Government of India, 1882 under the Chairmanship of William Hunter (a member of Viceroy's Legislative Council) to review the existing education policy of India. Within ten months the Commission submitted a report which was a revised and enlarged version of Charles Wood's Despatch of 1854. The major recommendations were listed as a) establishment of indigenous schools with a freedom to choose vernacular language as a medium of instruction, b) separate establishment of secondary schools by the state for instruction in English, c) transfer of all government secondary schools to local native management committees, d) bifurcation of secondary education, etc. The ultimate objective of the report was to curtail the activities of its own educational institutions as well as withdraw from direct enterprise *i.e.*, gradual transfer of government institutions to efficient private bodies. In addition to that, it was proposed that the reorganised private institutions should enjoy the same status and privileges as government institution. The Report encouraged first time to promote Indian private sector in education system [Taylor et al., 1997].

e) Lord Curzon's Educational Policy:

A Commission was appointed under Sir Thomas Raleigh on 27th January 1902, to survey on the condition and prospects of the Universities in British India. The Commission submitted its report with various recommendations to the Government of India which were later incorporated in the Universities Act of 1904.

The major recommendations are - higher education for entering government jobs, dominance of examination on teaching, too much emphasis on memory training, the vernaculars and English as medium of instruction, too much emphasis on literary aspects of the curriculum, importance of primary education as mass education, etc. Recommendations for university education system were – reconstitution of Senates and Syndicates of universities, fulfilment of requisite requirements (like regular governing body, qualified teachers, adequate building and equipment, staff quarters, sufficient financial resources and a rational fee policy) by the colleges as laid down by the University for Affiliation, improvement of technical, vocational, and commercial education, etc. [Hingorani, 1955; Agarwal, 1993]

f) The Aftermath of Lord Curzon's Education Policy:

After the First Educational Conference at Simla on September 1901, Government appointed the Indian Universities Commission (1902). On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission of 1902, the Indian Universities Act was passed in 1904. The power conferred as per the Act on the Universities of India to control and supervise higher education in accordance with the principles and policy approved by the Government of India. G.K. Gokhale, the Congress Leader and Political Guru of Mahatma Gandhi, introduced a Bill in the legislative council on 16th March 1911 for creation of a separate education department and strengthening of the movement in favour of mass education. He forced the government to implement the concept of free and compulsory primary education as only 6% people of India were literate. Sir Harcourt Butler, as the spokesman, said that, there could be no question of compulsory primary education, as the country was not prepared for it [Sarin, 2011].

g) Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919)

Calcutta University Commission was appointed by the Government of India in 1917 to unfold the prospects of Calcutta University under the Chairmanship of Dr. Michael Sadler, the Vice-Chancellor of Leeds University. After thorough analysis of the present situation, the commission proposed several recommendation in the report. The major recommendations were – implementation of Matriculation examinations at the end of school stage, Entrance examination before entry to university, Intermediate examination followed by First Degree Examinations. For this



purpose Inter University Board (IUB) should be established and the duration of under-graduate courses for the first degree should be increased to three years with a provision of Honours courses [Calcutta University Commission, 1917-19; Report].

• Education under Dyarchy system (1921 -1937)

In the year 1919, a resolution known as Government of India Act, 1919, was passed which is otherwise known as Montague-Chelmsford Reform. The main feature of the Government of India Act of 1919 was the introduction of the principle of dyarchy or double government rule in the provinces *i.e.*, The Provincial Executives were divided into two parts – the Councillors (British) who took charges for Reverse subject matters and the Ministers (Indians) who took charges for transferred subject matters. Education was a transferred subject matter, became a direct responsibility of the Indian ministers. These ministers were unable bring into any major changes in education because finance, a reserved subject, was under the control of the English Councillors who were reluctant to give the required amount of money to the Indian Ministers. Financial difficulties prevented the provincial governments from taking up schemes of educational expansion or improvement. At the beginning in 1918, some form of compulsory schooling was gradually introduced just as education was transferred to the control of provincial governments under elected Indian ministers. These changes reflects reforms mark the end of direct colonial responsibility for education.

h) Education under Provincial Autonomy (Government of India Act, 1935)

