

**NEP 2020 AND INCLUSION OF MARGINALIZED**

**\*Dr. Dharminder Singh**

***ABSTRACT***

Countries plan their education systems to progress further (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is independent India's third Education Policy after National Policy on Education (1968) and *National Policy on Education (1986)*. Effectiveness of NEP-2020, must be assessed based on the extent to which it contributes to the Indian concept of education, to inclusion of marginalized and to realization of recently created legislation; Right to Education which was made a fundamental right by the 86th constitutional amendment 2002 by inserting Article 21A in the constitution under the Fundamental Rights. In any phase of historical development of society, the significance of education for a human being has been continuously increasing. However it varies at different levels because of influence of an assortment of factors related to the society, religion, gender, caste, economic and physical status. Indian elementary education system was the second largest in the world, with 155.6 million children enrolled in the age group of 6-14 years. Simultaneously, India also has the world's largest number of out-of-school children (Chattopadhyay et al; 2009). Social Marginalization in Indian society leads to this problem. Domain of marginalized sections of people emerges as main cause of this problem.

**Key Words:** Marginalized, Out-of- School, Legislation, Inclusion, Domain, Education, Gender, Policy NEP-2020, Fundamental Rights

"Education is Something Which Makes Man Self-Reliant And Selfless" it is said in Rig Veda and in Upanishad it is said, "Education is For Liberation". In modern times Swami Vivekananda said, "Education is the manifestation of divine perfection, already existing in man". Father of nation, Mahatma Gandhi said, "By education I mean all round drawing out of the best in the child and man body mind and spirit." Sri Aurobindo had said, "Education which will offer the tools whereby one can live for the divine, for the country, for one self and for others and this must be the ideal of every school which calls itself national." Education is a basic human right that works to raise men and women out of poverty, level inequalities and

**Professor, Desh Bhagat University**

ensure sustainable development. The right to education has been recognized as a human right in a number of international conventions, but worldwide 258 million children and youth are still out of school for social, economic and cultural reasons. While India has the largest population in the K12 age group globally (Kindergarten to 12th grade), the worrying factor is that only 219 million children are enrolled across the country out of the eligible 361 million (Thornton, 2010). Transforming the increasing youthful population into a productive workforce requires heavy investment in education. In 1999–2000, Indian elementary education system was the second largest in the world, with 155.6 million children enrolled in the age group of 6-14 years. Simultaneously, India also has the world's largest number of out-of-school children (Chattopadhyay et al; 2009). Social Marginalization in Indian society leads to this problem. Domain of marginalized sections of people emerges as main cause of this problem. Marginality is an experience that affects millions of people throughout the world. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them. This results in making them handicapped in delving contribution to society. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further isolation. This has a tremendous impact on the development of human beings, as well as on society at large.

Though it is difficult to define and identify all marginalized people in common interpretation. But it is certain that many people in society face social Exclusion. There are certain sections in our Indian society that have faced marginalization and discrimination. The term 'marginalization' describes the overt actions or tendencies of human societies, where people who they perceive to undesirable or without useful function, are excluded, i.e., marginalized. 'To be marginalized is to be placed in the margins, and thus excluded from the privilege and power found at the center'. According to the government, nearly half of the children – over 80 million children – drop out before completing their elementary education ("India: Marginalized Children Denied Education" 2014). As per the 2011 census, more than 10.1 million children in the age group 5-14 years are engaged in child labour According to the latest survey data from the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) 2017-18 the annual average dropout rate of SC

students at the secondary school level is at 21.8% and it is 22.3% for ST students. Generally we can include in Women, People with disabilities, Schedule Castes (Dalits), Scheduled Tribes, Elderly or Aged People, Ecological and Geographically marginalized zones. (slums and tribals), Sexual Minorities. Those identified as gay, lesbian, transgender etc in marginalized sections. On 12 January 2019, The 2019 "State of the Education Report for India: Children with Disabilities" took into account the 2011 census, according to which there are 78,64,636 children with disability in India constituting 1.7 per cent of the total child population. Three-fourths of the children with disabilities at the age of five years and one-fourth between 5-19 years do not go to any educational institution. 75% of children with disabilities don't attend schools in India - UNESCO report said. ("75% of children with disabilities don't attend schools" 2019). Azad (2001) starts with the emphasis on 'all' and identifies 'able-bodied, disabled, at-risk, health-impaired, ethnic and cultural minorities, scheduled caste/scheduled tribe, slow learners, street children etc. There are two ways to create educational inclusion of the marginalized communities: one is following policies of reservation in educational institutions. The second is, evolving other supportive measures to generate capacity among socio-economically deprived communities to participate in and acquire the benefits of education. Apart from using reservation for creating educational inclusion of the marginalized communities,