In 1935, the British Parliament passed the Government of India Act, 1935 which divided all educational activities into two categories only – Federal (Central) and State (Provincial). All matters regarding education of all other categories other than those included in the Federal list fell under State or Provincial Subjects. The Provincial Autonomy was introduced in 1937. During their short term of Congress party in rule, the Provincial ministers dealt seriously with education from the national point of view. The Provincial Government undertook certain bold experiment such as Wardha Scheme ('learning through activity'). After the end of Second World War, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) in India published a comprehensive report on the "Post-War Educational Development in India" in the country. This was the first systematic and national level attempt to review the problems of education as a whole. It is also known as Sargent Plan after John Sargent, the then Educational Advisor to the Government of India. The government had proposed a detailed outline of the educational programmes to be undertaken by the government during the following 40 years from 1944 to 1984. This plan could not be implemented because of political turmoil in the country. With India achieving freedom in 1947, this Plan became only a matter of historical significance [Rawat, 1963; Ghosh, 1987; Singh, 2005].

EDUCATION AFTER INDEPENDANCE

The most important problems in the field of education before the independent national government were the expansion of mass compulsory elementary education, reform of the secondary and university educational systems, to develop vocational and technical education at various levels, to encourage women education and also to reorganize the structure of educational administration [Kumar, 1998]. After independence, several committees and commissions were established to review the educational problems and make recommendation in order to adjust it according to the changing needs, aspiration of the people, structure, and strategy of education. An effective Constitution to provide Justice, Liberty, and Equality and to provide free education to the people of India was needed at the time. According to Article 45 of the Indian Constitution explain that 'the State shall endeavour to provide within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years. Article 29 and 30 of the Indian Constitution guarantees the minorities certain cultural and educational rights to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice, whether based on religion or language'. Article 15, 17 and 46 safeguard the educational interest of the weaker sections of the Indian community, that is, socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Article 29(1) explains that 'any section of the citizens, residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to construe the same'. The above mentioned Articles along with others provided in the Indian Constitution aim to cultivate education among Indian citizens. The constitution is able to fill the gap of educational disparities between diverse classes of people by providing maximum possibilities to get education with minimum expenditure.

To ensure the constitutional rights of education to every Indian, several commissions were formed in different time. The present article highlights the objectives and major recommendations of various commissions on Indian education.

a) Radhakrishnan Commission (1948 - 1949)

It was the first education commission (December 1948 – August 1949), established according to the resolution of Ministry of Education, Government of India (No. 55-5/47-D/3 of dated the 4th November 1948) under the leadership



of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The objective of the commission was "to report on Indian University Education and suggest improvements and extensions that may be desirable to suit present and future requirements of the country". This commission was also known as University Education Commission. The commission discussed on the future plans of university education for Indian universities on the basis of compulsory Primary Education and a new Secondary Education. The commission also focused on the standard of teaching, various courses of study including post graduate level, training and research in arts and science, professional education in Agriculture, Engineering and Technology, Law, Medicine, Religious education, Women's education, Medium of Instructions, Examinations, etc. The most valuable part of the consideration was the future expansion of universities in rural as well as urban areas. One of the main recommendations relates to the establishment of a 'University Grants Committee' [later known as University Grants Commissions] by the Central Government followed by the setting up of a similar Committee in the United Provinces to allocate funds for universities and colleges. The commission also mentioned that 'It is the primary duty of a university to maintain the highest standards of its teaching and examinations' unless quality research will suffer. 'We cannot raise examination standards unless we improve the quality of teaching first.' The commission specially emphasized on the establishment of new school, colleges, universities, infrastructural development of existing institutions, increase intake capacity of students, implementation of academic calendar, refresher course for the teachers, reform in Laboratory and Libraries, etc.

The commission highlighted drastic reform of examinations in education system of India. The important recommendations were noted as Formation of Board of Examiners to advise about the policy of examinations, guidelines for appointing internal or external examiners, implementation of internal examination system along with allotment of marks, etc. The commission proposed that duration of each under graduate program will be 3 years and annual mode of examinations will be conducted after completion of each year. The criteria was to select that 'no one should serve as an examiner in a subject which he has not taught for at least five years. Three years should be the limit of continuous service as an external examiner for the first degree examination'. The commission has clearly proposed a distinct division *i.e.*, 70% or more marks: first class, 55% to 69%: second and at least 40% for a third. They also recommended that awarding grace-marks be abolished for the first degree and all higher examinations. Viva-Voce examinations should be employed only for post-graduate and professional degrees [The Report of the University Education Commission, 1950, Vol I].

b) Kothari Commission (1964 - 1966)

The National Education Commission (1964 - 1966), popularly known as Kothari Commission was established on 14th July, 1964 under the Chairmanship of Prof. Daulat Singh Kothari with an objective 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 up twelve Task Forces on (1) School Education; (2) Higher Education; (3) Technical Education; (4) Agricultural Education; (5) Adult Education; (6) Science Education and Research; (7) Teacher Training and Teacher Status; (8) Student Welfare; (9) New Techniques and Methods; (10) Manpower; (11) Educational Administration; and (12) Educational Finance. In addition, it set up seven Working Groups on (1) Women's Education; (2) Education of Backward Classes; (3) School Buildings; (4) School-Community Relations; (5) Statistics; (6) Pre-Primary Education; and (7) School Curriculum. Considering the major issues, the Task Forces and the Working Groups made few major recommendation on – reorientation of the educational system to national objectives, structural reorganization and improvement of teachers, enrolment policies and equalization of educational opportunity. For school educations, they highlighted problems of expansion, curriculum, teaching methods, textbooks, guidance, evaluation, administration and supervision. For higher education, the commission recommends establishment of major universities, programmes of qualitative improvement, enrolment and university governance along with research and agriculture, adult education, etc. The other part of the report was financial planning to implement all recommendations for improvement of the education policy. The commission submitted the report on 29th June, 1966 [Report of The Education Commission, 1964-66].

c) The National Policy on Education (1986)

The New Policy on Education was introduced by Shri Rajib Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India in the year 1986. The National System of Education emphasised on elimination of disparities in the educational system and improvement in the quality of publicly funded schools for majority of Indian people. For this reason, 'Operation Blackboard' launched to improve accommodation and facilities in under provided primary schools in rural as well as urban areas. Establishment of District Boards of Education, District Institutes of Education and Training, and Village Education Committees were the major recommended steps for creating a new form of accountability of the educational system. The commission recommended programme of action regarding reorientation of the whole system to promote women's equality, special provisions for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other educationally disadvantaged sections, minorities, the physically and mentally handicapped, etc. To expand the opportunity of access to higher



education the commission recommends to establish Open University in India. State government may also allowed to establish Open University with the help of National Open University [National Policy on Education 1986].

d) The Knowledge Commission (2005):

The Knowledge Commission, also known as The National Knowledge Commission was introduced by Dr. Manmohan Singh, the then Prime Minister of India on 13th June 2005 to improve the knowledge intensive service sector. The commission was aimed to expand Indian education system and suggest to establish 1500 universities (approx.) over the country by the year 2015 including partly restructuring the existing universities. The commission recommended several steps to be taken to achieve excellence in education system, incentives according to the performances of faculties, creation of New Regulatory bodies like Independent regulatory authority for higher education (IRAHE), etc. [National Knowledge Commission: Report to the Nation 2006 – 2009].

e) National Education Policy (2020)