*Present paper is concerned with inclusion of marginalized sections in imparting education. Effectiveness of NEP-2020, must be assessed based on the extent to which it contributes to the Indian concept of education, to inclusion of marginalized and to realization of recently created legislation; Right to Education, which was made a fundamental right by the 86th constitutional amendment 2002 by inserting Article 21A in the constitution under the Fundamental Rights. Prime Minister of India claims that NEP 2020 will transform lives of millions of people in times to come. Many claim that National Education Policy Aims to Empower India's Marginalised Sections, Without Tinkering with Reservation System, equitable and inclusive education, NEP 2020 will bring two crore out of school children back into the main stream.*

NEP 2020 also proposes many creative ways. Aside from existing categories of marginalized people, NEP has tried to explore various other categories such as Divyang, transgender, ecological and geographically marginalized zones, etc, and realised the need for their educational inclusion. It has created a separate cluster for various forms of marginalities which are facilitating inequalities in Indian society. This cluster is defined as socio-economic deprived groups (SEDG). The NEP defines the need for exerting special focus on these various marginalities, prevailing like viruses in the Indian society. The strategy appears to form diverse policies but cultivate the unified impact for these marginal groups. That is why NEP also suggested defining special educational zones (SEZ), areas which are inhabited by a large number of educationally deprived social groups. These SEZs will provide an opportunity to the states to give special attention, form special policies to reduce educational deprivation of the deprived social groups. The scholarships, transportation facilities and other ongoing support schemes will continue with many other capacity-building new policies and measures. Special Education Zones (SEZs) and Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs)/KVs to be set up in aspirational districts, with targeted focus on improving the quantity and quality of learning. While addressing issues of educational inclusion of the marginalised, the NEP proposed an interesting idea to give special emphasis on the educational inclusion of the girl child and women of the deprived sections. The NEP not only realised the need of educational inclusion of the girls and women of weaker sections but women as a whole and made a provision to make a Gender Inclusion Fund (GIF). This fund may be used to launch special schemes for the educational inclusion of women, which is almost half of our Indian population. NEP 2020 made various provisions to strengthen the educational capacity of minorities in India. It respects and gives support to their traditional medium of education and also tries to include them in the modern sphere of educational culture.

In context of marginalized people and New Education policy, Many social and political organizations criticized the new education policy on the basis of reservation which is already constitutionally granted privilege to SC/ST, OBC. According to them Caste and the associated aspects do not feature in the policy. In the 66 pages of the policy, there is no discussion on reservations or caste. There is no acknowledgement of any caste discrimination taking place in schools and colleges or of the flouting of reservations norms. It also does not provide any mitigation strategies for these issues. The policy refers to the SC/ST, OBC, and minority communities when it clubs them as SEDGs - Socially and Economically

Disadvantaged Groups. The other sub-groups under SEDGs include- women, transgender individuals, migrant communities etc. Clubbing these diverse groups under a single umbrella is unjustified. The educational needs of each of these sub-groups are different from each other. Each group is having different disease so common diagnose cannot be justified. They need to be addressed separately, distinctively. The needs of tribal communities differ from those of the other sub-groups. For instance, the policy points out that the dropout rate of ST students is higher compared to SC students. The girls from these communities are far more disadvantaged. Banding them together as one single group will not address the educational crisis that exists for the marginalized sections. Another objection on SEZ SEZs, it may elaborate the existing differences between the marginalised and non marginalized population. As suggested by Kothari Commission (1964), the common school system model in which children from different social and economic backgrounds shall study together, which will perhaps establish and strengthen the foundation of inclusive society right from the school level. But NEP tends to exacerbate not just social and economic inequalities but also educational inequalities (Sharma, “NEP 2020: why is it euphoria around a grand vision need reflection” 2020). This stands as a major barrier in inclusive education further.

Keshvi Raonka and Tammana Joon (2021) reveals that The NEP focuses on the need of digital education, but it fails to recognize how smart phones, laptops, wifi and for that matter the skills to use them remains a distant dream for most of the children from rural and marginalized sections of the society. Dalits (scheduled castes). Adivasis (Scheduled tribes) Children from urban slums and Children with disabilities Such children have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them. They face discrimination by teachers and other school staff and are continuously considered as “others” despite laws prohibiting discrimination and constitutional guarantees (“India: Marginalized Children Denied Education” 2014). Such discrimination is faced by thousands of children in our country. This paper focuses on the issues of such marginalized children from the following sections of society:

Batra (2020) According to Batra, most of the proposed interventions do appear to be well-meaning. But because they are based on a shallow understanding of the ground realities of education in an unequal society, they could suffer deep infirmities in execution. Several innovations proposed by NEP 2020 could exacerbate existing educational challenges and perpetuate inequality.

Agarwal (2020) Agarwal finds that NEP-2020, allow non-government philanthropic organisations and alternative models of schools thrust on privatization especially in higher education may act as a deterrent for education equalities and vistas for the disadvantaged and marginalized students. It is ironic that the NEP that claims to 'provide education to historically marginalised, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups lays the roadmap for the privatisation of higher education.