The National Education Policy 2020 is considered as the first education policy of the 21st century which aimed to minimise the gap between present state of learning outcomes and the requirements by undertaking major reforms and bring the highest quality, equity, and integrity into the system, from early childhood care and education through higher education. The objective of this policy is to transform India into a vibrant knowledge society and become a global knowledge superpower by making both school and college education more holistic, flexible and multidisciplinary. Apart from the suggestions to reform in school (*i.e.*, revision of the curriculum and pedagogical structure from a (10+2) system to a (5+3+3+4) system for students based on cognitive development of children.) and higher education, the policy was conceived to raise the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) from the current 26 percent to 50 percent by 2030 in the higher education sector. It also promotes for development of the overall personality of students by strengthening infrastructure for open and distance learning, online education and increasing the use of technology in education. Moreover, the committee proposed to set National Research Foundation (NRF) to boost research work in the country. National Accreditation Council (NAC) will act as a single regulatory authority for higher education institutions across the country. The Higher Education Council of India (HECI) will play multiple vertical roles for fulfilment of the present requirements. For examinations, it was 'proposed to set up a National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance, Assessment, Review, Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), as a standard-setting body under MHRD that fulfils the basic objectives of setting norms, standards, and guidelines for student assessment and evaluation for all recognized school boards of India, guiding the State Achievement Survey (SAS) and undertaking the National Achievement Survey (NAS), monitoring achievement of learning outcomes in the country, and encouraging and helping school boards to shift their assessment patterns towards meeting the skill requirements of the 21st century in consonance with the stated objectives of this Policy. This Centre will also advise school boards regarding new assessment patterns and latest researches, promote collaborations between school boards. It will also become an instrument for the sharing of best practices among school boards, and for ensuring equivalence of academic standards among learners across all school boards'. For higher education, 'The principles for university entrance exams will be similar. The National Testing Agency (NTA) will work to offer a high-quality common aptitude test, as well as specialized common subject exams in the sciences, humanities, languages, arts, and vocational subjects, at least twice every year. These exams shall test conceptual understanding and the ability to apply knowledge and shall aim to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams. Students will be able to choose the subjects for taking the test, and each university will be able to see each student's individual subject portfolio and admit students into their programmes based on individual interests and talents. The NTA will serve as a premier, expert, autonomous testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for undergraduate and graduate admissions and fellowships in higher education institutions. The high quality, range, and flexibility of the NTA testing services will enable most universities to use these common entrance exams - rather than having hundreds of universities each devising their own entrance exams - thereby drastically reducing the burden on students, universities and colleges, and the entire education system. It will be left up to individual universities and colleges to use NTA assessments for their admissions.' [The Report: National Education Policy 2020].

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION:

Education policy generally deals with the regulations and principles that govern for the better operation of educational systems. In the ancient to medieval period the major objectives of education were to deliver religion based learning. There were no significant efforts made to universalise education and include people from different castes. The introduction of European education was an event of great historical importance for the emergence of education policies in India [Pallathadka et al., 2021]. One of the prominent objective of establishing institutions was to train a population of native Indians to assist English Judges for explaining the principles of Hindu and Muslim law. The Christian missionaries were allowed for teaching activities in India only after the approval of the Charter Act of 1813. As per the



Act, the Government allotted Rupees One Lakh for education purpose. This had been regarded as the first financial allotment for education system. The main drawback of the education policies implemented by British government was minimum or less allocation of fund and not taking initiative for mass education. According to Macaulay's Resolution, the British Government released funds for Anglican mode of learning not for teaching in Oriental languages. The British government followed The Policy of Downward Filtration Theory for spreading the education among the Indians until the implementation of recommendations by The Indian Education Commission (1882) where the control of secondary school education system for oriental languages went to native management committee and private enterprises were encourage to invest in education system. As a result the mass literacy program were hindered [Vaidyanatha Ayyar, 2017]. G.K. Gokhale forced the British government to implement the concept of free and compulsory primary education as only approx. 6% people of India were literate. The British Government also introduced Dyarchy System (1921 - 1937) in education which clearly depicted their intention for not providing financial support for spreading literacy in India. Mahatma Gandhi also pointed out the ineffectiveness of the primary education system of India and the low percentage of literacy rate among Indian people at Round Table Conference in London (1931). He accused that the policy of the British Government was responsible for the 'pathetic situation in the field of mass education'. According to Gandhiji, "I am a firm believer in the principle of free and compulsory primary education for India. I also hold that we shall realize this only by teaching the children a useful vocation and utilizing it as a means for cultivating their mental, physical and spiritual faculties. Let no one consider these economic calculations in connection with education as sordid or out of place. There is nothing essentially sordid about economic calculations." Gandhi believed that the medium of basic education should be through the mother tongue. Strong mother tongue foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum as well as a more positive attitude towards school to increase the literacy rate in India [Jena, 2020]. The Indian government adopted a variety of nation sponsored programme to address the problems of illiteracy in both rural and urban India. The main point of emphasis was put on education as it was the only way of developing a nation. The government formed several education commission ranging from Radhakrishnan Commission 1948 to National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 for modernization of the Indian Education in the context of global needs. Based on the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), the then Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi announced the first National Policy on Education in 1968, which called for a "radical restructuring" and proposed equal educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration and greater cultural and economic development. The policy focused on the learning of regional languages including implementation of the "three language formula" in secondary education. The policy also encouraged the teaching of the ancient Sanskrit language, which was considered an essential part of India's culture and heritage. A National Policy was also introduced by Rajiv Gandhi (former Prime Minister of India) specifically focused on issues that were previously neglected in the earlier education policy especially the implementation of IT in education. National Education Policy had been considered more successful than the previous one.