Kshitij Chopra (2020) while advocating new education policy said that Indians now make up about 20-30% of the graduate student population in top institutions across the globe, the tech giants of the world also have a similar trend among employees and companies like Google, Microsoft, IBM, and Pepsi (formerly) have CEOs of Indian origin. Also, in recent years, the Startup ecosystem has flourished in India and the number of Indian unicorns is surging NEP 2020 seems to be a step in the right direction with supposed thrust on actual learning and not just rote memorization and getting a degree. As an optimistic sceptic, he hoped there is a transformational change and a phoenix rises from the ashes.

Countries plan their education systems to progress further (Rizvi & Lingard, 2009). After independence Gandhi in his development model emphasized among other things, and self reliance su!ciency, swadeshi, liberation of the rural poor from all forms of oppression and deprivation and participation of the masses in nation building. he also described as man ‘s Swaraj. Nehru strongly believed in scientific knowledge and propagated reasoning and rationality as the basis of all learning. It was under Nehru’s vision for the country’s youth that pivotal higher education institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), All Indian Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and others were set up. Nehru helped establish the Lalit Kala Academy and the Sahitya Akademi, and was the first chairperson of the latter. According to him, education was not only about academics and scholarly studies but also about art, culture and all round development as well. Nehru was very much influenced by western culture and socialism. Many intellectuals condemned him on his pro Russian they were of the view that India cannot develop on socialistic model, even many scientists at that time also condemned Nehru for his denial to get support from US for nuclear research. But scientific socialism,

tempered by his intense humanism, thus became his intellectual tool. His socialism was basically aesthetic and liberal, concentrating on the individual rather than the community and stressing self-expression, individuality, social justice and human creativity. His entire model of development and economic change was based on it.

On the basis of the report and recommendations of the Kothari Commission (1964–1966), the government of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi announced the first National Policy on Education in 1968, which called for a "radical restructuring" proposed equal educational opportunities in order to achieve national integration and greater cultural and economic development. The policy called for fulfilling compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, as stipulated by the Constitution of India and specialized training and qualification of teachers. The policy called for a focus on the learning of regional languages, outlining the "three language formula" to be implemented in secondary education - the instruction of the English language, the official language of the state where the school was based, and Hindi. Language education was seen as essential to reduce the gulf between the intelligentsia and the masses.

In 1986, the government led by Rajiv Gandhi introduced a new National Policy on Education. The new policy called for "special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity," especially for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and the Scheduled Caste (SC) communities. To achieve such a social integration, the policy called for expanding scholarships, adult education, recruiting more teachers from the SCs, incentives for poor families to send their children to school regularly, development of new institutions and providing housing and services. The NPE called for a "child-centered approach" in primary education, and launched "Operation Blackboard" to improve primary schools nationwide. The policy expanded the Open University system with the Indira Gandhi National Open University, which had been created in 1985. The policy also called for the creation of the "rural university" model, based on the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi, to promote economic and social development at the grassroots level in rural India. 1992 The 1986 National Policy on Education was modified in 1992 by the P. V. Narasimha Rao government. In 2005, Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh adopted a new policy based on the "Common Minimum Programme" of his United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government. Programme of Action (PoA) 1992, under the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 envisaged to conduct of a common entrance examination on all India basis for admission to professional and technical programmes in the country. For admission to Engineering and Architecture/Planning programmes, Government of India vide Resolution dated 18 October 2001 has laid down a Three – Exam Scheme (JEE and AIEEE at the National Level and the State Level Engineering Entrance Examinations (SLEEE) for State Level Institutions – with an option to join AIEEE). This takes care of varying admission standards in these programmes and helps in maintenance of professional standards. But from last three decades Indian government could not present its education policy despite of bulk of changes and transformations due to neo-economic policies incorporating Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization after collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 Privatization in education has mushroomed after this paradigm shift in economic policy of India. P. Geetha Rani (2008) Private higher education is one of the most dynamic and the fastest-growing segment of post-secondary education at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A combination of unprecedented demand for access to higher education and the inability, or willingness of governments to provide the necessary support has brought private higher education to the forefront. Private institutions, with a long history in many countries, are expanding in scope and number, and are becoming increasingly important in parts of the world that have relied on the public sector Altbach, (1999). This transition process in higher education is primarily on account of the new goals, policies, and practices of neo-liberal market principles.

The new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, is a document which directs for the structural betterment of the education system by innovative and progressive ideas after a long socio-economic change in our country. The changes are made according to the need of the time. In 2019, the Ministry of Human Resource Development released a Draft New Education Policy 2019, which was followed by a number of public consultations. The Draft NEP discusses reducing curriculum content to enhance essential learning, critical thinking and more holistic experiential, discussion-based and analysis-based learning. It also talks about a revision of the curriculum and pedagogical structure from a 10+2 system to



a 5+3+3+4 system design in an effort to optimize learning for students based on cognitive development of children

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