The statistical analysis on the literacy survey since the first census of 1901, shows gradual increase of literacy rate [Karkal, 1991]. The notable part of the statistical table (Table: 1; Fig. 1) is the literacy rate of Female in 1901 was 0.60% which clearly indicates the status of Women's education as well as women's empowerment in the country at British period (Table: 1; Fig. 2). Different education commission advocated on the fact that Women's education is essential to restructuring as well as the overall development of society. From the statistical analysis, it is visible that there had been a panoramic change in the education system in India. After independence, government of India had done a remarkable job to cater to the need of the Indian society for the purpose of education. Notwithstanding that, the literacy rate in India is still alarming in respect to world's scenario. Therefore, more practical need based policy implementation is required to improve the literacy rate as well as cater higher education including research to the Indians.

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Literacy Rate of India			
Year of Census	Overall Literacy Rate	Literacy Rate of Male	Literacy Rate of Female
1901	5.35%	9.83%	0.60%
1911	5.92%	10.56%	1.05%



1921	7.16%	12.21%	1.81%
1931	9.50%	15.59%	2.93%
1941	16.10%	24.90%	7.30%
1951	16.67%	24.95%	9.45%
1961	24.02%	34.44%	12.95%
1971	29.45%	39.45%	18.69%
1981	36.23%	46.89%	24.82%
1991	42.84%	52.74%	32.17%
2001	64.83%	72.56%	53.67%
2011	74.04%	82.14%	65.46%
2021	77.70%	84.70%	70.30%

Table 1: Tabulated report of Literacy in India according to Census 1901 to 2021. (Source of data: Census of India, 1901 to 2021).

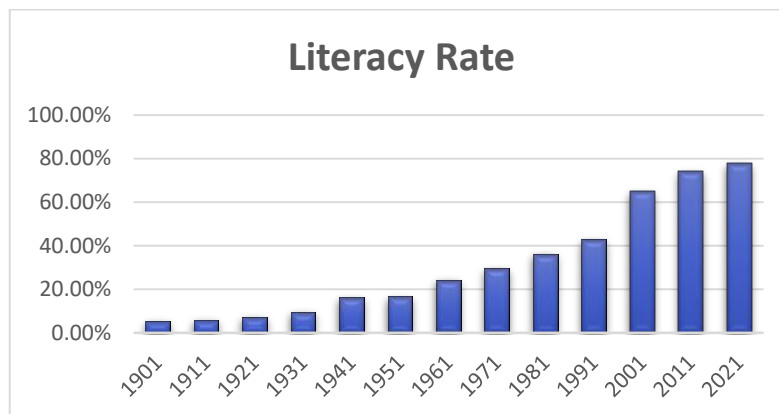


Fig. 1: Graphical representation of Gradual increase of Literacy rate in India

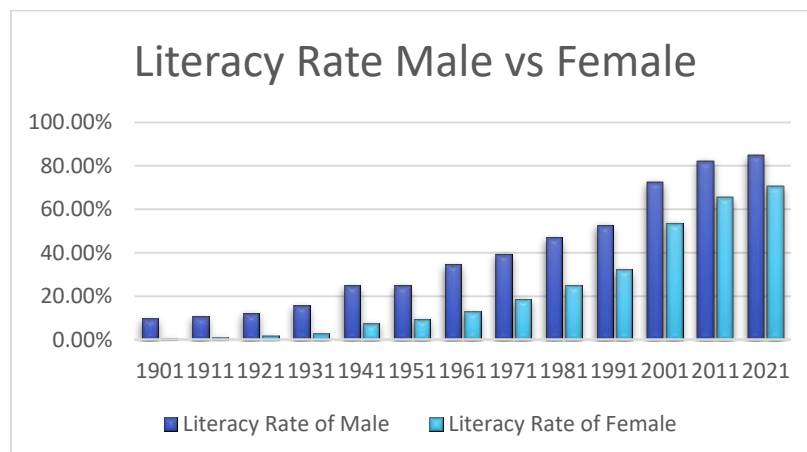


Fig. 2: Graphical representation of comparative analysis of Literacy rate for male and female in India.

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